

Corporate Issues and Partnerships Panel

Member Engagement with Outside Bodies

Issue

The Corporate Issues and Partnerships Panel is undertaking a review to look at the way the Council engages with its partner bodies and organisations across the Authority (often referred to as Outside Bodies) and specifically the role of elected members appointed, nominated or co-opted on to these bodies.

Background

Bath and North East Somerset Council works in partnership with a wide range of local bodies and organisations to deliver services across the area. These range from large organisations delivering housing, health and education services through to smaller voluntary and community groups. The council currently maintains its relationship with many of these organisations through the appointment of elected members who sit on their Boards. These Board appointments are in addition to range of other duties that Councillors fulfil such as carrying out ward duties and attending Council meetings.

With the development of alternative arrangements for working with partners through our Community Strategy, the Local Strategic Partnership & Local Area Agreements and the increasing role of Overview and Scrutiny in these arrangements, it is an opportune time to reconsider the nature of the Council's engagement with organisations and service providers in the area to which we appoint elected members.

Review Objectives

This review will set out to:

- Investigate current arrangements that exist between the Council and these partner organisations
- Consider and explore alternative ways of engaging with partner organisations to ensure a more robust and accountable system.

Scope

Taking each of the Review objectives, the Panel will investigate the following:

- Investigate current arrangements that exist between the Council and these partner organisations
 - Identify the total number and categories of different appointments that the Council makes to all outside bodies
 - Determine what engagement and reporting arrangements are in place.
 - Identify what arrangements are in place to deal with relationships that are being forged through the Local Area Agreement
 - Investigate the potential tension that may sometimes exist between the member's dual role as representative of the Council and member of the Board for that organisation.
- Consider and explore alternative ways of engaging with partner organisations to ensure a more robust and accountable system
 - Investigate best practice in exemplar Local Authorities
 - Hold discussions with a representative group of these bodies to determine the effectiveness and expectations of current engagement arrangements.

- Investigate whether there is a role for the Overview and Scrutiny function and/or Member Champions to become more involved in engagement arrangements with these bodies.

Excluded from Investigation

- Consideration of any grant funding or commissioning criteria or arrangements (contracts or service level agreements) that may currently be in place between the Council and the other organisations that are relevant to this review. .
- Detailed consideration of statutory relationships such as appointments to school governing bodies, Fire and Police authorities

Approach

In order to gather their evidence the panel will:

- Use the public panel meeting on July 27th as a contributor session to seek early views
- Approach local relevant local bodies and organisations for their views
- Investigate how other Local Authorities have approached this issue

Draft Timescales

Detail to be confirmed

| Date | Activity | Type |
|-----------------------|--|----------------------|
| 9 th June | Steering Group Meeting | Private |
| | Draft terms of reference circulated to Panel | |
| | Draft terms of reference circulated to outside bodies for comments/invitation to Panel meeting | |
| July | Press release issued | |
| 27 th July | Public panel Meeting – Terms of Reference presented and discussed in open session. Views sought from outside bodies. | Public Panel Meeting |
| August | Research alternative options/other Council's approaches | |
| Sept | Interviews with Outside Bodies | Private |
| | Meeting with Member Appointments Panel | Private |
| | Analysis of questionnaires to members and outside bodies | |
| | Steering Group Meeting | Private |
| Oct | Recommendations Workshop | Private |
| Nov | Draft Report and agree final version | |
| 30 Nov | Final Report presented to Panel | Public Panel Meeting |
| | Exec Response | |

Project Team

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