

Report of: **Director of Corporate Resources**

Meeting of	Date	Agenda Item	Ward(s)
CMB	28 th January 2010		
Standards Committee	4 th February 2010		

Delete as appropriate	Exempt	Non-exempt

SUBJECT: COUNCILLOR INDUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT – MAY 2010

1. Synopsis

This report sets out a proposed programme for Councillor induction and development for the local elections in May 2010 and asks the Board to agree the general approach and confirm dates for the events.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree the general approach for Councillor Induction set out in the report;
- 2.2 To agree the proposed dates of 12th May for the Corporate Induction Evening and 15th and 16th May for the Corporate Induction Weekend;
- 2.3 To comment on the suggested information to go into the Ward Packs set out in **Appendix C** and agree which Corporate and Service Directors undertake ward walks with Councillors in each ward and what the programme should contain;
- 2.4 To agree that departments notify the Head of Democratic Services now of any training they would like to put on so that this can be co-ordinated in the diary.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Borough Elections will take place on the 6th May 2010, probably on the same day as the Parliamentary Elections. If this is the case, the count for the Parliamentary Elections will take place on the evening of 6th May at the Sobell Sports Centre and the count for the local elections will commence at mid-day on Friday, 7th May. If only the local elections take place on 6th May, then the count will take place that evening as normal.
- 3.2 For the past two local elections, there has been a 50% turnover of councillors and it is thought this will be much the same for May's election.
- 3.3 This report will look at arrangements for Councillor Induction in three parts:
- Before and on the night/day of the count;
 - The weeks immediately after the election; and
 - The period up to December 2010 and beyond.

Before the Election

- 3.4 The Head of Democratic Services has spoken to both Group Offices and the Chief Whips of the Groups and proposes to organise a session in April for any candidates standing for election offering them an induction session which would last no longer than 1½ hours and cover purely factual information about the role of councillors, what support was available, rules and obligations around Members Allowances and the Code of Conduct and the structure of the Council.
- 3.5 In the letter to candidates they would also be told of key dates to put in their diaries now should they be elected e.g., Group meetings, induction and training dates, Annual Council and Committee dates. This would enable them to plan and keep these dates free, rather than finding out about them only after they were elected.
- 3.6 The Induction Session would give the chance to get some of the drier factual information out of the way at an early stage.

Communications

- 3.7 Communications and Democratic Services are already working on an integrated communications plan for the elections, which comprises three main stages – pre-election, the two days during the elections and counts, and post-election. Although the messages, communications tools and channels used will be different for each stage and each audience, there will be a consistent look and feel to the campaign, with an overarching strapline across all materials: 'ISLINGTON COUNTS'. This covers all key messages, for example, 'your vote counts' (external), 'we need polling clerks on the day of the count' (internal), and messages explaining what happens on election day (both internal and external). The initial designs and how they will be implemented across a range of materials will be available at the meeting.
- 3.8 One of the main aims of the campaign is to create a buzz around the elections and so a key part of the communications plan is to update the pages on the council's website to make this the primary source of information for our residents and other stakeholders. On the new website pages, there will be information relating to the forthcoming election and details of how to stand for election, polling venues and the count, together with information relating to councillors and anything to do with decision-making. There will also be links to other

bodies/organisations in the borough that have decision-making powers, to show people how they can find out more or get involved. In the next few months leading up to the elections, there will be regular items on the homepage of the website that link to these pages, to give it more prominence so that people clicking onto our website for other purposes will see the campaign.

- 3.9 In addition, the Communications team is looking into having a celebrity endorsement. And to get more coverage – perhaps nationally – they have also planned to use social media, which will be new to the council. For example, we will have a Twitter feed that we'll encourage people to follow. In the lead-up to and on election day, people registered for the tweets will receive live updates. This will be carefully planned so that it is impartial. The website will also be updated with results as and when they are announced. Plus, we will have a blog on the website, written by a range of council officers. A blog is currently being piloted in Environment and Regeneration, so this approach will have been trialled.

On the night/day of the Count

- 3.10 As soon as individual ward results had been announced by the Returning Officer, the successful candidates would be asked to go over to a separate table in the hall to sign their acceptance of office and collect a welcome letter from the Chief Executive giving dates of induction sessions and asking them to complete and return key documents (example attached at **Appendix A**).

After the Election

- 3.11 Both the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups will be holding their first Group meetings with their Councillors the weekend of the 8th and 9th May to decide their positions and nominations in readiness for Annual Council on 18th May.
- 3.12 It is proposed to hold a Corporate Induction Evening for all Councillors on Wednesday 12th May from 7.00pm-9.00pm. This will be an informal evening attended by all the Corporate and Service Directors and key staff in departments as well as our partners such as HFI, Kier, Aquaterra, PCT and the Police. Each department will have a stand to showcase their service and will provide an opportunity to find out about the structure of the Council and the way in which services are delivered and to meet services on an informal basis. A suggested programme and layout is set out in **Appendix B**.
- 3.13 It will also be an opportunity for Councillors to get their publicity photos done which will be used for their ID badge, on the website and for surgeries. They will also be given a tour of the building and meet key support staff from Democratic Services.
- 3.14 Councillors will be asked to return their key forms such as contact details, Members Allowances, bank details and CRB check forms and arrange dates for a visit by TSG to deliver equipment to their homes.

