



Committee: COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Date: THURSDAY, 29 MARCH 2007

Venue: MORECAMBE TOWN HALL

Time: 4.00 P.M.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Minutes

Minutes of meeting held on 11th January, 2007 (previously circulated).

3. Items of Urgent Business Authorised by the Chairman

4. Declarations of Interest

5. Elected Member Development – Induction Programme for Newly Elected and Returning Members (Pages 1 - 4)

Report of Head of Democratic Services.

6. Elected Member Development – One to One interviews (Personal Development Plans) (Pages 5 - 8)

Report of Head of Democratic Services.

7. British Forces Free Postage Petition (Pages 9 - 10)

Report of Head of Democratic Services.

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

(i) Membership

Councillors Susan Bray (Chairman), Evelyn Archer (Vice-Chairman), Geoff Knight, Anne Chapman, Karen Leytham, Joyce Pritchard and Peter Robinson

(ii) Substitute Membership

Councillors Abbott Bryning and Gina Dowding

(iii) Queries regarding this Agenda

Please contact Gillian Noall, Head of Democratic Services - telephone: 01524 582060 or email gnoall@lancaster.gov.uk.

(iv) Changes to Membership, substitutions or apologies

Please contact Members' Secretary, telephone 582170, or alternatively email memberservices@lancaster.gov.uk.

MARK CULLINAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
TOWN HALL,
LANCASTER LA1 1 PJ

Published on Tuesday 20th March, 2007

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Elected Member Development – Induction Programme for Newly Elected and Returning Members

29th March, 2007

Report of Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Members on the proposed Induction Programme and timetable.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) That the Committee notes the proposed Induction Programme and timetable.

1.0 Report

As part of the commitment to the support and development of elected Members in their roles and the work towards the North West Charter for elected Member development, the Council has agreed to develop a comprehensive induction programme for newly elected and returning Members following the election in May. Following the comments and suggestions put forward at the last meeting of the Council Business Committee and the feedback from the short questionnaire that was circulated to existing Members on the success of previous induction programmes or ways in which improvements could be made, a comprehensive induction programme has been developed, encompassing the pre-induction, acceptance of office, induction day and follow up induction as follows:

Pre induction

An open evening will take place on 21st March for candidates and their agents. This will be to advise on electoral procedures and answer any questions about the practicalities of being a Councillor.

Prior to the election at the close of nominations, all candidates will receive a letter outlining the key dates for their diaries, should they be elected and a copy of the Code of Conduct that they will be required to sign up to. An Information Pack for potential Councillors is already available.

Acceptance of Office

All Councillors must sign the declaration of office and acceptance of the Code of Conduct with the Chief Executive before they can take part in any Council business. Five 'open' sessions for this have been scheduled at Lancaster and Morecambe Town Halls within the first week of office for Members to call in. It is intended that official photographs will be taken

at the same time and arrangements discussed for the provision of laptops and/or electronic access to the Council's committee management system for new members.

Induction Day

Two Induction Day sessions will be held to welcome newly elected and returning Members, one in the evening at Lancaster and one during the afternoon at Morecambe Town Hall. Councillors will get chance to meet the Chief Executive and other Chief Officers. The session will comprise of a series of short briefings to give Members the basics for their first few weeks in office (The Code of Conduct and an introduction to the Council etc). The day will also involve a tour of the building followed by lunch/tea and a 'freshers fayre style' stands from departments and services.

