

POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

28 SEPTEMBER 2011

REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS

REVIEW OF MAYORAL ROLE

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Committee is requested to consider the Overview, Scrutiny and Audit Committee's recommendations from its meeting on 14 June 2011 following a review of the Mayoral Role.
- 1.2 The below contains the proposals put forward by the Councillors who had been involved in the review of the Mayoral role. The review group had spoken to a number of former Mayors and the proposals were to bring a more structured approach to the role, remove any ambiguity, reduce the burden on staff time, and limit activity to a more realistic role.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The specific proposals put forward by the Committee as listed at (a)-(o) below be approved :-
 - (a) the Mayoral Introduction booklet at Appendix D form the basis for the Mayor's Induction on the role;
 - (b) the extract of the Mayor's role in Chairing Council from the Constitution (Appendix E) be reviewed to add reference to the public role of the Mayor;
 - (c) the Mayor be the 'public face of the Melton Borough' on all matters when promoting the Council and its business;
 - (d) the Mayor be involved in monthly monitoring of the Mayoral budget and ensure that only one twelfth of the next Mayor's budget is used;
 - (e) the benefiting Mayor's Charity to work in co-operation with the Council to provide administrative support for the fund raising process and that Council officer support will be for the ceremonial support of the Mayor;
 - (f) Civic Hospitality be limited to the Leicestershire, neighbouring and Welland authorities;
 - (g) the Mayor proactively arrange to visit all the Borough's secondary schools during the year and visit the Primary Schools when invited;
 - (h) the Deputy Mayor always be the default position if the Mayor cannot make a specific event and this conforms with the role in the Constitution;
 - (i) the issue of continued government funding for the Young Mayor be investigated by the Community and Neighbourhoods section and due

- to the importance of the role, consideration be given to continuing the role if external funding is not forthcoming in the future;
- (j) the Mayor visit the Children's Holiday Centre at Mablethorpe if children from the Borough are there;
 - (k) the Mayor be encouraged to use their own transport where possible and when booked transport is needed a taxi be used to save on cost;
 - (l) a biography of the Mayor be provided to the local press following the Annual Meeting and this be included on the website along with a similar article about the Deputy Mayor;
 - (m) a list of the events the Mayor has attended be added to the website weekly. It is intended that this be events already attended to protect the security of the Mayor and their home;
 - (n) the explanation of the Coat of Arms be added to the website;
 - (o) Corporate or Borough Gifts – personalised calligraphic, high quality, framed certificates be investigated instead of gifts.

2.2 The casting vote proposal be not pursued having regard to common law principles.

2.3 The Mayor and Deputy Mayor be encouraged to access the Mayoral Diary electronically and the appropriate equipment be provided to enable this.

3.0 KEY ISSUES

3.1 At its meeting in September 2010, the Overview, Scrutiny and Audit Committee requested that there be a review of the Mayoral Role and its support. A Scrutiny Scoping Form was approved by the Committee in December 2010 and this is enclosed at Appendix B. Councillors Dungworth, D.E. Orson and Slater were appointed to lead on this review as they were independent from the role of Mayor having never taken up this position.

3.2 A first meeting was held with Councillors Dungworth and D.E. Orson, the Head of Communications and the Senior Democracy Officer on 2 March 2011. At that meeting some guidance was provided by Members as to the direction of the review and it was agreed that a second meeting be held between the Member Review Team and the current and past Mayors on 9 March 2011. This meeting was not attended by Officers. The notes from that meeting are attached at Appendix A and they form the basis of the recommendations in this report.

3.3 To address the role of the Mayor and include a job description for the role in the Constitution as suggested by the review, a proposed job description is enclosed at Appendix C. This document forms part of the Mayoral Introduction document already and gives the Mayor an insight into what is required in the role. If approved this job description could be added to the Roles and Responsibilities for Councillors document that had been approved by the Council on 14 July 2011.

3.4 The Mayoral Introduction document at Appendix D forms the basis of a Handbook for the Mayor as mentioned in the notes at Appendix A and it may be helpful to note that there are many reference books available on Civic protocol that the Democracy and Involvement Officer has access to.