Equipment

- 3.15 Councillors will be offered a Council laptop with Citrix to enable them to access the Council's systems. Alternatively, if they already have their own facilities which are connected to their home broadband via a fixed cable, they will be offered a special memory stick that can plug into their computer and allows them to access the Council's systems. This has been trialled over the last few months and is fully Coco compliant.

- 3.16 Councillors will not be offered printers but will be expected to either use their own printers or purchase a printer out of the money they will receive from their basic allowance.
- 3.17 All Councillors will be able to reclaim the cost of broadband connection and rental up to a maximum of £25 per month. Senior Councillors, such as Executive Members and the Leader of the Opposition can also have access to a Blackberry but if they choose to have one they cannot also claim the monthly broadband allowance.
- 3.18 One-to-one training will be provided to Councillors on the use of their IT and its applications both by TSG and Secretariat staff.
- 3.19 Any old IT equipment supplied to Councillors will be collected and the memory wiped to enable them to be recycled.

Induction Weekend

- 3.20 Given the current decision-making structure it will be important to get all Councillors trained on Planning, Licensing and the Code of Conduct before they can sit on these committees. (These structures could well change after the election but it will still be necessary to train Members on this).
- 3.21 It is proposed to hold an Induction Weekend from 10am-4.00pm on Saturday and Sunday, 15th and 16th May.

Saturday 15th May will cover Licensing training and briefing on the Code of Conduct. The Licensing training will take the form of a mock meeting using experienced officers and Councillors for a hearing.

Sunday 16th May will cover Planning training and details of support services for Councillors.

- 3.22 Councillors will be provided with key information to help them understand their roles and responsibilities and know who to contact for help and information.
- 3.23 All departments have been asked to update the 'Brief Guide to Council Services' which outlines essential information on each service along with Frequently Asked Questions that are raised by Councillors.
- 3.24 All Councillors will also be provided with key information on their wards. **Appendix C** set out some suggestions of the information that could be included in these ward packs as well as essential information such as key facilities and contacts within their ward. Group Offices and Members will be asked for their views of what else they would like to see included in these packs.
- 3.25 Staff are also working on an information portal that Members could access on line that would give them access to this and other detailed statistical information.
- 3.26 To sit alongside this ward information it is proposed that Corporate and Service Directors arrange ward walks with Members to talk through some of the work and issues that were going on in each ward. A programme will need to be agreed as to who will undertake these and what will be covered on the walks.

Immediate Training

- 3.27 Following on from the Corporate Evening and Induction Weekend it will be important to offer immediate training and support to Executive Members and Committee Chairs -

This will cover such things as chairing skills, presentation and media training, time management etc., scrutiny.

Executive Members, if they are new, will also need to be briefed and brought up to speed fairly quickly on their portfolios.

- 3.28 Both the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups will have arrangements in place for mentoring/ buddying, which they will arrange themselves.
- 3.29 Depending on the outcome of the election, this may need to be offered to independents or other groups.

Other Training

- 3.30 By the end of February 2010 we will have a Members Casework System in place which will allow Members and officers a web based system for managing casework effectively.
- 3.31 Officers and Members from both Groups will be trialling this during March so that it will be ready in time for the May elections.
- 3.32 One evening each month has been set aside in the diary for member training. This would allow us to plan briefing sessions over the course of the next couple of months. Depending on what changes might be made to the Committee Structure, other dates could also become free for training.
- 3.33 We will also film any of the training sessions that are provided so that they can be captured on DVD and placed on the intranet for Members to view again or if they missed the session.
- 3.34 We will also look to have specific on-line training for Members to access so that they can fit their learning at times to suit them. This will cover the Code of Conduct, Data Security, Equalities and IT.
- 3.35 The Council will also be applying for the London Council's Member Development Charter in 2010. Currently 12 Councils in London have achieved the Charter. The Charter, a bit like IIP, will be awarded to Councils who are able to demonstrate they meet clear standards in terms of Member development. Assessment will take place from a small team drawn from London Councils and an authority who has already achieved Charter status.
- 3.36 It will be essential therefore for Democratic Services to be able to record all training and development that has been undertaken by Members throughout the year and obtain feedback from these sessions. This will include briefings or training undertaken by departments themselves.