The timetable for the whole induction is set out below:

Wed 21 March	5.30pm	Open evening for candidates and agents
Tues 8 May	10 - 12noon 2 - 4pm	Acceptance of Office
Tues 8 May	4.30 – 8.30pm	Induction Day
Wed 9 May	10-12noon 2 - 4pm	Acceptance of Office
Thurs 10 May	10 – 2pm	Induction Day
Thurs 10 May	4 - 6pm	Acceptance of Office
Wed 16 May	9.30am–12.30	Planning training
Wed 16 May	5 - 7pm	Overview & Scrutiny and questioning skills training
Thurs 17 May	Morning	Personnel Training
Tues 22 May	Evening	Personnel Training
Wed 23 May	5 - 8 pm	Planning training
Thurs 24 May	Afternoon	Licensing Act training
Thurs 24 May	5 - 8 pm	Equalities training
Fri 25 May	Morning	Licensing Act training
Tues 29 May	Morning	Licensing Regulatory training
Tues 29 May	Afternoon	Licensing Regulatory training
Wed 30 May	Morning	Equalities training
Wed 30 May	Afternoon	Equalities training
Thurs 31 May	Afternoon	Code of Conduct training
Fri 1 June	Morning	Code of Conduct training

Mon 4 June	Evening	Code of Conduct training
Mon 4 June	All day	Communicating with Clarity
Tue 5 June	Afternoon	Standards Committee training
Fri 8 June	All day	Overview and Scrutiny training
Mon 11 June	Afternoon	Tourism briefing
Thurs 28 June	10 – 1pm	Managing Casework
Wed 4 July	1 – 3pm	Managing Casework
Wed 11 July	All day	Communicating with Clarity
Tues 17 July	4.30 pm	Performance management & data quality training

Follow up induction

Once the initial welcome meetings have taken place and important papers have been signed, those councillors appointed to the Planning and Highways, Licensing, Standards and Personnel Committees will be required to attend compulsory training, all of which has been scheduled for the last few weeks in May/first week in June. Following this, it is intended that visits to other services and a tour of the district and regeneration projects and History of Lancaster Town Hall tour should take place during June and July.

There will also be a follow-up “surgery” style induction day on a date to be set in June, when new Councillors can come in and ask any further questions on things they did not fully understand initially or did not realise they needed to know, or on things that have arisen since their original induction day.

From July onwards it is suggested that training be organised on a range of subjects; local government finance and budgeting, data protection, civil contingencies and child protection. Following which briefings would be provided on tourism, climate change and other subjects of interest.

Alongside this, IT training will be offered on basic things i.e. accessing emails and using the internet but also training on software i.e. accessing minutes and agendas on the intranet, Microsoft word, Excel spreadsheets, creating web pages. This training will be offered on an individual basis and be arranged via IT helpdesk or Member Services.

To complement the induction training being offered in house, it is proposed that training sessions be co-ordinated for skills based and specialist training such as public speaking, overview and scrutiny, charring skills, dealing with the media etc which would be offered as part of the Member Training Programme using external training providers.

In addition all 60 councillors will be offered personal one to one interviews to discuss individual training needs. This information will then inform a new Member Learning Programme.

Later on in the year, it is suggested that a workshop be held for Cabinet Members and Cabinet Members be offered individual portfolio training where available.

Members Handbook

Alongside the induction, the Council should take account of the type and volume of information to be made available to Members prior to the election, on the election day and following their election.

Therefore all newly elected and returning Members will be given a copy of the Members Handbook. The Handbook contains information that Members need to know i.e. role of a Councillor, the support they will receive, information on the Council and its services, opening hours, ID cards, car parking, allowances, declaring interests, fire alarm, smoking policy and a whole lot more.

The Handbook will also includes details of the main contact officers in Member Services and contact details and photos of the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors and their Personal Assistants, a Who's Who of Corporate Directors and Service Heads and useful contact numbers (within the Council, and externally including the local newspapers and radio stations and MP's etc).

2.0 Conclusion

Members are requested to note the proposed Induction Programme and timetable.

