

# COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

## Induction Review

12<sup>th</sup> January 2012

### Report of the Democratic Services Manager

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Committee on the implementation of the Members' Induction Programme following the 2011 local elections.

**This report is public**

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

To note the report and Member feedback on the 2011 councillor induction programme.

##### 1.0 Training and development events taken place

As part of the commitment to member development, a comprehensive induction programme was arranged for members in the two months following the 2011 local elections. Successful candidates were presented with a comprehensive pack of information at the count, and the following events took place as part of the induction programme.

Date	Time	Event	Location
Tues 10 <sup>th</sup> May	10.00 - 12.00pm	Signing Declaration session	Lancaster Town Hall
Tues 10 <sup>th</sup> May	2.00 - 4.00pm	Signing Declaration session	Lancaster Town Hall
Tues 10 <sup>th</sup> May	5.00- 7.45pm pm	Induction Evening	Lancaster Town Hall
Wed 11 <sup>th</sup> May	10.00 - 12.00pm	Signing Declaration session	Morecambe Town Hall
Wed 11 <sup>th</sup> May	2.00 - 4.00pm	Signing Declaration session	Morecambe Town Hall
Thurs 12 <sup>th</sup> May	11.00 – 2.00pm	Induction Day	Morecambe Town Hall
Thurs 12 <sup>th</sup> May	4.00- 6.00pm	Signing Declaration session	Lancaster Town Hall
Mon 16 <sup>th</sup> May	2.00pm	Code of Conduct	Lancaster Town Hall
Wed 18 <sup>th</sup> May	5.30pm	Code of Conduct	Morecambe Town Hall

Fri 20 <sup>th</sup> May	12.00 noon	ANNUAL COUNCIL – MAYOR MAKING	Lancaster Town Hall
Mon 23 <sup>rd</sup> May	4.00pm	Mock Council: Speaking in the Chamber	Morecambe Town Hall
Mon 23 <sup>rd</sup> May	6.00pm	BUSINESS COUNCIL	Morecambe Town Hall
Tues 24 <sup>th</sup> May	10.00am	Code of Conduct	Lancaster Town Hall
Wed 25 <sup>th</sup> May	11.00am	Licensing Reg training	Lancaster Town Hall
Thurs 26 <sup>th</sup> May	11.00am	Licensing Act training	Lancaster Town Hall

Wed 1 <sup>st</sup> June	2.00pm	Code of Conduct	Morecambe Town Hall
Thurs 2 <sup>nd</sup> June	2.00pm	Planning training	Lancaster Town Hall
Fri 3 <sup>rd</sup> June	10.00am	Planning training	Morecambe Town Hall
Mon 6 <sup>th</sup> June	2.00pm	Standards Committee training	Lancaster Town Hall
Wed 8 <sup>th</sup> June	6.00pm	Code of Conduct for Parishes	Lancaster Town Hall
Wed 8 <sup>th</sup> June	10.00am	Equalities Training	Lancaster Town Hall
Thurs 9 <sup>th</sup> June	10:00am	Introduction to Finance	Lancaster Town Hall
Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> June	10:30am	Personnel Committee Training	Lancaster Town Hall
Tues 14 <sup>th</sup> June	2.00pm	Decision Making Process	Lancaster Town Hall
Wed 22 <sup>nd</sup> June	2.00pm	Equalities Training	Lancaster Town Hall
Mon 29 <sup>th</sup> June	5.30pm	Decision Making Process	Lancaster Town Hall

Fri 8 <sup>th</sup> July	10 – 4pm	Overview and Scrutiny Training	County Hall, Preston
Mon 11 <sup>th</sup> July	10am	Chairing Skills	Lancaster Town Hall

Coupled to the 28 planned events listed above, Democratic Services organised a number of additional events in the subsequent weeks and months in response to feedback from members and senior officers of the Council.

Two Induction Days were held as part of the Induction, one during the day time and one during the evening at Morecambe and Lancaster Town Halls with a 'freshers fayre' style event of Service stands. Five Declaration of Office sessions were held at various times and days in Morecambe and Lancaster Town Halls with the Chief Executive.

