

REVIEW OF OUTSIDE BODIES

Item OS 23/53 referred from Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 16 November 2023

The report of the Chief Executive provided an update on the recent review of appointments to outside bodies. A short survey had been distributed to external organisations and whilst there was a relatively low response rate, those that did respond felt that the Borough Council appointments were beneficial.

A summary of the perceived benefits of local authority representation was provided at 1.1.3 of the report. As the external organisations all operated very differently, with varied requirements from their nominated representative, it was difficult to draw any fixed conclusions from the responses received. However, there was consensus that the perceived benefits were being achieved although it was apparent that there was a lack of consistent reporting back to the Borough Council.

Members recognised the impracticability of inviting all outside bodies to address the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to explain the role of their organisations. It was, therefore, recommended that the list of annual appointments to outside bodies be distributed between the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the 3 Scrutiny Select Committees. Each Committee could then decide on the best way to gain feedback from the organisations. The Scrutiny Officer was asked to reconsider the distribution of the outside bodies organisations between the Committees with particular reference made to the Leisure Trust which might fit better with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

There was detailed discussion on the role of outside bodies and the Chair invited Mr M Davis and Mr O Baldock to share their views as Borough Council appointees, who felt these appointments provided an opportunity to see how the funding offered by the Borough Council was being used; provided an opportunity for useful and valuable feedback and the use of former Councillors meant that experience wasn't lost. Reference was also made to the issues around conflicts of interest in respect of some appointments which meant that serving Members had to leave a debate in which they could have made a valuable contribution. The Committee asked that options around best practice on this issue be explored.

On the grounds of allowing Group Leaders sufficient time to identify and nominate suitable candidates, especially in an election year, Councillor Hood proposed, seconded by Councillor Cope that nominations for appointments to outside bodies should be considered at the second meeting of Full Council in a municipal year rather than Annual Council. Whilst this proposal was supported in principle, it was

explained that Council Procedure Rule 1.2 (i) would need to be revised and this would be considered further by Cabinet and the Monitoring Officer.

RECOMMENDED*: That

- (1) the approach of distributing the annual appointments to outside bodies list between the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the 3 Scrutiny Select Committees, as set out in 1.2.3 of the report, be endorsed by Cabinet;
- (2) each Scrutiny Committee be invited to consider how to receive feedback from the outside bodies assigned to them; and
- (3) subject to revising CPR 1.2 (i) in Part 4 of the Constitution and the views of Cabinet and the Monitoring Officer, nominations for appointments to outside bodies should be considered at the second meeting of Full Council in a municipal year.

***Recommended to Cabinet**