

Meeting:	Member Development Panel
Date:	14 September 2005
Subject:	Members Induction 2006
Responsible Officer:	Director of People, Performance and Policy
Contact Officer:	Maggie Rees, Organisational Development Group Manager
Portfolio Holder:	Communications, Partnership and HR
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Public

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

That (1) the Panel note the report;

(2) Members are invited to advise the officer working group on the content and format of the induction programme;

(3) Members are asked to comment and make suggestions on the 'Who's Who' guide attached at Appendix B; and

(4) Members are asked to comment and make suggestions on the Draft Members Handbook attached at Appendix C.

Reason for report

To brief Members on the preparations for the Member Induction Programme and to invite comments on the content and format of the induction programme.

Benefits

By recommending compulsory training the Council would facilitate a more efficient decision-making process.

To ensure that Member induction is a Member-led process.

Cost of Proposals

Additional Officer time, production of materials and costs of events themselves are estimated at £30,000. These costs would be equally spread over two financial years. Costs incurred in 2005/06 can be contained within the estimates for the year. Costs for 2006/7 would be included in the proposals for the budget for 2006/7.

Risks

None associated with this report

Implications if recommendations rejected

N/A

Section 2: Report

Background

A programme of induction activities was provided for Members for the first time following the 2002 elections. The programme was well received and recognised to be a major step forward in member development, but evaluations highlighted a number of areas for improvement.

Initial Preparations

Initial preparation has begun on the Members Induction Programme, which will follow the Borough Elections in May 2006. The programme will aim to provide new and existing Members with the skills and knowledge required for their representative, scrutiny, specialist and executive roles.

An officer from Democratic Services has been seconded to the Organisational Development team on a part-time basis for a three month period to co-ordinate the preparations.

Topics for the programme

The 2002 induction programme and the subsequent Member Development Programme for 2002/03 included a series of seminars/briefings. A list of those seminar subjects is attached at Appendix A.

Directors have been asked to suggest seminar subjects for inclusion in the 2006 induction and the subsequent 2006/07 programme. The responses to date are also attached at Appendix A.

Who's Who Guide to Harrow Council

At the meeting on 8 February 2005, the Panel discussed the inclusion of a 'Who's Who' guide to the Council in the induction pack for 2006. A draft version of part of the Business Development directorate is attached at Appendix B.

A working group of officers is being established to develop plans for the induction programme, under the direction of the Member Development Panel. Officers from OD, Corporate Governance, HITS, and Scrutiny will be involved in the group. The Working Group will be writing to Members to ask for suggestions of subjects in the induction programme and the 2006/07 programme.

Training: Compulsory, Highly Recommended & Recommended for Development Purposes

Cabinet at its meeting on 23 June 2005, asked the Member Development Panel to consider which member development should be compulsory for which Members. The Panel may wish to consider member development activities under three categories: compulsory, highly recommended and recommended for development purposes.

Currently, training for the Development Control Committee is compulsory for all Members (and Reserves) of the Committee, as agreed at the Council meeting on 21 October 2004. It is also the Council's practice that all Members of the Licensing Panel attend training before serving on a Panel. Members are also encouraged to attend training on the Code of Conduct, although this is not mandatory.

Highly recommended training activities might include:

- planning training for all Members
- licensing training for all Members
- local government finance
- Freedom of Information
- Health and Safety
- Representing the Council on an outside body
- Personnel Appeals Panel (for Members of the Panel)
- Social Services Appeals Panel (for Members of the Panel)

Members should be encouraged to take part in all other training and development activities at every opportunity for their own development purposes.

Creative approaches to compulsory training will need to be developed if the Council wishes to ensure smooth business operations at the start of the Municipal year. A more detailed review of which training should be compulsory for Members will be considered at the Panel's next meeting in November 2005.

Options considered

N/A

Candidate Training

The Panel's views are sought on providing candidates with an introduction to the Council prior to the election in May. This could involve briefings on the functions of a Local Authority and the Councillors role within the organisation. This might include a session/display for candidates, which would provide a practical example of how to deal with the paperwork that a Member is likely to receive. The Group Offices have indicated that candidates will be selected by the New Year.

A welcome evening for all Councillors

The welcome evening in 2002 was appreciated, however, Members felt that there were too many activities taking place at one time and a tighter structure to such an event would improve the experience. Another option might be a series of events in the two weeks following the election.

Consultation

Directors have been asked to suggest subjects for briefings/seminars as part of the induction programme. Members will also be contacted to suggest subjects that should be included in the induction programme.

Financial Implications

As set out in the 'Cost of Proposals' section.

Legal Implications

No legal comments.

Equalities Impact

An impact assessment will be conducted by the working group as part of the planning for the induction programme.

Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents

Appendices

Appendix A	List of Seminar Subjects/Events
Appendix B	Who's Who Guide to Harrow Council
Appendix C	Draft Members Handbook May 2006