

REPORT FOR: MEMBER
DEVELOPMENT PANEL

Date: 7 January 2010

Subject: INFORMATION REPORT – Planning for 2010 Member Induction Update

Key Decision: No

Responsible Officer: Jon Turner, Divisional Director Human Resources & Development

Portfolio Holder: Councillor David Ashton, Leader and Portfolio Holder Strategy, Partnership and Finance

Exempt: No

Decision subject to Call-in: No

Enclosures: None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report outlines proposals for the 2010 Member Induction programme and is a supplementary to the main report reviewing the current programme.

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

1. **Purpose of report:**

This report updates the panel on the approach, suggested content and delivery options for the Induction component of the four-year member development programme commencing after the May 2010 election.

2. **Recommendations**

The panel are requested to note the progress that has been made in planning for induction and to identify any modifications in relation to all aspects of the programme including timing, content and delivery options.

3. **Background**

The proposals are based on research conducted between September and November 2009 that was undertaken to ascertain the most appropriate model for Induction 2010. The research consisted of the following:

3.1 Identification of good practice from across the main bodies that support local councillors: the IDeA, London Councils, South East Employers, Centre for Public Scrutiny, LGIU, other local, district and county councils outside of London, the Leadership Centre for Local Government amongst others

3.2 Focus Group meetings with groups and individual Harrow members across all parties to gain a review of what happened in 2006 and to develop ideas for 2010

3.3 Regular meetings with the Head of Legal Services, the Divisional Director of HR & D and senior democratic services staff to steer the direction of the research and proposals

3.4 Discussions with all members of the Senior Management team to gain their perspective on the content and delivery options for May 2010 Induction and the follow on programme.

4. **Policy Context**

Harrow has a robust and highly developed programme of support for members that has been enhanced in between 2008 – 2009. Full council approved a new Member Development Policy and Strategy in May 2009. An extract is reproduced below:

2.0 Aims and Objectives of Member Development at Harrow Council.

The policy aims to provide an entitlement to professional development for members and ensure they receive continuous updating on the key legislative and political skills frameworks that impinge on the day-to-day work of members.

Implementation of an annual Modern Councillor Member Development

programme should enable members to:

2.1	<i>increase the capacity of individual members in line with Harrow Council's strategy</i>
2.2	<i>gain the skills and knowledge required to increase the capacity of the council to meet corporate priorities and implement the council improvement plan to attain and retain excellent status</i>
2.3	<i>engage with the implementation of the corporate values – CREATE</i>
2.4	<i>review their own performance</i>
2.5	<i>improve and further develop political skills</i>
2.6	<i>participate in a development programme to meet identified needs</i>
2.7	<i>increase their understanding of the framework of local government and the impact of national government</i>
2.8	<i>develop a range of organisational and management skills to support them in their role e.g. presentation, casework, IT skills</i>
2.9	<i>recognise the changing legislative framework in which the council operates and know their legal duties as a local councillor</i>

4.1 These enhancements and strengthening of strategy resulted in the achievement of external recognition for the quality of development support in the form of the IDeA/London Councils Member Development Charter in October 2009. The award has a lifespan of 3 years and upon expiry we can apply for re-accreditation for the new Charter Plus award.

4.2 The council is now positioned to continue making improvements to member development and consider seeking the IDeA Charter Plus award in 2012. Charter Plus is a more rigorous award than the original IDeA Charter and requires the council to support all members with Personal Development Plans (PDPs) and demonstrate the impact training interventions have on individual member performance, including their role as community leaders.

4.3 The May 2010 Induction will be designed to form an integral part of the 2010 – 2014 member development programme aligned closely to the IDeA Charter Plus requirements (see Appendix 3).

5. Proposals for Induction – Summary of Consultation with Members and Senior Officers

5.1 Members Perspective – See Appendix 2

5.2 Senior Officers Perspective

Meetings were held during November with the Assistant Chief Executive and all of the Corporate Directors to ascertain the key knowledge areas that need to be provided for members as part of the Induction and follow on member development programme. A wide range of materials from directorates will be available as part of the Induction along with a Members' Handbook.

