

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

Review Title: A Review of Members Services

A Review by the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Background

Within its lifetime, the panel have given little consideration to Democratic Services, and in particular, the extent and effectiveness of support for Members.

It is a current objective within the Democratic Services Resource and Service Plan to produce a Member 07 strategy. This will address the Council's planning for the May 07 whole Council election and for meeting the support needs of the Council and its elected members after that election.

Purpose

To identify

- the current level and range of support for Members, political groups and co-opted members in all of their roles within and outside of the Council and
- how well or otherwise they meet current and future needs

Objectives

- to be clear about and develop wider understanding of elected councillors' roles, including ward roles and roles at meetings,
- to understand the impact of the Council's support services and internal processes on members, their work / life balance and their families and how changes might improve things
- to investigate ways to remove barriers to member participation and involvement
- to determine the need for any changes to the service approach and the allocation of resources for supporting member roles, including support for members and lay members relating to meetings
- to inform the development of a Member 07 strategy, as described above
- to achieve a cost neutral outcome

Scope

The Panel will explore the following:

- current support given to councillors, political groups and co-opted (lay) members, including committee administration support
- the level, scope, timeliness and relevance of that support
- councillors' needs relative to their generic and specific roles

- future (and possible alternative) support to meet identified needs
- information management for members
- meetings management
- Information provision to officers and the public about the role of councillors
- how the Council's procurement strategy is applied when councillors leave office
- relevant legal provisions and constraints

This review will not consider:

- an individual councillor's needs
- Members' Allowances (which are determined by the Council on a recommendation from an Independent Remuneration Panel) - however, it would be relevant for the review to address the balance of support assumed to be covered within the basic allowance as against separate budget provision made by the Council
- the members' IT access project which is currently being rolled out to all councillors, and which was devised in consultation with councillors
- Democratic Services functions that do not fall within the remit of members' support (eg school admission appeals, external body support, management of the democratic process interface with the public, Council membership of key national organisations)

Approach

The Panel will undertake the following activities:

- collate information on existing support provision within the Council
- research comparable information from equivalent other local authorities and guidance / good practice from national representative organisations (eg LGA, LGIU, IDeA and Association of Councillors)
- survey all councillors to identify degree of satisfaction with current levels and type of support
- interview selected/cross section of councillors regarding their needs and whether those are currently satisfied
- interview key officers who manage and deliver support to councillors

Outputs of this Review

- notes and papers from public Resources O&S Panel meetings
- recommendations to the Executive Member for Resources to be considered in the context of the emerging Member 07 strategy and response thereto
- observations to the Independent Panel on Members' Allowances
- protocols for the guidance of members and officers
- comments to Group Leaders

Constraints

- The review must be managed within the budget and resources available to the Panel.

Draft Outline Project Plan

Date	Stage / Activity	Meeting Type
29 th September 2005	Draft Terms of Reference discussed at Resources Panel meeting.	Public
17 th October, 2005	Task and Finish Group to meet to agree full scope of the review, and Terms of Reference for approval by the Resources OS Panel on	Informal
27 th October	Panel to consider and approve terms of reference and have discussion as to the timescales of the review	Public
June 7 th 2006 (TBC)	Task & Finish Group meet to discuss project plan.	Informal

Project Team

Resources O&S Panel	Cllr David Bellotti Cllr Mike Kelleher Cllr Shaun McGall Cllr Colin Barrett Cllr Mike Ringham Cllr Brian Webber Cllr Betty Perry
Task and Finish Group	Cllr David Bellotti Cllr Colin Barrett Cllr Betty Perry
Directors:	Jean Hinks, Resources Director
Service Officers:	Jay Williams (Culture Development Project Leader) Tom Dunne, Democratic Services Manager (Council and Members' Support)
O&S Project Officer:	Georgina Jackman
Panel Administrator, Democratic Services	Michaela Gay