<p>RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK The work of Member development supports the corporate priority – to continue to improve the Council.</p>	
<p>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing) No direct implications</p>	
<p>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS The cost of training courses and events is met from the Member training budget held by Legal and HR Services. For 2007/08, the sum of £10,500 has been included from which all the proposals set out in this report can be met.</p>	
<p>SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.</p>	
<p>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS There are no legal comments.</p>	
<p>MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.</p>	
<p>BACKGROUND PAPERS None</p>	<p>Contact Officer: Suzanne Smith Telephone: 01524 582074 E-mail: smsmith@lancaster.gov.uk</p>

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Elected Member Development – One to One Interviews (Personal Development Plans)

29th March, 2007

Report of Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Members on the feedback from the one to one interview questionnaires and offer suggestions for the way forward.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) That Members consider all the suggestions and questions on improvement and suggest a way forward for future one to one interviews.**
- 2) That it be noted that a future report will be submitted to the Committee on progress with Member Development in due course.**

1.0 Report

As part of the commitment to the support and development of elected Members in their roles and the work towards the North West Charter for elected member development, the Council introduced a process whereby all councillors would be offered the opportunity to discuss their individual development training needs.

Therefore, during 2006, approximately 32 Members have had one to one interviews with the Learning and Development Officer and officers from Democratic Services to discuss their future development and support needs. The aim of the informal interview was to discuss individual training and development priorities for the duration of the year. The outcome of the interviews informed the Training and Development Programme and each of the 32 Members now own a personal development plan setting out their identified learning and development needs. Support was then given to Members to help them meet their needs to assist them in their roles and to review existing plans. The interviews also gave a valuable insight into the requirements of new Members and the need for an induction programme, tailored to meet the needs of newly elected Members.

The outcome of the one to one interviews then informed a comprehensive Elected Member Training and Development Programme which aimed to specifically address Member development and support. The first edition of the Training and Development Programme for May 2006 to May 2007 was published and encompassed generic training for all councillors i.e. chairing skills, questioning techniques, alongside specific training such as speed reading, IT training and leadership training as identified from the one to one interviews.

As a follow up to the initial one to one interviews, each member was asked to review their one to one interview and explain how they feel they have achieved their training needs and whether there have been any failings in the system. Feedback has been received from 18 members which shows that the interviews have been beneficial to members. However it also shows the considerable demands on councillors' time, which means that some of the much-needed training has not been delivered.

A comparison of the training needs identified and the training events which have been organised has been undertaken and it is clear that a third of the training needs identified in the one to one interviews have been offered. For a number of reasons, Members have not always attended these sessions due to conflicts with other meetings and appointments, inconvenient dates/times, or not seen as a priority compared to other Council business. Therefore a number of training sessions as part of the induction have been scheduled for evenings to assist those councillors who work full time and the Council will continue to offer evening sessions where possible. It is important to note that 5 members have not managed to attend or meet any of their training needs identified in their one to one interview; again this could be due to some of the reasons explained above.

It is apparent that there are a number of priority areas where training has not been offered (Chairing skills, presentation skills, public speaking and dealing with the media), and these training sessions will be run as a matter of priority after the election once all training has been undertaken for newly elected members. It is expected that this training will take place from July onwards.

It is recognised that there is not always sufficient interest to run some events and therefore it is suggested that rather than waiting for sufficient numbers, officers look at buying ad hoc places elsewhere i.e. from other training companies or local authorities subject to availability, costs and location.

The target from 2007, as part of the requirements to achieve the Member Development Charter, is for over 50% of all councillors to have undertaken one to one interviews. Clearly there are some issues of ownership by members and taking responsibility for their own development and the Committee is asked to consider possible ways in which this could be addressed:

- Should Group Administrators/Leaders/Council Business Committee Members (as Member Development Champions) lead by example by having their one to one interviews first to encourage their members to do the same?
- Should the information from the one to one interviews be shared with the relevant Group Administrators/Leaders/Council Business Committee Members (as Member Development Champions) so that political groups take on some responsibility to encourage their Members to take up opportunities to attend training?
- Should some sort of 'league table' be devised which can be published on the Intranet showing which Members have taken part in one to ones and in organised training.

Whilst it was encouraging that 32 members took part in the initial one to one interviews, it is disappointing that only 18 provided feedback and review. The process also proved time-consuming for the officers involved and needs to be varied in order to ensure that it can be contained within the existing resources available. The Committee is also requested therefore to consider the process for the one to one interviews and suggest ways in which this could be improved to encourage more Members to take part:-

- Should the interviews be more informal and consist of just one officer with the councillor and prompts for discussion?

