

Committee: Full Council

Agenda Item

Date: 11 December 2007

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Title: MEMBERS' EXTERNAL APPOINTMENTS

Author: Rebecca Procter, Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive Item for decision

Summary

1. This report assesses the merit of retaining certain appointments to external bodies as conferred on members by the council.

Recommendations

2. That the council consider whether the appointments listed in Group 2 below should be discontinued, and that the council resolve to discontinue the appointments listed in Group 3 below.

Background Papers

3. Information gained from members, officers and external bodies is set out in a schedule a copy of which is available in the members' room. In addition, the following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection.
 - List of appointments made at full council meeting of 22 May 2007
 - List of changes to appointments made at full council meeting of 31 July 2007
 - Questionnaire sent out on 31st May 2007 and various response forms received

Impact

4.

Communication/Consultation	Opportunities for communication with the council other than via a member representative may be taken into account when assessing the validity of an appointment. There may be a role for streamlining contact if regular communication has been held with both officers and members. In some cases, the issue of substituting a bulletin for representation could be considered.
Community Safety	None

Equalities	None
Finance	Should certain appointments be dropped, associated members' costs would be reduced, although such savings are likely to be minimal
Human Rights	None
Legal implications	None, as statutory appointments or those required by an organisation's constitution are recommended to be kept
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	Ceasing representation on external bodies whose objectives are ward-specific may have an impact on that ward, which should be taken into account in these cases. The majority of appointments to external bodies are non-ward specific.
Workforce/Workplace	Minimal, as the majority of appointments will be retained, resulting in little change to officers' associated time.

Situation

5. There are 63 appointments to external bodies conferred on members by full council. The majority of appointments are for a single representative, but there are a few appointments requiring a substitute to be named, or requiring two substantive appointments. In total, members dedicate significant time to work relating to such appointments. Current appointments set by full council range from the obligatory (whether a statutory or similar duty, or because necessary from a strategic point of view), to those which are desirable for various reasons, and finally to those which may for various reasons be redundant. It is therefore recommended that the council consider whether there are any appointments to external bodies which may be discontinued on the grounds set out at paragraph 7 below.
6. In taking a view on whether or not to keep a post, a decision will depend on factors such as whether the post is agreed to be a valid use of the appointee's time; and the basis for making a distinction between those local organisations which currently benefit from having a member representative, and those which do not. It should be noted that questioning the validity of the appointment is not intended to reflect adversely on the value of the role played by the external body itself.
7. The grounds for deciding whether to retain, further assess, or discontinue appointments have been formulated as follows.

- Group 1 – appointments which are recommended to be retained on the following grounds: for strategic reasons; where the council has a statutory responsibility; where there is a service level agreement; where the constitution of the external body unavoidably requires member representation; where the member has recommended continued representation.

List of appointments recommended to be retained:

* denotes no member appointed

- Birchanger Wood Management Committee
- Board of Turpins Indoor Bowling Club
- British Red Cross Society – Essex Branch
- Business Development Services (North West Essex)
- Campaign to Protect Rural Essex
- Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership
- Citizens' Advice Bureau (Uttlesford)
- Committee of the Friends of the Maltings
- Council for Voluntary Service
- Crawley Prize Endowment Charity (2 appointments)
- Crossroads Care Attendant Scheme
- Dunmow Day Centre Management Committee
- Dunmow Museum Management Committee
- Dunmow Society – Executive Committee
- Dunmow Town Strategy Group
- East of England Regional Assembly
- Essex County Strategic Partnership
- Essex Local Government Association
- Friends of Bridge End Gardens
- Greater Cambridge Partnership
- Local Government Association – General Assembly
- Local Government Association – Rural Commission
- Local Government Association – Rural Community Partnership
- Museums in Essex Committee
- National Housing and Town Planning Council Eastern Region Council:
now ROOM@RTPI
- Saffron Walden Arts Trust
- Saffron Walden Cinema
- Saffron Walden Day Centre Management Committee

- Saffron Walden Initiative Partnership Board
- Saffron Walden Museum Society
- Stansted Airport Community Trust
- Stansted Airport Consultative Committee – Noise & Track Keeping Working Group
- Stansted Day Centre Management Committee
- Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group
- Supporting People Essex Commissioning Body
- Takeley Day Centre Management Committee
- Thaxted Day Centre Management Committee
- Thaxted Guildhall Management Committee (2 appointments)
- Uttlesford Community Safety Action Team
- Uttlesford Community Road Safety Sub-Group
- Uttlesford Community Youth Initiatives Working Group
- Uttlesford Community Alcohol and Drugs Strategy Group
- Uttlesford Community Support Group
- Uttlesford Community Travel
- Uttlesford Futures
- Uttlesford Over Sixties Association
- Uttlesford Police and Community Consultative Group (2 appointments)
- Waste Management Advisory Board
- West Essex Primary Care Trust
- West Essex Highways Panel

Group 2 – where the merits of continued councillor representation are to be considered on the following grounds: where there are other routes of communication between the council and the external body via local authority groups which may duplicate the link; where there is frequent officer contact with the external body; where representation seems to have been established primarily to gain access to funding; where representation reflects a relationship based primarily on the leasing of premises from the council.

List of appointments to be evaluated for continuation:

- Accuro (formerly ResCU)*
- Alzheimer's Society Uttlesford Branch
- Eastern Orchestral Board – now Orchestras United
- Local Government Arts Forum

- Local Government Information Unit
- Uttlesford Buffy Bus Association
- Uttlesford Carers

Group 3 – appointments where members are invited to consider dispensing with representation on the following grounds: where there has been a chronic lack of contact; where the organisation is now defunct; where the main reason for inviting a representative on to the body relates to a specific time-limited question; where there is no distinct reason for member representation, other than it is a local good cause

List of appointments to be discontinued:

- Arts Council of England*
- Dame Johane Bradbury's School*
- Essex Cycling Forum*
- Essex Sport
- Old Manse Home Community Support Group
- Saffron Walden Age Concern (2 appointments)

Risk Analysis

6.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Regarding Group 2 appointments, if there is only officer contact, that pressure of work and time constraints may diminish attendance; where charitable bodies are concerned, the absence of a councillor representative may be interpreted as a lack of appreciation.	Medium	Medium	Councillors having direct experience of these groups are invited to make their views known, to ensure that appointments are retained where these risks may outweigh the benefit of ceasing the appointment.
Regarding Group 3 appointments, there is minimal risk which would occur.	Low	Low	These bodies have little or no reason for councillor representation.