Longer Term

- 3.37 Once the first couple of months are out of the way we will look to undertake more specific knowledge and skill based training for Members. This might be done individually or via groups.
- 3.38 Some Councillors in the past have attended Leadership Training Modules offered by the IDEA, Leadership Centre and others. Two Councillors have also signed up to professional qualifications for Councillors run by various universities.
- 3.39 The Annual Members' Survey will be undertaken again in September/October and will obtain feedback on the induction/training they have received so far and ask what specific training/development they would like help with. This, along with suggestions put forward from the respective Chief Whips and Group Offices, will form the basis of more detailed training for the rest of the year.
- 3.40 Key partners and members of the Standards Committee will be invited to take part in all the relevant sessions on offer.

4. Implications

Financial

- 4.1 The cost of providing the Member training will be met from existing budgets. Departments putting on their own specific briefings concerning their own services will be expected to meet this from within their own budgets.
- 4.2 The cost of providing new IT equipment will be met from the PC Refresh Programme and existing budgets.

Equality Impact Assessment

- 4.3 All Members will be asked to complete equality profile information after their election and all Councillors will be briefed on all equality information from across the various strands as well as things such as their role in Corporate Parenting.
- 4.4 Democratic Services will work closely with Groups to meet specific disability and equality needs of any Councillors including issues such as dyslexia and those whose first language is not English.

Background papers:

(Insert details here)

Final Report Clearance

Signed by
Director of Corporate Resources Date

Received by
Head of Democratic Services Date

Report author: John Lynch
Tel: 020 7527 3002
Fax: 020 7527 3323
E-mail: john.lynch@islington.gov.uk

Tel: 020 7527 3002
Fax: 020 7527 3092

Reply to: John Lynch
Our Ref: JL/PN

Date: 6 May 2010

Dear Councillor,

WELCOME TO ISLINGTON COUNCIL

Congratulations on your election and welcome (or welcome back) to your membership of Islington Council. As a councillor, you are now one of the forty-eight people collectively responsible for the direction and leadership of this multi-million pound organisation which provides services to all of Islington's residents, businesses and visitors. The Council also provides leadership in the Local Strategic Partnership and in relationships with the full range of statutory, voluntary and other service providers. These roles are significant, carry with them serious statutory responsibilities, and require you to sign a code of conduct. Over the next few days and weeks, we aim to provide you with a comprehensive suite of information and induction to support you in taking on this role and the work that it entails.

Classically, councillors have roles in the strategic life of the Council, in engagement with policy areas and acting as individual community leaders. Typically, this is a very important part of the role and many councillors undertake advocacy and casework on behalf of the community and individuals. The staff of the Council have different roles but are here to provide you with support across the range of activities. Those roles, delivering Council policy and managing services as well as dealing with specific issues raised by councillors and the public will be more fully described during the induction process. Additionally, there is a team of people dedicated to provide support to councillors and the political group offices which should be able to point you in the right direction. Some key contact details are enclosed with this letter.

We are keen to issue you with your councillor's badge and to put together publicity about you and your role. To this end, we have arranged for a photographer to be available on the following dates and times at the Town Hall:

Wednesday, 12th May

19.00-21.00, Town Hall, Upper Street, London N1 2UD

Saturday, 15th May

12.00-14.00, Town Hall, Upper Street, London N1 2UD

As indicated in this letter, the induction process is very important and you are urged to attend on:

Wednesday, 12th May

19.00-21.00 in Committee Room 1 at the Town Hall, Upper Street, London N1 2UD

This is an opportunity to find out about the structure of the Council and the way in which services are delivered and the way in which the Council works with partners. You will get the chance to meet key officers on an informal basis, light refreshments will be available .

Additionally there are two sessions on which we will provide you with some very important training on the conduct of planning and licensing issues and will deal with any questions about the Code of Conduct for councillors. It will not be possible to take a full part in making planning and licensing decisions unless you have attended this training:

Saturday, 15th May 10.00-16.30 – Town Hall

Licensing training, briefing on ethical conduct, Code of Conduct

Sunday, 16th May 10.00-16.30

Planning training, details of support services for councillors.

The next key date is the Annual General Meeting of the Council at which the Mayor is elected for the year and appointments to committees and outside bodies are made. This is an important occasion and is held on **Tuesday, May 18th at 19.30** in the Council Chamber. This is also an occasion to which you may wish to invite guests, details of this will be made known to you later.

In addition to the general induction sessions, each service area will be organising in-depth sessions to provide more information and assistance to members. The timetable for these will be available at the general induction sessions.

As an organisation we are moving towards delivering ever more comprehensive E government and a greater reliance on the use of email and IT to do our work and to communicate. In order that you can be fully integrated in all the Council's systems, we will be issuing you with a Council laptop and email address. To assist you with the set up of equipment and to organise any training requirements you may have, an IT engineer from the Council will visit you at home. S/he will enable you to dial in remotely to the Council's IT systems. Any specific training needs or support you may need in using the equipment will be provided for you on a 1:1 basis.