- Should the interviews focus more on support and how the Council can assist in ward work and additional responsibilities from becoming a Councillor rather than focusing on training as it is recognised that not every councillor has the time nor the inclination to attend formal training?
- Could the interviews be undertaken on a group discussion basis with just short individual personalised sessions?
- Should the review be held by email or by officers meeting with the councillor again to discuss progress and get constructive feedback.

2.0 Conclusion

Members are requested to consider all the suggestions and questions on improvement and suggest a way forward for future one to one interviews.

<p>RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK</p> <p>The work of Member development supports the corporate priority – to continue to improve the Council.</p>	
<p>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)</p> <p>No direct implications</p>	
<p>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>The cost of all learning and development proposals must be met from the member training budget held by Legal and HR. A sum of £10,500 has been included for 2007/08.</p> <p>In view of the additional training required in 2007/08 as a result of the elections, if possible it may be advantageous to carry forward some of the underspend in 2006/07 (currently approximately £7,500) to ensure that sufficient resources are available throughout 2007/08 for member learning and development and a view will be taken on this in due course once the induction training has been finalised and precise costs are identified, and the overall outturn position is known.</p>	
<p>SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS</p> <p>The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.</p>	
<p>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>None directly arising from this report.</p>	
<p>MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.</p>	
<p>BACKGROUND PAPERS</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Contact Officer: Suzanne Trippier Telephone: 01524 582074 E-mail: smtrippier@lancaster.gov.uk</p>

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COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE**British Forces Free Postage Petition
29th March 2007****Report of the Head of Democratic Services****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise Members of a request from Tewkesbury Borough Council seeking support for their campaign to reinstate free postage for British forces overseas.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee consider whether this Council should support the motion passed by Tewkesbury Borough Council in relation to free postage for British forces stationed overseas.

1.0 Report

The following has been received from Tewkesbury Borough Council:

At the meeting of the Council held on 22 February 2007 the following Motion was considered:

'This Council is aware of the situation in which British forces and their families who are stationed overseas cannot receive parcels free of charge as they could in 2003.

This Council believes that the situation is both an appalling and disgraceful way to treat our dedicated and hardworking troops and their families given the hardships that they face in the world's hotspots and war zones and therefore asks that the Government reinstates this service as a matter of urgency.

In addition this Council calls upon:

- 1. Each of it's Town and Parish Councils to offer their support to the Motion*
- 2. Each Local Authority in the Country to offer their support to this Motion*
- 3. Each Local Authority across the Country to invite the Town and Parish Councils in their area to support this Motion '*

My Council was overwhelmingly in support of this Motion and as such I am now writing to ask whether your Authority would consider offering its support to this Motion and if

so to ask you to write to the appropriate Government Minister, Secretary of State for Defence, the Rt Hon Des Browne MP, to express your support.

If you have Town and Parish Councils in your area I would be grateful if you could pass this letter on to them and seek their support in writing to the Minister.

2.0 Options

The Terms of Reference of the Council Business Committee provide for this committee to determine the method of response and where necessary ratify responses on behalf of full Council to consultations.

Whilst a process is in place to deal with government and other consultation exercises in an efficient manner, Members may wish to consider these more 'ad hoc' issues promoted by other Local Authorities on a more individual basis.

The Committee is therefore requested to consider:

Option 1 – to agree with the motion put forward and offer support by writing to the Secretary of State and also passing on the request to Parish and Town Councils in the District.

Option 2 – to take no action

Option 3 – to refer the matter to full Council for a full debate by all members.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

There are no direct implications as a result of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None as a direct result of this report.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The S151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None as a direct result of this report.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Deputy Monitoring Officer has prepared the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Letter from Tewkesbury Borough Council –
26th February 2007

Contact Officer: Gillian Noall
Telephone: 01524 582060
E-mail: gnoall@lancaster.gov.uk