

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

18 NOVEMBER 2014

REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS

AWARD OF MERIT SCHEME

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the recommendations of the Award of Merit Task Group arising from its review of the scheme and how it operates for 2014/15.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **To consider the Task Group's recommendations as set out at paragraph 3.5.**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Mayor's Award of Merit was set up by the Council on 26 October 1988 at the instigation of Councillor Barbara Hart, Mayor of the Borough of Melton 1988/89.
- 3.2 The Award of Merit is a means of formally recognising particular merit on the part of individuals and/or organisations connected with the Borough.
- 3.3 The Governance Committee has made two separate recommendations for consideration by the Award of Merit Task Group at its first meeting in 2014/15 :
- (a) to review the Award of Merit scheme and how it operates in 2014/15 (Governance Committee 2 April 2014); and
 - (b) to consider working in partnership with the Melton Times (Governance Committee 22 September 2014).
- 3.4 The Task Group met on 27 October 2014 and considered how the existing Award of Merit scheme operated having regard to the declining number of nominations received in recent years and a similar annual event promoted by the Melton Times which could be seen as duplication of a community awards scheme. The Task Group felt that the Award of Merit scheme should remain in place and be more proactively promoted to encourage nominations for both the Award of Merit and the Young Citizen Award. With regard to the presentation of the awards, the Task Group felt a higher profile Awards event be arranged rather than presentations at Full Council with all Members invited and award recipients be given the opportunity to talk a bit about themselves and their work. This type of buffet evening event could feature entertainment so that it became a family orientated event. It was also suggested that as well as the recipients receiving a framed certificate, a gift to the value of £50 to £100 should be made. Due to the existence of the Young Citizen Award the Task Group considered that the Council should withdraw its sponsorship of the Young Champion category of the Melton Times awards and the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods has been consulted on this.

3.5 The Task Group made the following recommendations to the Governance Committee :-

- (a) The Council does not seek to collaborate with the Melton Times' Community Awards and withdraws its sponsorship of the Young Champion category;
- (b) That more effort and resources be directed into raising the profile and prestige of the Award of Merit Scheme in accordance with the Task Group's suggestions and that the award ceremony be held as a separate event;
- (c) Publicity and promotion of the scheme to start in December with social media being used during the nomination process;
- (d) Awareness of the Young Citizen award be promoted through the Young Mayor role and through officers' contact with young people.

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The scheme is in line with the government's Big Society initiative. To recognise outstanding service to the community in individuals and groups encourages others to become involved in supporting community and voluntary activities.

4.2 The scheme gives a positive message that the Council wishes to publicly recognise those that support their community and do good work in the Borough.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Any costs in promoting the scheme and hosting an award afternoon tea event are currently met from the Mayoral budget.

5.2 Should 3.5(b) be approved being a higher profile awards event with prizes for the winners any additional costs will need to be found from outside the mayors budget and this may have an impact on other demands.

5.3 Staffing implications will be met from within existing resources.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

6.1 There are no legal implications.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 Nominations could be received in recognition of Community Safety initiatives.

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 The Award of Merit scheme welcomes nominations from all individuals and groups represented in the community. An equality impact statement has been completed.

9.0 RISKS

9.1 There are no significant risks but poor perception of the Award of Merit scheme could impact on the Council's reputation and that of the office of the Mayor.

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 There are no climate change implications in this report.

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 The scheme has been made publicly accessible since its introduction and there has been consultation on the scheme with the Mayor and the Task Group Members since the start of the scheme in 1988/89.

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 The Award of Merit scheme applies to all wards in the Borough.

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Date: November 2014

Appendices:

Background Papers: Award of Merit Task Group Terms of Reference
Award of Merit Task Group Minutes of 27 October 2014

Reference: Cttees, Council & Sub-Cttees/Governance/2014-15/181114/Award of Merit Scheme