6. Management and Supporting Members' Individual Development

- 6.1 Member Development; publicised through a stand at Members' Open Evening where members can receive their Personal Development Folder and find out more about Harrow's Member Development Charter and proposals for the 2010/11 programme.
- 6.2 A Training Needs Analysis questionnaire can be issued to members in June 2010 to take stock of the skills and knowledge needs of new and returning members

7. Topics for 2010 Induction

It is clear from the member Focus groups and consultations with officers that a core programme of mandatory development is required for members immediately after the elections on 6th May.

- 7.1 The key topics that need to be covered are: Member probity and ethics: introduction to the Code of Conduct, Planning and Licensing, Equalities, Finance, Effective working with Officers and using Harrows ICT facilities
- 7.2 Other areas for inclusion: Overview and Scrutiny, Data Protection & Freedom of Information, Casework, Role of LSP and HAVS (see Appendix 1)

8. Delivery Options and Assessment of Member Learning and Development

- 8.1 Key to the success of the programme will be the necessity of actively engaging members in learning the skills and knowledge required to be an effective councillor.
- 8.2 Options for delivery of knowledge and skills include a range of methods that have been used successfully at Harrow in the member development programme and include:
- round table briefings with Question and Answers
 - case study / scenarios with questions
 - formal presentations
 - Action Learning events
 - e-learning using the Modern Councillor programme from learning pool (15 modules)
 - member exemplar presentations of good practice
 - hands on shadowing of council services e.g. call centre
 - workshops using practice of skills and role play e.g. chairing skills, presentation skills
 - external use of IDeA peers and other members from neighbouring councils
 - use of ex Harrow members to support new members, e.g. casework
- 8.3 Assessment of learning could be introduced for a range of mandatory areas. For example, at the end of Licensing training mini knowledge tests can be used to check learning. This could possibly be extended to other areas such as Planning and

Finance. Certificate of completion of each course could be issued to members.

9. Evaluation

9.1 The induction programme and follow on 4 year member development programme will be evaluated through a mix of end of session feedback questionnaires, follow up Focus groups and follow up impact questionnaires to gauge the impact upon performance.

9.2 It is suggested that a new questionnaire is devised that asks members to make comments on how the learning and development activities have helped them develop their ward councillor role and improve their performance. Aligned to Charter Plus is the requirement to assess the impact of member activity upon the community. A starting point for this is the current questionnaire that asks members to self-report on the value of development activities for individual learning, benefits to the council and the community.

10. Funding

The induction programme will be funded from the existing Capital Member Development Budget.

Appendix 1

Outline Programme for Induction 2010

Aim

The programme aims to ensure that new and returning members gain an appreciation of the role of the modern councillor and the competencies and behaviours required to be effective as an individual member of the council and as a community leader, aligned to the IDeA Member Development Charter Plus criteria

Objectives:

Through participating in the induction and follow on development programme, members will have an opportunity to:

- Appreciate the structure of the council and the main functions and services provided
- Identify the functions of the council that are governed by statute and the associated mandatory responsibilities of councillors
- Familiarise themselves with role of the executive, key officers and functions
- Gain a knowledge and understanding of the Code of Conduct and appreciate the implications for non-compliance
- Gain the required knowledge to act as an effective member of committees e.g. Planning, Licensing
- Develop a range of skills to support their role, e.g. chairing, public speaking, community leadership
- Appreciate the respective roles of member and officer and codes governing relations

- Define the function of Overview and Scrutiny within the council and the role of members in critically evaluating decisions made by the council, partners and stakeholders
- Review development needs, plan and undertake relevant learning and evaluate performance through regular maintenance of a PDP and Personal Development Handbook

Proposed DRAFT Induction Programme Timetable (May 2010 – October/November 2010)

Session Topic	Delivery Method	Led by	Time / Date	Venue
Members Open evening Members will be provided with a feedback questionnaire at the end to request more in-depth sessions on topics later on in the programme	Presentations and Q & A with Members Handbook plus Marketplace of stands for each Directorate	Chief Executive, Leader, Corporate Directors, Head of Legal, Democratic Services team	Suggest: Monday 10th May 2010 6.30 – 10pm	Civic Centre
Licensing	TBA	TBA	TBA	Civic Centre
Planning	TBA	TBA	TBA	Civic Centre
Data protection and freedom of information	Presentation, Contextual Case Studies	TBA	TBA	Civic Centre
Equalities	TBA	TBA	TBA	Civic Centre
Finance: introduction and overview of local government Finance	TBA	TBA	TBA	Civic Centre
Effective officer-member working relations	TBA	TBA	TBA	Civic Centre
Using Harrow's ICT facilities	Small groups & 1:1	TBC	TBA	Civic Centre
Borough Tour	TBA	TBA	TBA	Across borough

