

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Supporting Councillors: A Manifesto for Councils 3rd April 2008

Report of the Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Members of a request from the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) to sign up to their Manifesto – Supporting Councillors.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee consider whether this Council should support the Local Government Information Unit's *Supporting Councillors: a Manifesto for Councils*'.

1.0 Report

- 1.1 The LGIU has campaigned for a number of years on issues around supporting Councillors including recognition for the changing role, the need to support Councillors better and the need to attract more people into the role. In particular they have recently been campaigning on practical measures that would help existing and future councillors with the intention of working with government, councils and political parties to make a real difference so that more people feel able to seriously consider becoming a councillor.
- 1.2 As part of this campaign the LGIU has launched *Supporting Councillors: a Manifesto for Councils* to coincide with the government's response to the Councillors Commission report by Dame Jane Roberts expected shortly and a raft of new measures which will impact on the role of the councillor flowing from the empowerment agenda and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act.
- 1.3 The LGIU is asking all local authorities to support and act on a dozen practical measures which could better support existing and future councillors. A copy of a suggested resolution listing the Manifesto action points is attached at Appendix A.

2.0 Options

- 2.1 The Terms of Reference of the Council Business Committee provide for this committee to determine the method of response and where necessary ratify responses on behalf of full Council to consultations.

2.2 Whilst a process is in place to deal with government and other consultation exercises in an efficient manner, these more 'ad hoc' issues are best considered on an individual basis.

2.3 The Committee is therefore requested to consider:

Option 1 – to support and sign up to the LGIU Manifesto, passing the resolution set out in Appendix A.

Option 2 – to support the content of the Manifesto but rather than pass the resolution contained in Appendix A, request the Head of Democratic Services to report to a future meeting to enable the Committee to consider the action points set out in the Manifesto and agree those elements which should be progressed.

Option 3 – to take no action.

Option 4 – to refer the matter to full Council for a full debate by all Members.

3.0 Officer Preferred Option

3.1 The Officer preference is option 2. Many of the actions within the Manifesto are already in place or are being acted upon. In the main these are issues which are being addressed through the work being undertaken as part of the member development programme. However there may be elements which are not a priority at the present time and in particular recommendation (10) is a matter on which it would be preferable to hear the views of the Independent Remuneration Panel before stating a position.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

One of the underlying objectives of the Manifesto is to ensure equality of opportunity for anyone considering standing as a Councillor.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Signing up to the Manifesto and approving the action points listed in the suggested resolution in Appendix A could have financial implications in respect of action which may be required to implement the action points.

The officer recommended option to report to a future meeting of the Committee on action already in place and potential future action on each would set out the relevant financial implications in that report.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None as a direct result of this report.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Letter from LGIU – 5th February 2008

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