

Executive

Annual Review of Representation on Outside Bodies

7 June 2010

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present proposals to improve the effectiveness of the support arrangements for member representation on outside bodies prior to the appointment of representatives for 2010/2011 by the Leader of the Council.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Executive is recommended:

- (1) to agree the proposals to improve the effectiveness of the support arrangements for member representation on outside bodies;
- (2) to agree the proposed changes to the list of outside bodies to which the Leader of the Council will make appointments in 2010/11.

Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 The 2008/09 Annual Partnership Report was considered by the Executive on 16 March 2009. The Executive agreed a number of recommendations to improve partnership working and specifically requested:

"That the Executive receive a report setting out how the Council will effectively support member representatives on partnerships and all outside bodies, including providing appropriate training, strengthening staff support for members, advice on council policy with regard to issues within the remit of partnerships and outside bodies and providing feedback mechanisms from issues raised on partnerships on outside bodies".
- 1.2 It was subsequently agreed that in advance of the 2010/11 appointments to outside bodies there would be a review of the current councillor representation on outside bodies to establish if this was an

appropriate level of commitment and a good use of resources. This report presents the conclusions of that review.

- 1.3 This report is concerned primarily with the Council's support arrangements for member representation on outside bodies. However, the issues and principles apply equally to the Council's member representation on Oxfordshire's strategic partnerships.

Proposals

- 1.4 This report proposes that the Council should implement a number of actions to improve the effectiveness of the Council's support arrangements for member representation on outside bodies.
- 1.5 This report proposes changes to the list of outside bodies to which the Leader of the Council will make appointments in 2010/11.

Conclusion

- 1.6 The continued focus at all levels of government on the value and benefits to be derived from working in partnership to achieve shared objectives and common goals reaffirms the importance of this review of the Council's support arrangements for member representation on outside bodies. The introduction of clear processes will allow the Council to build strong and structured relationships with outside organisations across the community.

Background Information

- 2.1 In response to the specific issues raised by the Executive the following improvements are proposed for 2010/11:
 - a) Democratic Services will maintain a database of all the outside bodies on which the Council is represented. For each outside body it is intended that there will be summary information (current and historic) on: the elected representative, the portfolio holder, the lead officer, the financial support provided by the Council, the purpose of the outside body, what it expects to achieve in the year ahead, and what has been achieved in the past year.
 - b) A lead officer will be assigned to all outside bodies. They will be responsible for maintaining contact with the outside body and providing support to the member representative.
 - c) The level and nature of support required by the member

representative (for example background information, briefings on current issues) will be agreed between the councillor and lead officer. The level of support required will range from the negligible, where the Council's commitment is not significant and primarily one of goodwill, to substantial where major resources and service delivery is involved. In future details of the level of resource committed by the Council in terms of member and officer time and funding will be captured and reviewed.

- d) A training seminar for councillors involved in partnerships and serving as representatives of the Council on outside bodies will be available through the Member Development Programme. This will be scheduled at the start of the year to coincide with the notice of appointments. The lead officers will also attend the seminar. The seminar will be held on Thursday 7 July 2010.
- e) A statement of "roles and responsibilities" for councillors representing the Council on outside bodies has been prepared (Appendix 1). This supplements the guidance in the Constitution (Appendix 2). These documents will be circulated to all councillors on their appointment to an outside body and they will be discussed at the training seminar.
- f) There will continue to be an annual review of the Council's involvement with outside bodies but from 2011/12 this will be expanded to include feedback from the outside bodies themselves and from the lead officers supporting the Council's involvement with the outside bodies. The information collected from the annual review will be presented to the Executive each spring and will inform the decisions on representation on outside bodies for the following year.
- g) The appointment of member representatives on outside bodies will be made by the Leader of the Council as a portfolio holder decision (which may be subject to call in under the Council's constitution).

2.2 In future the Council will build on these proposed improvements and be more proactive in its management of its representation on outside bodies to ensure that the benefits to the organisations and the Council are optimised. This new approach will be underpinned by coherent processes to ensure that appointments are regularly reviewed and properly resourced (illustrated at Appendix 3).