Overview and Scrutiny	TBA	TBA	TBA	Civic Centre
Role of Third Sector / Local Strategic Partnerships	TBA	Local Stakeholders/HAVS	TBA	TBA
Managing Casework:	Small group workshops	Corporate Complaints Team	June/July/Sept/Oct 2010	Civic Centre
Personal Development Plans / Learning Needs Questionnaire	Online self assessment TBA	TBA	July/September/Oct 2010	Civic Centre
Chairing Skills	Workshops	TBA	Sept/Oct/Nov 2010	TBA

Appendix 2 Focus Group Notes from Consultations

Focus Group 1 with Conservative Group was held on 21 10 09

Focus discussion 2 with Lib-Dem Group with one member on 30 10 09

Focus Group 3 with Labour Leader and Group on 6 11 09

Conservative Focus Group

Cllr Susan Hall

Cllr Jean Lammiman (seen separately)

Cllr Paul Osborn

Cllr Yogish Teli

- Members felt overwhelmed with too much information too soon at the 2006 Induction although the standard of the induction was generally high
- A number of sessions, e.g. Code of Conduct, Equalities, statutory training for Planning & Licensing etc – need reinforcement later in programme – Code of Conduct needs to be contextual with practical case studies – not just a presentation
- Members feel that all new councillors and returning councillors should be made aware of their requirement to participate in member training and development from the outset – a display stand and presentation on member development is required at Members Open Evening
- Have set standards and a requirement for all members to continually update a Personal Development Plan (note: this is required for Charter Plus)
- Sessions need to be more engaging, not just presentations – and members need to be assessed on what they have learnt. They want officers to be confident in challenging members to demonstrate they have learnt mandatory knowledge
- Action Learning events and follow on Action Learning sets need to be embedded into the programme from the outset
- Briefings should be offered at Group Meetings once a month
- Follow up evaluation is required and there needs to be a measure of the impact on training upon individual member performance, the

council and benefits to the community (again- required for Charter Plus)

- Members require training in basic constitutional matters including protocols for speaking at meetings and chairing skills
- Materials for Induction need to be made available on a members area of the main Harrow website and available from home / any location
- Priorities for members May – October 2010 include: Code of Conduct, Scrutiny, Equalities, Mandatory training on Planning/Licensing as soon as members are allocated, Chairing Skills, Corporate Parenting/Safeguarding, Data Protection & Confidentiality, Presentation Skills, role specific training for Cabinet members, Member- Officer relations and Protocols
- Working with Residents and Casework seen also as a priority with clear information to members on what they can and cannot do; clear referral points required on which officers can assist with residents/casework issues
- IT – members would benefit from being able to access web based member development packages from home. Improved IT access and facilities needed (Note: recommended as an Action in the London Council Member Development Charter Assessment Report)

Labour Focus Group

Cllr Bill Stephenson (seen separately)

Cllr Phil O'Dell

Cllr Nizam Ismail

Cllr Thaya Idaikkadar

Cllr Krishna James

Cllr Rekha Shah

- It would be useful to have Stands at the Members Open Evening representing each Directorate
- All members should attend Planning – but the training needs to be more effective
- Licensing was good in 2006 but Planning needs improving
- Planning – members need to know: basic knowledge of how to read planning drawings and a basic Glossary, e.g. some members didn't know what a front elevation and other terms meant
- Chairing skills training required for all Chairman (preferably group based)
- Knowledge of what to expect at meetings – agendas, summons and other terminology and what they mean
- Licensing panel – questioning skills needed for members
- These development sessions need to be more facilitative in approach
- All committee members should have a guide "What happens at a meeting"?
- IT training needed – remote access fob not working. More time needed on IT training
- Training Needs Analysis should be given to all members after May 2010 to identify needs
- New members need a "who, what, why and how" of the Council
- Codes of conduct and officer-member relations

