

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

6 SEPTEMBER 2012

REPORT OF CORPORATE AND SOCIAL INCLUSION SELECT COMMITTEE

CABINET DECISION

Corporate Management and Finance – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor David Harrington

REVIEW OF MEMBERSHIP TO OUTSIDE BODIES

1. Summary

This report presents the findings of the Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee following the review of Outside Bodies.

A request was made to Stockton Council's Executive Scrutiny to consider including a Task and Finish review of the LGA benefits as part of the Scrutiny Work Programme. The full Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee undertook this task looking also at other outside bodies to which the Council subscribes examining value for money and the benefits of membership for Stockton Council.

2. Recommendations

The Committee recommend that:

- R1** Stockton Council maintain its membership to the six outside bodies scoped in this review
- R2** Stockton Council continue to use the system of a rolling notice for membership to the LGA and that the Chief Executive write informing the LGA annually
- R3** Specific criteria is developed and applied to determine the membership of all outside bodies and professional organisations
- R4** Negotiations with ANEC are undertaken to address value for money concerns of the Committee
- R5** A review of the management and effectiveness of NEPO activity is pursued by appropriate officers of this Council
- R6** Improvement to the circulation and sharing of information and learning from membership to outside bodies is developed utilising all available resources such as the Council's Intranet

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

As part of the Council's EIT Programme, the Committee has undertaken the review with the aim of identifying options for future strategy, policy and service provision that will deliver efficiency savings whilst sustaining/improving quality outcomes for Stockton residents.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members) should consider whether they have a personal interest in any item, as defined in **paragraphs 9 and 11** of the Council's code of conduct and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with and/or taking account of **paragraphs 12 - 17** of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 16** of the code, in any business of the Council he/she must then, in accordance with **paragraph 18** of the code, consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest and the business:-

- affects the members financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code, or
- relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to the member or any person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code.

A Member with a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, may attend the meeting but must not take part in the consideration and voting upon the relevant item of business. However, a member with such an interest may make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to that business before the business is considered or voted on, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under a statutory right or otherwise (**paragraph 19** of the code)

Members may participate in any discussion and vote on a matter in which they have an interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, where that interest relates to functions of the Council detailed in **paragraph 20** of the code.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

It is a criminal offence for a member to participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest (and where an appropriate dispensation has not been granted) **paragraph 21** of the code.

Members are required to comply with any procedural rule adopted by the Council which requires a member to leave the meeting room whilst the meeting is discussing a matter in which that member has a disclosable pecuniary interest (**paragraph 22** of the code)

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DETAIL

1. The attached report presents Cabinet with the findings of the Review of Membership to Outside Bodies undertaken by the Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee in 2012.
2. Cabinet agreed on 3rd November 2011 to:
 - Issue a 12 month notice to the LGA to withdraw subscription.
 - Request Executive Scrutiny be asked to consider including a Task and Finish review of the LGA benefits as part of the Scrutiny Work Programme.
3. The scope of this review was widened to encompass membership to other outside bodies. Having completed a three-year programme of efficiency saving reviews this review, although not part of the EIT (Efficiency, Innovation, Transformation) process, contributes by examining the overall spend on Council membership to outside bodies as well as determining value for money.
4. Specifically reviewed against the review criteria the following bodies were scoped – Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE); British Association of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF); North East Purchasing Organisation (NEPO); North East Regional Employers Organisation (NEREO); Association of North East Councils (ANEC); and Local Government Association (LGA).
5. Three organisations have reduced their fees and the total spend reduced from £186,407 in 2009-10 to £164,253 (-12%) for 2011-12.
6. The Committee having recognised the cost to the Council of all outside body memberships, subscriptions to journals, magazines and newspapers, portals, licenses, and professional body memberships believes greater consideration should be given to their continuation.
7. With ANEC's membership fees at a third more than the LGA the Committee questioned the cost of an organisation undertaking a similar role to that offered by the LGA.
8. Stockton Council Members and key officers are part of the governance arrangements involved in continuing to monitor and influence NEPO's progress and future service delivery model. Issues were raised during the consultation with officers and Members regarding NEPO which the Committee is keen to see resolved to ensure its future effectiveness.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9. Recommendation 3 could generate savings following the development and application of specific criteria.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10. There are no legal implications arising as a direct result from this report.

RISK ASSESSMENT

11. This report is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

12. There are no direct Sustainable Community Strategy implications arising as a result from this report. This review impacts on the Council Plan objective of Organisational and Operational Effectiveness - Deliver Value for Money which can support all Sustainable Community Strategy themes.

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

13. This report is not subject to Equality Impact Assessment as it makes no proposals for service development or policy change.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

14. Consultation was carried out with councillors and senior officers to determine use and value for money of membership to outside bodies.

Name of Contact Officer: Graham Birtle

Post Title: Scrutiny Officer

Telephone No. 01642 526187

Email Address: graham.birtle@stockton.gov.uk

Education related?

No

Background Papers

None

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Not ward specific.

Property

None