

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.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK The work of Member development supports the corporate priority – to continue to improve the Council.	
CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing) No direct implications	
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.	
SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.	
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS There are no legal comments.	
MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.	
BACKGROUND PAPERS None	Contact Officer: Suzanne Smith Telephone: 01524 582074 E-mail: smsmith@lancaster.gov.uk