- Casework training and how to manage and refer should be delivered in June /July (early)
- A Buddying system amongst members would be good – could member development provide a structure / guide?
- Mock up of meetings would be useful – mock Planning, Mock Licensing and Mock full council
- Shadowing teams including call centre and complaints would be very useful for members

Lib-Dem Group – Paul Scott

- Need to know which officers to contact to deal with which issues - who are the key officers and what can members expect in terms of a response?
- Community engagement knowledge/skills training needed: how members can act as advocates
- Casework, petitions, questions to Cabinet, presenting objections to planning
- The role of new members needs to highlight their potential work with the community and they need an understanding of stakeholders: residents associations, HAVS, Police, NHS
- Needs to be recognition by member development lead for all of the informal learning that goes on
- Skills training needed in member-officer relations
- Beneficial to have a range of methods to deliver member development including e-learning
- The strategy used for delivering development activities will depend upon the topic
- Workshops are helpful with input from more experienced members
- IT access needs improving – the remote access key has problems
- PDPs a good idea but likely to be resisted by long serving members who have acquired knowledge and experience over many years

Appendix 3

The Member Development Charter

- Charter Plus

Charter Plus is an optional higher level of the Member Development Charter. It is intended for councils that have already been awarded the Charter and want an additional challenge to further improve their member development and support.

The Charter Plus differs from the Charter in a number of key ways. These reflect:

- developments in what is considered to be best practice in member development since the original Charter was launched
- the need to address wider councillor support issues as part of the broader development of councillors' roles
- the need to promote local democracy and make better links between the tiers of local government

It is accepted that there may be a number of reasons why a council might not opt to go for Charter Plus.

It is envisaged that:

1. Regions operating joint charters with the IDeA will introduce Charter Plus as appropriate to local needs.
2. When councils commit to the Charter for the first time they will work towards and be assessed against the existing Charter requirements. If they request the assessment report can show what additional work would need to be done to achieve Charter Plus
3. When councils are due for reassessment they can opt to be reassessed for the Charter or for Charter Plus.
4. An assessment for Charter Plus will first of all confirm that the council meets the requirements of the Charter itself and then go on to assess against the requirements for Charter Plus.
5. Councils that fail to get Charter Plus will still be awarded the Charter (provided they still meet that level of requirement) and the report will indicate what areas they need to address to gain Charter Plus
6. While councils would normally seek Charter Plus as part of the three yearly reassessment process, it can be done earlier subject to the agreement of the Regional awarding body.

Examples of evidence requirements for Charter Plus

General Requirement	Examples of requirements for Charter Plus
Commitment to member development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio-holder has responsibility for members development • Evidence that the budget is properly reviewed, set and prioritised by the cross party task group • Examples of how learning is shared with other authorities across the tiers of local government including Parish / Town Councils.
Strategic approach to member development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust evaluation process is in place and can be evidenced • Member role descriptions exist and are maintained for all key roles including ward councillor • All councillors are offered PDPs and the majority of councillors take them up. • Annual programme of development activities published and circulated to all councillors through a variety of channels • Some form of impact assessment at the community level exists and is used (e.g. by

	asking for feedback from partners)
Member learning and development plan in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members can identify positive outcomes as a result of their development programme. • At least 90% of all councillors feel they have adequate access to development opportunities • Development is a regular item on all political group agendas
Learning and development is effective in building capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear process showing how end of event evaluation feeds into impact evaluation and to review and development of the training programme • Examples can be given of changes made as a result of feedback and evaluation
Supporting Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that support arrangements for councillors are reviewed on a regular basis and that this review covers support needs of all councillors • Evidence that council reviews its arrangements and timings of meetings and the way it conducts its business to take account of cultural, faith, travel needs and family commitments of councillors • Evidence that the Council takes an active role in promoting local democracy • Evidence that the Council is building links with local businesses and employers to promote the role of the councillor

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jennifer Hydari	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
Date: 16 December 2009		

Section 4 - Contact Details

Contact: Ken Howgill, Project Manager, Learning and Development 020 8424 1415