

+Report to: External Organisations Scrutiny Committee

Date: 8th November, 2007

Report of: Director of Legal and Democratic Services

Report No:

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Report Title: Appointments Made By Council to Outside Bodies

Purpose:

The purpose of the report is to present to Members the current position in respect of appointments made by Council to outside bodies..

Decision:

The Scrutiny Committee is requested to:-

- (i) note and comment on the report; and
- (ii) consider whether it wishes to proceed with a review.

Background Doc(s):

Summary:

The report details those appointments made by Council to outside bodies and seeks guidance as to the wishes of Members in relation to taking this matter further.

Introduction

At its meeting on 19th July, 2007, the Committee considered a report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services which set out a possible process for a review of the way the Council engaged with partner organisations.

Committee resolved that a report be presented to a future meeting of the Committee setting out the present position in respect of appointments made by the Council to outside bodies.

Current Position

Each year at its Annual Meeting, Council makes numerous appointments to various internal/ outside bodies and organisations. At the Annual Meeting in May, 2007, the Council made appointments to some 130 internal and outside organisations. Appointments are made on an Executive Member/portfolio basis.

When undertaking research for this report, the following assumptions have been made.

Firstly, that the Council would continue to appoint to significant regional and national organisations such as AGMA Joint Authorities and Local Government Association Committees.

Secondly, that appointments would continue to be made to the various local charities to which the Council have made appointments for numerous years.

Finally, that School Governing Bodies would not be included in the review.

This reduces the number of bodies to be investigated to 105 details of which are included in the appendix to this report. The list details the organisations in Executive Member/Portfolio order, sets out the appointed representatives and advises of the appointing body.

Of these 105 appointments, 33 are internal appointments and 72 are outside organisations. The term internal appointments refers to organisations which are administered via a Council Department. It should be borne in mind that prior to each Annual Council, Directorates are contacted and asked whether those bodies are still in existence and require an appointment to be made for a further 12 month period. This process has been repeated for the purpose of this exercise and the comments of Directors are included on the list.

Neighbouring authorities have been contacted to ascertain their processes in relation to appointments to outside bodies. Responses have been received from Blackburn with Darwen Wigan, Oldham and Trafford Councils, and these, in the main, point to similar process to that adopted by Bolton. Manchester City Council has delegated appointments to outside bodies to individual Directors.

Scope of any Proposed Review

It is for the Committee to decide the exact scope and remit of any review, it could decide, for instance, to remove those internal organisations to which appointments are made. However, as a starting point for discussion the following are suggested

- Investigate current arrangements that exist between the Council and these partner organisations; and

- Consider and explore alternative ways of engaging with partner organisations to ensure a more accountable and robust system.

Approach to any Proposed Review

Any review could be undertaken either by the Committee as a whole receiving a series of reports at scheduled meetings or via a task and finish scrutiny panel with a clear remit. In either course of action, the following approach could be undertaken

- Undertake research to establish the nature of current arrangements that exist between the Council and outside bodies;
- Contact outside bodies, Councillors and Senior Officers of the Council to ask for views on specific issues;
- Examine any responses and identify any issues which require more detailed investigations; and
- Seek the views of similar authorities to Bolton as to how they approach this issue.

Recommendation

The Committee is requested to advise whether it wishes to undertake a detailed review of the way the Council engages with outside organisations and if so, the preferred method.