Specific training was arranged for Members of the Planning, Personnel, Standards and Licensing Act and Regulatory Committees and training on the Code of Conduct was held for all Members. For the first time, Equalities Training was made compulsory for all new members of the council, as well as a pre-requisite to taking membership of the Personnel, Appeals and Licensing Regulatory Committees.

Initial finance training was held, and new events continue to be held throughout the course of the year on various facets of the council's budgeting and finance procedures.

## 1.1 Evaluation

An evaluation of the induction process recently took place, to which 18% of councillors responded. Whilst the response rate was a little low, the findings were positive, with 91% of those who took part agreeing that they 'feel much more informed about my role as a councillor having undergone the induction'.

A summary of the key points that were raised are set out in the two tables below:

Positive	Negative
<b>Service stalls</b> were an extremely effective means of meeting senior officers, and finding out about the council's work.	<b>Service stalls</b> were 'very good, but department titles and job descriptions are not clearly related to council functions'.
<b>Members Handbook</b> was an extremely useful source of information	The <b>daytime scheduling</b> of certain events was inconvenient for some of those who are in full-time employment.
<b>The committee taster sessions</b> gave a very clear insight to decision-making on the Council	Some sessions featured <b>excessively long powerpoint presentations</b> .
The <b>Guide For New Councillors DVD</b> , which was given out at the Induction Days, was very useful. 'A variety of media formats is good...it could be taken away and watched in your own time...there is a tendency to come away from these events with information overload and the DVD helped with this'.	
<b>Member Briefings:</b> '[these are] very good as councillors can see firsthand how the Council operates. In some cases a meeting with a powerpoint is necessary but can be dull.'	

Suggestions
<b>Financial training should become mandatory</b> for all members, this should include training on how to read and understand balance sheets (see report elsewhere on agenda);
The <b>civic and ceremonial</b> aspect of the Council should be given a higher profile, both in the course of the induction events, and within the Members' Handbook
<b>A more comprehensive telephone directory</b> , which includes all members of staff, would be an extremely useful component of future members' packs, as given out to successful

candidates at the count.
Sessions on <b>how to be an effective ward councillor</b> would be helpful

In addition to the evaluation, all Members have been offered the opportunity to have a discussion with an officer from Democratic Services about their individual training needs for the forthcoming year.

These discussions are ongoing at the present time and, together with findings from the induction evaluation, information gathered from these discussions will be used to prepare a programme of training for the year ahead, and inform future induction programmes.

## **1.2 Forthcoming training and development events**

Officers from Democratic Services will continue to provide a comprehensive programme of internal training events for members throughout the remainder of the municipal year. This involves a mixture of monthly member briefings, sessions on current topics, and other priority areas as set out in the Member Development Strategy.

In addition, this year officers have organised two training events to which members from neighbouring authorities were invited. The sessions provided high quality training and the chance to network and exchange ideas with members from different councils, who were charged at the going rate. This resulted in consistently positive feedback from members, internal and external, and very good value for money training for the council.

Following on from the success of these events, Democratic Services are holding discussions with authorities in Cumbria about establishing a Cumbria and Lancaster training partnership. This would arrange high quality training events, for which the costs, accommodation, and administration would be shared between authorities.

## **1.3 Conclusion**

Despite a low response rate, the induction evaluation indicates that this year's programme was extremely beneficial to new and returning councillors alike.

As such, future induction programmes will be structured along similar lines but will reflect the suggestions made by councillors as part of the evaluation process, enabling the council to combine the most effective elements of this year's programme with suggestions for improvement from the target audience.

### **CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

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

There are no direct implications.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The budget for 2011/12 was set at £14,800 to allow for additional training required for new members and the costs of all members training for this year will be met from within this budget allocation. The 2012/13 budget estimate will reduce back to £10,500.

**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The s151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising directly from the report.

**MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Monitoring officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

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