

REPORT TO: EXECUTIVE
Date of Meeting: Executive – 10th January 2017
Report of: Corporate Manager, Democratic and Civic Support
Title: Council Representation on Outside Bodies

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Executive

1. What is the report about?

To provide an update and details as to the current Council representation on outside bodies.

2. Recommendations:

Having consideration for the attached spreadsheet of information (Appendix 1) and the Spotlight Reviews' findings (as set out in section 8 of this report), the Executive is asked to:-

- i. Recognise the feedback contained within this report.
- ii. Agree to the suggested actions contained within this report at Section 8.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

To ensure that Members:-

- remain fully informed as to the current Council representation on outside bodies as identified in Appendix 1.
- are able to consider whether representation remains both appropriate and/or necessary in each case.
- are given the opportunity to consider whether representation should continue or be withdrawn and whether the membership of that representation should be revised or changed in so far as Exeter City Council is concerned.

4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources:

None.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

There are no financial implications contained within this report.

6. What are the legal aspects?

None.

7. Monitoring officer Comments

Whilst content with the mainframe of this report and its recommendations, there ought to be consideration as to the insurance position for Members who sit on outside bodies, particularly as Directors and/or Trustees. I would suggest that enquiries are made with each organisation listed at Appendix 1, where Members are Directors/Trustees as to whether Directors' indemnity insurance is already in place.

8. Report Details:

Council representation on outside bodies is no doubt an essential component to ensuring that the voice and views of the residents of Exeter are expressed and heard outside the realms of the Council's normal day to day business. Joint working and cooperation between the Council and outside organisations is imperative, as is good, direct communication, if the needs of the citizens of Exeter and its communities are to be met and supported effectively.

The Spotlight Review Group recognised the important role that Council representation has to play whilst balancing that consideration with need, necessity and overall value. It was also highlighted that some of the organisations listed are charities and, as such, withdrawal of representation could have a negative impact as these charities may then have to approach the Charities Commission and possibly be required to change their Articles of Association. The Group were keen not to put these charities at risk by suggesting the withdrawal of Council representation.

The Group's membership consisted of:-

Cllr Edwards
Cllr Brimble
Cllr Yolanda Henson
Cllr Leadbetter
Cllr Newby
Cllr Sheldon
Cllr Wardle
Corporate Manager, Democratic and Civic Support
Democratic Services Manager (Committees)

The Group met on the 21st November and worked through the list (shown at Appendix 1). Findings provided the basis for suggested actions as follows:-

- a) Age Concern should be asked to include the Champion for Older People as a representative.
- b) Central Exeter Relief in Need Charity – the current representatives are not Councillors but on the basis of the Group's discussions this was not identified as an issue and the Executive Committee is invited to agree with this view.
- c) Community Safety Partnership - reference to the representative should appear as "Portfolio Holder for Place, Exeter City Council".
- d) Dartmoor National Park Community Forum – there are currently two Councillors involved and one should clearly be defined as a substitute.

- e) Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel – the representative should appear as “Deputy Leader, Exeter City Council”.
- f) Exeter Citizens’ Advice Bureau – the representative should appear as “Portfolio Holder for Communities and Neighbourhoods, Exeter City Council”
- g) Exeter Dispensary and in Sickness Fund – a replacement representative should be sought since Cllr Mrs Henson wishes to be replaced.
- h) Exeter River and Canal User Group – Councillor representation should be withdrawn and this organisation notified since the Council’s Waterways Team Manager regularly attends the User Group meetings and provides information on the operation of the waterways and responds to questions.
- i) Safer Devon Partnership – the Group suggested that the Chief Executive, Exeter City Council should be approached for his views, the suggestions being that the Deputy Leader should be the main representative with the Leader being the substitute instead.
- j) St Edmunds and St Mary Major Charities, Exeter – enquiries should be made as to whether Exeter City Council could have just two representatives rather than the current four which seems excessive.
- k) Topsham River Commissioners – enquiries should be made as to what contact details this organisation holds for the Councillor representatives, since invitations and documentation are not being received.

As a side issue, the Group decided that further information was required in respect of Exeter Homes Trust Limited and exactly what they do, so that the Executive Committee can reach an informed decision with regards to whether representation should continue. Enquiries were made with Cllr Branston, who is a current a representative and he was able to provide a brief outline as follows:-

The Trust owns a substantial amount of properties in Exeter (around 260), including Grendon Road Cottages, Magdalen Cottages and North Park Cottages. The main purpose of the Trust is to provide accommodation for local residents over the age of 55 who are in particular need. A recent example would be that of an elderly individual who was adversely affected by regular incidents of anti social behaviour in the block of flats where he lived. The Trust was able to offer him an alternative property. The Trust also has sub Committees who carry out interviews in respect of prospective residents and also consider grant applications which fall under two categories:-

- those needing relief, for example, help with furnishing a property (a recent application involved a single parent who was made unintentionally homeless due to fire damage to her property, was subsequently re-homed by the Council but needed assistance in purchasing essential replacement items for the home).
- “Advancement in life” – those individuals who might need assistance in buying books for educational courses or individuals looking to go abroad to do volunteering work.

There is a limit of £300 per application.

- l) Cllr Branston is keen that representation on the Exeter Homes Trust Ltd continues since he views their work as essential. It is unclear as to whether all Councillors are aware of the good work of the Trust and the opportunities it offers, hence it is suggested that a Members Briefing is held with a guest speaker from the Trust in attendance to outline these details and the purpose of the Trust for the benefit of all Councillors.

9 What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, Economy safety and the environment?

This report has no impact on these areas, save to say that, by association with this report and in general terms, it is not unreasonable to assume that Council representation on any external body would have an indirect and potentially positive impact on all aspects.

John Street : Corporate Manager, Democratic and Civic Support

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report:**

None

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