

Social Inclusion Working Group - Membership Revisions

Summary

1. The report outlines proposed revisions to the membership of the Social Inclusion Working Group.
2. Members are requested to approve the proposed revisions.

Background

3. The Social Inclusion Working Group was established as part of the revised Council Constitution in 2006. Annex 1 is an excerpt from the Council Constitution and outlines the purpose of the group. It was established following extensive discussion and consultation by the ad-hoc Scrutiny Panel on Inclusivity, to improve the effectiveness of the organisation in meeting the diverse needs of its customers. The Group first met in July 2006.
4. Since its establishment, the Group has been chaired by the Executive Member for Youth and Social Inclusion. In line with Constitution requirements about “the need to be proportional to the overall political proportionality on the Council” the group currently comprises:
 - a. 3 Members from the Liberal Democrat group, including the Chair (Executive Member for Youth and Social Inclusion)
 - b. 3 Members from the Labour group, including the Shadow Executive Member
 - c. 1 Member from the Conservative group
5. At its first Development Day on 25 February 2008 the Group reviewed its membership. The Development Day was attended by all existing members and co-optees on the group. Those present

arrived at a number of recommendations regarding the representation of Elected Members on the Group. These were further discussed and agreed at the Group meeting on 12 March 2008. The decision made is summarised in the following excerpt from the draft minutes of the meeting on 12 March 2008:

“That Heather Rice and the Head of Legal investigate a possible reduction in the number of elected members on the Group, in line with comments made at the Development Day, and a report be brought back to the May meeting”.

6. Following investigation, it became evident that the issue had to be considered by Council Executive meeting on 22 April 2008 so as to allow Council Annual General meeting on 22 May 2008 to approve the proposed change as well as appoint Councillors to Social Inclusion Working Group for year 2008/9. The Executive resolved:

“That, arising out of the minutes of the Social Inclusion Working Group, the number of elected members on the working group be reduced, at the Annual Council meeting, to 5 (in proportion 2:2:1).”

Consultation

7. Community representatives and elected members jointly considered the topic of this report during the Group Development Day on 25 February 2008 and the meeting of 12 March 2008.

Options

8. Option 1: To change the number of elected members on the Social Inclusion Working Group to

- d. 2 from the Liberal Democrat Group

- e. 2 from the Labour Group

- f. 1 from the Conservative Group,

and increase representation from the six strands through inviting a number of non-voting Expert Witnesses to join the Group as agreed at the SIWG meeting on 12 March 2008.

9. Option 2: To maintain the current numbers of elected Members

10. Following consensus after extensive discussion at Group Development Day on 25 February 2008 and the Group meeting on 12 March 2008.

Analysis

11. Whilst ensuring that meetings remain workable and as inclusive of community voices as possible, a reduction in the number of elected Members will also facilitate increases in the community representative body through inviting a number of Expert Witnesses as outlined in the minutes of the SIWG meeting on 12 March 2008.
12. The meeting on 12 March also agreed that minutes from the Group and issues raised in meetings should be forwarded for consideration by the Council Executive and other senior member and officer groups like Council Management Board (CMB) and the Equality Leadership Group (ELG). This will afford SIWG an increased number of opportunities to influence Council planning and service delivery at the earliest possible opportunity.

Corporate Priorities

13. The recommendation will contribute to the promotion of inclusive and cohesive communities through supporting increased community inclusion and engagement in Council planning and decision making.

Implications

14. These are as follows:
 - **Financial** - None
 - **Human Resources (HR)** - None
 - **Equalities** – The recommended principles will contribute to the promotion of inclusive and cohesive communities and to Council Equalities aims and objectives.
 - **Legal** – None
 - **Crime and Disorder** - None
 - **Information Technology (IT)** - None
 - **Property** - None

- **Other** – None

Risk Management

15. N/A

Recommendations

16. Request members to approve:

- i. The number of elected members on the Social Inclusion Working Group to be:

2 from the Liberal Democrat group (including the Chair of the Group),

2 from the Labour Group (including the Vice Chair of the Group)

1 from the Conservative Group,

- ii. An increased representation from the six Equality strands through inviting a number of non-voting Expert Witnesses to join the Group as outlined in the minutes of the SIWG meeting on 12 March 2008.

Reason: To facilitate the business of the Group in 2008/9 and beyond through increasing community engagement and inclusion.

Contact Details

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Heather Rice
Director of People and Improvement

Report Approved



Date

30 April 2008

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background papers – None

Annexes- Annex 1 – Purpose of the Social Inclusion Working Group