

Regulatory and Audit Committee

Title:	Outside Bodies Protocol
Date:	Wednesday 27 April 2016
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Local members affected:	All

For press enquiries concerning this report, please contact the media office on 01296 382444

Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to propose a protocol to set out the Council's approach to outside bodies. Currently there is no protocol or guidance. The benefits of having a protocol are:
 - Enables Council appointees to outside bodies to understand their responsibilities;
 - Enables the Council to have a mechanism for feedback from appointees for the first time;
 - Maximises transparency to the public by providing more information on the full range of activities undertaken by elected Members – via published information.
 - Helps Members who are thinking about taking up a position on an outside body to decide if they want the role.
2. This report also sets out a proposal to further rationalise the number of outside body appointments.

Recommendations

1. **To agree to no longer make Council formal appointments to those organisations whose remit relates primarily to locally specific matters, and instead to encourage Members to consider individually volunteering to the respective organisation. See Appendix 2 (those organisations starred and shaded are those that are proposed to no longer make nominations to in 2016/17).**



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2. To agree to adopt the proposed Protocol on Outside Bodies as set out in Appendix 1.

Background

3. In the audit report on BLT governance considered by the Regulatory & Audit Committee on 25 September 2015, one of the issues identified was that the Council currently had no agreed process in place for ensuring that the Council's representatives on outside bodies are appointed; understand their roles and obligations and report back to Council. This report provides a proposed way forward for addressing these issues.
4. In preparing this report for Regulatory and Audit Committee, Member Services have ensured that the website is fully up-to-date with information in detail on all outside bodies and appointees. See here:
<https://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/mgListOutsideBodies.aspx?bcr=1>

The Role & Number of Council Appointees to Outside Bodies

5. The Council makes nominations for appointments to outside bodies in order to provide support to those organisations that the Council as a whole wishes to maintain a close relationship with, and upon the request of the respective outside body.
6. Appointees are not expected to 'represent' the County Council but are rather appointed based on an expectation that they will apply their skills and experience in the best interests of the group to which they are appointed to.
7. The Council currently has 69 outside bodies that it makes appointments to as a matter of local choice. In 2013/14 the Deputy Leader led a review of the number of outside bodies and reduced this from over 200.
8. Currently, the Council appoints to a mixture of very strategic organisations such as the LGA or the LEP to very local charities who work within a specific part of Buckinghamshire and may have historically had important links with the Council.
9. In preparing this paper, the current list of outside bodies has been reviewed and it is proposed to ensure that going forwards the Council only makes appointments to those bodies where there is a clear strategic interest in the Council as a whole in maintaining a relationship officially. This will make it easier to appoint to outside bodies and fill vacancies in the future, as well as providing greater clarity on the purpose of making appointments.

10. The Council will continue providing strong support to all the voluntary and community sector in Buckinghamshire, and in particular will encourage the continuing role of County Councillors in personal capacities sitting on the boards of local organisations. However, this can and does happen without the need for a formal Council appointment process.

11. Appendix 2 highlights the 9 outside bodies (shaded and starred) where nominations from the Council are proposed to no longer be made, as whilst very important organisations locally there is no business need for the Council to be formally making an appointment to them. Instead the Council will encourage Councillors to individually volunteer to those organisations concerned directly.

Overview of the proposed Council Protocol on Outside Bodies

12. A copy of the draft protocol is set out in Appendix 1. This includes guidance for Members/other appointees on the following:

- The role of appointees
- The appointment process
- The reporting process

13. The protocol proposed codifies existing practice and clarifies roles. The only area of change proposed is in relation to introducing a reporting/feedback mechanism for the first time so that those appointees who wish to formally report back to the Council are able to do so.

14. Member Services would invite feedback from Members annually and subsequently publish the collated responses on the Council's website for public information, as well as provide a copy to full Council annually in May of each year.

Resource Implications

15. Council appointees are able to claim back expenses from the County Council for serving on outside bodies.

Legal implications

16. This protocol will enable appointees to have a better understanding of their individual legal responsibilities in relation to sitting on an outside body.

Feedback from consultation, Local Area Forums and Local Member views (if relevant)

17. The Deputy Leader has approved this protocol to go forward for the consideration of Regulatory and Audit Committee. Informal feedback to Member Services (and previously Democratic Services) has been that there has been a lack of clarity on

appointments and no mechanism to enable the opportunity for Members to feedback on their work.

18. This protocol provides guidance and a process so to respond to this Member feedback, as well as acting upon the recommendation of Regulatory & Audit Committee in response to issues in relation to BLT.

Next Steps

19. If approved, the next steps proposed are:

- Circulate Protocol for information to all Members alongside invitation to provide feedback from appointees.
- Council AGM – Feedback reports published for Information. (May)
- Key Annual Decision by the Deputy Leader on appointments 2016/17 (May)

Background Papers

Appointments to Outside Bodies 2015/16, Decision of the Deputy Leader – 12 November 2015
<https://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=5131>