Appointments to outside bodies in 2010/11

2.3 Traditionally this Council has published a Portfolio Holder Decision Notice listing the appointments of member representatives to outside bodies in June or July each year. The list of 52 appointments made in July 2009 (Appendix 4) is very similar to those of previous years and contained some anomalies, which suggests that this review of the

current councillor representation on outside bodies was needed.

- 2.4 Using the July 2009 list of appointments as the starting point the Portfolio Holder for Performance Management and Improvement consulted the elected members, Strategic Directors and Service Heads to determine which outside bodies the Council should continue to appoint to.
- 2.5 The conclusions of that review are detailed at Appendix 5 but in summary the proposals are to:
- a) Continue member representation on 34 outside bodies.
 - b) Introduce member representation on 5 new outside bodies.
 - c) Delete 11 outside bodies (mainly because the organisation no longer exists or has merged with another organisation).
 - d) Withdraw member representation on 3 outside bodies (because officer involvement is more appropriate).
- 2.6 Previously all outside bodies have been assigned to one of five categories. The review proposes that the categorisation should be simplified and reduced from five to three. The proposed categories are:
- A an outside body important to the development or implementation of Council policy and/or one or more of the Council's service delivery objectives but which is not statutory.
 - B an outside body on which representation is desirable and should be maintained as a matter of local goodwill and for as long as a nomination or nominations are forthcoming from members.
 - P A statutory partnership which the Council is obliged to be part of.

Next Steps

- 2.7 Assuming that the conclusions of this review and the proposals set out in this report are agreed then the next step will be for the Leader of the Council to appoint member representatives to the outside bodies in late May/early June. The appointments will be published in a Portfolio Holder decision notice and confirmed in letters of appointment to the member representative and to the outside body.

Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options

- 3.1 In the past some councillors have expressed concern about the lack of guidance and support available to them when appointed to an outside body.
- 3.2 In the past the three way relationship between the member representative, the service officer and the outside organisation has not been as effective as it might have been.

The following options have been identified. The approach in the recommendations (Option Two) is believed to be the best way forward

Option One	To continue with the present arrangements for outside organisations to which appointments are currently made.
Option Two	To adopt the proposals to improve the effectiveness of the support arrangements for member representation on outside bodies and to agree the proposed changes to the list of outside bodies to which the Leader of the Council will make appointments in 2010/11.

Consultations

Internal	The Council's elected members serving as representatives on outside organisations, Strategic Directors and Service Heads.
External	Under the terms of this review it was decided not to consult with representatives from the current list of outside bodies about the nature of the Council's involvement. The conclusion was that it would be better to clarify our internal arrangements first and then to consult with the representatives from the outside bodies as part of the new procedures introduced in 2010/11.

Implications

Financial:	There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Comments checked by Denise Westlake, Service Accountant, 01295 221982
Legal:	Representation on outside organisations presents significant legal implications for the Council if the roles and responsibilities of those involved are not fully defined and the arrangements are not

adequately resourced and managed.

Comments checked by Liz Howlett, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, 01295 221686

Risk Management: Representation on outside organisations should result in some benefit to both the Council and the organisation concerned. There is a risk (which is difficult to quantify) that such benefit may be lost to either or both parties if representation is withdrawn or inadequately resourced.

Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk Management and Insurance Officer, 01295 221566

Wards Affected

All

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Councillor Representation on Outside Bodies ~ Roles and Responsibilities
Appendix 2	Constitution, Codes and Protocols, (e) Elected members serving on bodies external to the council
Appendix 3	Councillor Representation on Outside Bodies ~ Process Note
Appendix 4	Appointments to Outside Bodies, Portfolio Holder Decision Notice Pol 67, July 2009
Appendix 5	Review of Outside Bodies 2009/10
Background Papers	
(1)	Working in Partnership Annual Report to Executive, 16 March 2009
(2)	The 2009/10 annual report forms submitted by Members serving on outside organisations. Copies are available from the Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager.
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