

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Special Council Meeting 2010 2 September 2010

Report of Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Members on progress with the arrangements for the special Council meeting 2010.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) **That members note and discuss the progress made so far with arrangements for the special Council meeting and feed back any comments and suggestions to officers.**

1.0 Introduction

At the meeting on 24 June 2010, Members will recall that theme of the special council meeting was agreed as 'Would you like to be a Councillor?' an event to promote the role of City Councillors to people who may be interested in standing in the 2011 local elections. This type of event is usually held before a local election to give potential candidates further information about standing for election as a Councillor. This year, by using the special Council meeting, the event will be on a larger scale and should attract more interest.

It was agreed that officers would report further to the Committee on the progress made with arrangements at this meeting.

2.0 Progress so far

Officers will report further at the meeting itself. However, at the time of drafting this report, political group leaders have already been approached to ask if they:-

- (a) Could publicise this event through their own group channels to any prospective candidates.
- (b) Would be willing to speak to the group of candidates for 5 or 10 minutes at the meeting about their work as a Councillor, perhaps covering why they first became interested in standing and giving a flavour of the Ward and Committee work that they have been involved in.

- (c) Know of any councillors who are fairly new to the Council in their group who would be willing to speak and present their point of view

To accommodate prospective candidates who work, it is felt that the meeting should start at 6pm, with a sandwich buffet available before the meeting commences.

Democratic Services have approached the Community Engagement Service and will be working with communications officers to discuss how best to publicise the event to the general public closer to the time of the event.

3.0 Agenda

The content of the meeting is envisaged to cover:-

- Being a Councillor – what will be expected of you.
- Structure of the Council and decision making. A formal presentation by the Chief Executive.
- Talks from Councillors (Group Leaders and perhaps one or two Councillors elected fairly recently) to give their views of what the role of the Elected Members is really like.
- Informal participative session in several small groups round the tables - a mix of councillors and prospective candidates to ask questions and discuss. Democratic Services staff could pre-draft some questions to start these sessions and/or facilitate each table.
- Feedback from the break away groups and then a talk from officers about the support that is available to Councillors (induction training, Democratic Support, role of officers, etc)
- The Elections Officer to present a segment on election procedures and the timescales for the May election.

Written information will be available for prospective candidates to take away with them.

4.0 Estimated costs

It was agreed that an estimate of costs would be presented to the Committee at this meeting, however the costs will all be contained within the existing Democratic Services budget. Using the Council Chamber at Morecambe with the chamber seating removed to accommodate more people will avoid any extra cost for room hire. It will also be an appropriate place to hold the event, being the room where Members hold their full Council meetings.

As with any meeting starting at 6pm, sandwiches would be available for Councillors and officers from the start. There will be an additional catering cost for supplying extra sandwiches for prospective candidates, but this can be met from the service budget.

Costs of providing written materials for prospective candidates will be met from the electoral promotions budget.

5.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

This update is for noting, however comments and suggestions are invited from the Committee at this stage to inform officers planning the event.

5.0 Conclusion

This report is in line with the Committee's responsibility to agree the agenda and make arrangements for the annual special Council meeting, as set out in Part 3, Section 11 of the Council's Constitution. The Committee is invited to comment and contribute to the planning at this stage.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

None

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All financial expenditure will be contained within existing budgets. It is estimated refreshments for the event will be approximately £250 if sandwiches are provided.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

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

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

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

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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