- 3.5 With regard to the Mayoral Budget, monthly monitoring analysis is provided to the Senior Democracy Officer and this is available to be shared with the Mayor. The issue of harmonising the Mayoral budget with the Mayoral year has been investigated in the past and Financial Officers have advised that this is not possible due to audit requirements. However every effort is made by those monitoring the budget to ensure that a Mayor only uses up to one twelfth of the next Mayor's budget.
- 3.6 The geographical limitations of extending Mayoral hospitality was considered previously by the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee in January 2007. It was agreed at that time that invitations be extended to the Leicestershire, neighbouring and Welland authorities and due to partnership working etc and existing relationships, it may not be considered appropriate to reduce this list.
- 3.7 As to the Mayor visiting all schools in the Borough, this referred to proactively seeking a visit to the Borough's secondary schools and by invitation to the primary schools.
- 3.8 On the Young Mayor funding position, the position was not clear and needed further investigation by the Communities and Neighbourhoods section.
- 3.9 On the annual visit to the Mablethorpe Children's Holiday Centre, it was considered that this was appropriate if there were children from the Borough involved in the visit.
- 3.10 On Mayoral travel, it was noted that the current Mayor had indicated she would make her own transport arrangements where possible and use a local taxi firm when booked transport was needed. This would be at a considerably less cost than using a Private Hire Chauffeur driven service. Although guidance on green travel and efficiencies could be given to the Mayor, choice of travel to Mayoral engagements was the Mayor's decision and had to fit with their existing commitments.
- 3.11 On the proposed PR arrangements, it was advised that
- Mayoral events organised by the Council were included on the Members' Calendar but not the Mayor or the Young Mayor's external engagements as these were included on the Mayoral Calendar
 - A biography of the Mayor was usually provided to the local press following the Annual Meeting and this would be included on the website along with a similar note about the Deputy Mayor
 - There had been investigations into publishing the Mayoral diary to the web without duplication however there so far there been no synergy between the Mayoral Calendar and the web enabled. Therefore it is intended to include a list of the events the Mayor has attended on the website. It is intended that this be events already attended to protect the security of the Mayor and their home
 - The explanation of the Coat of Arms had been added to the website
 - Corporate or Borough Gifts – there is no policy as such and individual Mayors decide on the type of gifts they would like to give. There is no separate budget for Mayoral gifts, this comes from the Mayoral Budget. The danger of sponsorship of gifts would be that the recipient may not see the gift as being from the Council but from a sponsor. Pre-printed calligraphic

certificates were suggested instead of gifts, with the individual or organisation's name added – these to be of high quality and be framed for presentation

- 3.12 With regard to the reference to the Mayor's casting vote at the end of the notes at Appendix A, legal advice has indicated that to take away the Mayor's initial vote would then mean that the Mayor would not have a right to a casting vote. Therefore it would not be good practice to put the Constitution in a position which contradicts common law.
- 3.13 Although not mentioned in the notes at Appendix A, the current Mayor has been keen to work electronically on the Mayoral Diary. This involves using a Council laptop to access the diary and logging into the Council's network. This has meant that the Mayor is able to be interactive with the Mayoral Diary and this could save on administrative support. It is also considered that the Mayor needs a PDA to be able to access her diary when 'out and about' and to check arrangements just before an engagement when it would not be possible to spend time logging into the Council's network on the laptop.
- 3.14 The Deputy Mayor had also indicated that he could work in this way on the Mayoral Diary. Therefore a recommendation is included to formalise a request for the current and future Mayors to work electronically where possible.
- 3.15 At the OSA Committee on 14 June 2011, Members considered the proposals and commented in particular on the need for both the outgoing Mayor and incoming Mayor to be involved in budget monitoring at the start of the financial year as this did not coincide with the start of the municipal year. Also whilst agreeing to the principle that the recipient of a Mayor's charity should bear the administrative burden, it was proposed that the wording of this proposal be amended to make that clear and to clarify the Council officer support would only extend to the ceremonial support in this context.

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The role of the Mayor helps towards the Council's priority for 'A Well Run Council'. The Mayor is the public face of the Council and as such promotes the positive work of the Council in the community. The proposals in this report aim to enhance and encourage this use of the Mayoral role.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Financial and resource implications relating to this report will be met from existing arrangements.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

- 6.1 The legal implications in this report mainly link to the role of the Mayor in the Council's Constitution and these have been taken into account when making the recommendations.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 7.1 There are no direct community safety implications relating to this report.

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 When considering any new Mayoral activity, equalities implications are considered in line with the Council's Equalities Policy and the associated legislation.

9.0 RISKS

9.1 The main risk implications relate to future Mayors not wishing to adopt the ways of working proposed in this report.

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 It is proposed that the Mayoral diary be available electronically for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and this will not only be more efficient but will help to meet the Council's corporate commitment to becoming a paperlight organisation.

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 The Workshop Team met with the current and Past Mayors to consider the Mayoral role and some of their views are included in the notes from that meeting.

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 All wards are indirectly affected by this report.

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Date : Sept 2011

Appendices : Appendix A – Minutes of Workshop Team Meeting with the current Mayor and Past Mayors
Appendix B – Scrutiny Scoping Form
Appendix C – Proposed Job Description for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor
Appendix D – Introduction to the Mayoralty
Appendix E - Chairing the Council – Extract from the Constitution

Background Papers : Constitution 2010
Mayoral Diary 2009/10