



TOWN COUNCIL STRUCTURES

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

20 FEBRUARY 2012

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for an amendment to the Staffing Committee's Terms of Reference and the appointment of two Working Groups.

No. DETAIL

1) INTRODUCTION

- a) The commitment to significant project activity, at least two of which involve additional staffing, would be facilitated by some adjustments to the existing Town Council structures.
 - b) It is important that the distinction between strategy and policy setting – governance – on the one hand and management and operational activity on the other is both understood and observed in practice.
 - c) This is reflected in the requirement that management of staff is the sole responsibility of the Town Clerk, acting within the corporately developed strategy, in compliance with Town Council policies and within the agreed budget framework,
 - d) However, it is equally important that the local knowledge, relevant experience and creativity of Members is incorporated in and contributory to project development and delivery.
 - e) The following recommendations are intended to secure the benefits of that teamworking while retaining governance integrity.
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2) STAFFING COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

- a) The current Terms of Reference of the staffing committee provide it with only advisory functions: it has no delegated authority, being tasked with making recommendations to the Town Council on structure, terms and conditions of employment, job descriptions and any other staffing matters that crop up from time to time
 - b) It seems right that this should remain the case in respect of the Town Council's major offices: those of Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer. Here the whole Town Council should be involved in approving recommendations from its Committee and confirming actual appointments.
 - c) However, there is no reason why this should be the case in respect of operational staff. In earlier days, appointments of Winter Gardens staff were made almost entirely by the Town Clerk directly and acting alone. Where Members were involved, it was largely informal and without appropriate authority.
 - d) In order to retain the advantages that had of flexibility while also involving Members with proper authority, it is proposed here that the Staffing Committee have formally delegated powers for appointments other than those of Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer.
 - e) The requirement of formal confirmation by the full Town Council for project and other operational staff not only adds time constraints on appointment but is also largely meaningless as only those Members involved with appointment processes will meet candidates for appointment.
 - f) This approach is reflected in the proposed new Terms of Reference for the Staffing Committee attached with this report.
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3) FORMALISING THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

- a) The contribution of the informal group of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor along with Councillors Jason Mack and Carol Jones to the development and detailed planning of the recent series of community engagement meetings has been immense.
 - b) It has met weekly since the inception of the programme and been able to advise on all the
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necessary arrangements and approaches based on the authority delegated by the Town Council to the Town Clerk.

- c) It has benefited from all the advantages of such a group: flexibility, timely decision making and direct involvement of Members with related experience in the development of the project while retaining good governance in the recognition that it operates under authority delegated to the Town Clerk and through his regular reporting back to the full Town Council.

4) ESTABLISHING AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

The new Economic Development project would benefit from a similar arrangement and for the same reasons.

5) RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Town Council:

- a) adopts the new Terms of Reference for the Staffing Committee attached to this report;
 - b) formally recognises the Community Engagement informal Working Group to work with the Town Clerk in the development and delivery of the community capacity building project; and
 - c) appoints a matching informal Working Group to work with the Town Clerk in the development and delivery of the Economic Development project.
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