Alternatively, if you already have your own laptop or computer which is connected to your home broadband by a fixed cable and wish to use this for your Council business we can provide you with software that will allow you to access the Council's systems remotely.

I enclose 3 essential forms that you are required to complete relating to: contact information for you; bank details for payment for your allowance and an IT questionnaire. All Councillors are also required to have Criminal Records Bureau checks undertaken as part of their role as Corporate Parents. The fourth form sets out the documents you will need to bring with you on the 12th or 16th May in order for the checks to be done.

Please could you return the forms on the 12th May Corporate Induction or on the Induction Weekend of 15th and 16th May.

I very much look forward to working with you. I hope to have a chance to meet you personally very soon and talk with you about your concerns and aspirations as a councillor. Please feel free to contact me at any time (tel. 0207 527 3141 – email john.foster@islington.gov.uk).

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

John Foster
Chief Executive

Councillor Details

Name: COUNCILLOR

Ward

Political Party

Surgery Venue

Surgery Times

Home Address

.....

.....

.....

Make available to

Officers YES NO

Public YES NO

Telephone

Home

Officers YES NO

Public YES NO

Fax

Officers YES NO

Public YES NO

Work

Officers YES NO

Public YES NO

Fax

Officers YES NO

Public YES NO

Mobile

Officers YES NO

Public YES NO

Pager.....

Officers YES NO

Public YES NO

E-mail

Officers YES NO

Public YES NO

Please return this form to: John Lynch, Head of Democratic Services, Room 104, Town Hall

Tel: 020 7527 3002

Councillor Bank Details

NAME: COUNCILLOR

HOME ADDRESS:
.....
.....
.....

Please transfer my monthly allowances to the following account:

Bank/Building Society:

Address of Bank/Building Society:
.....
.....
.....

Account No:

Sort Code:

National Insurance Number

Signed.....

Dated

Please return this form to:

John Lynch, Head of Democratic Services, Room 104, Town Hall
Tel: 020 7527 3002

IT Requirements

NAME: COUNCILLOR.....

Please tick the equipment you will require

A laptop

Will use my own equipment but require software to access Council systems

SKILLS QUESTIONNAIRE

Would you require training in this application?		How would you rate your skills level?		
		Beginner	Inter-mediate	Advanced
Basic computer and keyboard skills	YES NO			
Microsoft Windows	YES NO			
Microsoft Word	YES NO			
Microsoft Excel	YES NO			
E-mail	YES NO			
Use of the Internet	YES NO			

Do you have any special needs? e.g. Dyslexia, eye sight difficulties – please let me know.

Please return this form to:

John Lynch, Head of Democratic Services, Room 104, Town Hall.
Tel: 020 7527 3002

**Member Induction 12th May 2010****Islington Town Hall – Committee Rooms 1, 2, 3****7.00 – 9.00 pm****PROGRAMME**

<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>
7.00 – 7.15 pm	Meet and Greet Collect your programme and guide to the evenings event. An opportunity to meet senior Council officers and partners to understand which services they provide and who they are. Staff at stalls in the main committee room area will provide information on each of the service areas and work with partners.
7.15 – 7.20 pm	Welcome from John Foster, Chief Executive
7.20 – 8.00 pm	Presentations from Directors and partners on key aspects of the Council and your role as a councillor.
8.00 – 9.00 pm	Stalls, service area information and meeting key senior staff.

Refreshments will be available

Stall and Events

Town Hall tour	Member Services stall
Use of IT and laptops	IT stall (next to Member Services)
Service Area information	All services are represented in the room along with partners. Senior staff will be on hand for you to get to know and ask questions. Each stall will also have information you can take away with you. You will also be able to sign up at on the stall of your choice, if you are interested in learning more!
Your pay	Ensure you have given your bank and national insurance details to Member Services so that you can be paid!
On-line information	Contact Member Services for a demo of Islington's on-line democracy pages, sign up and make your financial declaration. See what information is available on the Council's intranet and Internet sites.

Ward Packs

Aims:

To produce a pack which gives details at ward level for members, residents and staff. These are to be developed by end of March 2010.

THEMES	DATA SOURCE
Population	GLA, Census, School data, Children's survey
Disability	Census or PCT
Deprivation	Multiple indices
Housing Tenure	HASS, ONS
Housing Homelessness information and overcrowding	HASS, ONS
Housing Prices	HASS
Income Band	Beta Model
Business Information	Beta Model
Working age people on benefits	JCP
Unemployment rates (youth unemployment in particular)	JCP
Retirement rates	JCP
Free school meals	Children's Services
Languages	Children's Services
Education	Children's Services
Health	JSNA
Crime	Community Safety, Met Police
Lifestyle (alcohol and drug misuse)	PCT : JSNA