

KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA PARTNERSHIP STEERING GROUP**MEETING OF 17th MAY 2004****CITIZENSHIP/WELCOME PACKS****REPORT BY THE R.B.K.C. HEAD OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS**

This paper outlines initial ideas by the Council on the production of a Citizenship Pack. The steering group is invited to discuss:

1. How far this goes to meeting the ambitions expressed by steering group members at the meeting in January 2004.
2. Whether there is value in widening the scope of the pack to cover a more comprehensive range of services.
3. Additional sources of funding for the pack.

FOR DISCUSSION**Context**

Against a background of rapid change in the ethnic make up of Britain, there has been a national debate about the nature of citizenship. In 2002 Sir Bernard Crick was appointed by David Blunkett, the Home Secretary, to head a committee charged with drawing up a syllabus on "UK Society and civic structures."

Sir Bernard's committee reported in 2003. One of the key recommendations is that new arrivals should attend a formal citizenship ceremony in which they would take an oath. The ceremonies have similarities with those that take place in the USA and Canada. Commenting on the report of his committee, Sir Bernard said that, "becoming a citizen should be no ordinary matter - it is a significant event." Citizenship ceremonies are intended to underwrite that very point.

These ceremonies are already taking place. The Royal Borough's first ever citizenship ceremony took place at the Town Hall on 2 April 2004 and great effort was made to imbue the proceedings with appropriate dignity.

The national citizenship debate has been mirrored locally; the Kensington and Chelsea Partnership discussed the issue at its January 2004 meeting. At that meeting the Partnership agreed that amongst other things consideration should be given to the development of a welcome pack for new citizens.

This short paper suggests a practical way forward on that proposal.

What are others doing?

Westminster will begin citizenship ceremonies in May and has not so far produced a pack.

Brent have a smart general information folder into which they are putting some leaflets which seem to relate to the Council's aspirations for Brent rather than more practical information.

Camden and Southwark will be handing out information from the Home Office but may in the future produce their own information on voting rights.

Tower Hamlets is putting a collection of material into its standard Registration Service folder. The material seems to be rather random and again lacks practical information.

Bexley are currently considering producing a pack.

A number of other councils have information folders into which collections of existing material can be placed.

Who is the pack for?

Kensington and Chelsea has a resident turnover of about 20% per year. This means that we have literally thousands of new arrivals each year, many of whom will be from overseas and therefore unfamiliar with local services and institutions. It follows that whatever is produced must be useful to a group wider than those who will be participating in citizenship ceremonies.

But if citizenship ceremonies are to be "significant events" citizenship packs must look the part. Can the need for high volume and significant quality be reconciled affordably?

Modern technologies and processes mean that fine print can be achieved on high print runs at affordable prices. Coated papers of the right weight, if well designed, can have that "vellum" touch. It may be possible to give the packs that will be used in the ceremonies 'that something extra', by introducing a special stamp or seal.

What should go in it?

The simple response would be to create a welcome pack folder and put into it a collection of existing key information leaflets. This option might not look as professional as we might wish because the leaflets would not have any unifying logo or design.

On the Council's part, corporate guidelines are in production and will be available this year. But it may take years before the Council's key information leaflets begin to wear a single brand that reflects a sense of a single coherent organisation.

Alternatively, a booklet or brochure might serve as an interim measure, produced annually or bi-annually, in sufficient quantity to meet demand. Whether booklet or folder, it must reflect the importance attached to citizenship and citizenship ceremonies but also be useful to a much wider group of new arrivals.

The Pack should be aiming to provide an information starting point only. The document cannot provide detailed information about the services on which new residents may wish to call, nor can it provide anything more than a thumbnail sketch of the workings of local democracy, and of partner organizations like the PCT. Also it is not the appropriate vehicle for a discussion on notions of citizenship, as this kind of material is unlikely to dovetail well with more practical information about services.

It might be desirable to provide a newcomer with some sense of The Royal Borough's unique history and heritage but this could also be an awkward companion in the same document as information on the local state. However during 2004/5, the Council's Media and Communications team aim to produce a handy borough guide to heritage and places of interest. Its design could be coordinated with the citizens' welcome booklet and could make a natural companion to go in a Citizenship folder.

Proposal

It is recommended that the Council produce a booklet with a pocket sleeve in the back cover into which additional material can be placed. Partner organisations would have the opportunity to provide leaflets to be included in the sleeve to supplement their allotted space in the booklet itself.

Contents and headings might include:

- a thumbnail sketch of the workings of the Council using the Parliamentary analogy and a recommendation to view the leaflet series, "Getting to know your Council", which could be included in the sleeve.
- a section on 'getting involved' - that discusses opportunities to participate in local democracy, local institutions and amenity and voluntary groups
- local health services, how to find a doctor, dentist and so on
- emergency services
- police, neighbourhood watch and community safety
- Council services
- employment and training
- housing advice
- education
- leisure opportunities
- contact numbers and web addresses for further information would feature prominently

While such a welcome booklet may not be the right place to discuss notions of citizenship, it would be an opportunity to stress the citizen's rights and obligations. Colour, or some other technique, could be used to split the page in a way that is suggestive of rights and obligations, for example:

- We will collect your rubbish twice a week - you can choose to recycle your paper, plastic bottles and glass in one of the following ways...
- The council operates a 24 noise nuisance team which can be called at any time on... - you can be a considerate neighbour by....

- If you summon an ambulance by phoning 999 we aim to be there within 14 minutes... before calling 999 ask yourself is this really an emergency, can you attend the St. Charles walk-in clinic at...?

What will the booklet look like?

A booklet of something between 24 and 32 pages would enable a reasonable survey of local institutions and services. Booklet to have a separate cover on high quality coated paper.

To ensure that additional material can be placed easily in the pocket sleeve and that the Citizenship event is matched by a significant piece of print, A4 sized paper is probably the best option.

There is potential for a separate stamp or seal on those booklets which will be used at citizenship ceremonies.

Quantity and distribution

The Mayor's Office expects that the Mayor will be conferring citizenship on 20-25 people a month for the foreseeable future. Assuming that level of demand is sustained, approximately 300 packs will be needed for citizenship ceremonies for a single year.

To capture other new arrivals in the borough, various organizations could be invited to hold stocks for appropriate new tenants, e.g. Migrant and Refugee Community Forum, estate agents, the TMO and RSLs. We could design welcome pack receptacles and leave stocks on police, hospital and council reception desks and at other places.

A print run of 7,000 is suggested in the first instance. This would be monitored closely in order to gauge the level of demand. An order for a second edition would then be based on more solid information.

Cost

For 7,000, full colour A4 booklets, with a heavyweight cover and fine coated paper throughout, plus 24 pages of text, new photography and other editorial support we should allow approximately £11,000.

If the folder approach is preferred, we could order 7,000 high quality A4 folders for appx. £6,000 and insert existing material from the Council and partner organisations. Key numbers and web addresses could be incorporated into the folder design.

Home Office funding is unlikely to be available. Possible contributions to these costs could be sought from the Council's development budget for the KCP, Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, or the Council's budget for Equalities work.

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