

Full Council

3 September 2020

Fundamental Review of Outside Bodies

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr S Flower, Leader of the Council

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director: Jonathan Mair, Corporate Director, Legal & Democratic

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Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

- (1) That the list of Outside Bodies appended to this report be approved subject to any in year amendments being made by the Democratic Services Team Leader in consultation with the Chairman of the Panel, Cllr Les Fry and Political Group Leaders.
- (2) That the Outside Body Task and Finish Group reviews the list of Outside Bodies in 2021 to take into account any changes and to review how well the revised list is operating;
- (3) That the Chairman of the Task and Finish Group works with officers to find an appropriate mechanism to enable members to upload updates on Outside Bodies to the Dorset Council intranet pages.

Reason for Recommendation:

1. Executive Summary

In accordance with the decision of Full Council in May 2019 a member Task and Finish Group has undertaken a fundamental review of the list of Outside Bodies for Dorset Council.

An outside body is considered to be a committee, panel or group that is not Dorset Council controlled and where a member of the council is invited or required to sit, as a result from either the constitution of the body (terms of reference), local member interest, funding or as a Dorset Council asset. Historically all of the predecessor councils made appointments to outside bodies at either a local, regional or national level which, when brought together for Dorset Council this created a list of approximately 140 bodies

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1** If the revised list is approved the overall cost relating to the attendance of outside body meetings will be reduced as members will not be able to claim travel allowance for those organisations listed as 'Member Choice' in Appendix 3.

3. Climate implications

A reduction in the overall number of in the number of Outside Bodies would reduce the number of car journeys made by members in the Dorset Council area.

4. Other Implications

No other specific implications.

5. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

This report does not contain a new strategy/policy/function and therefore does not require an impact equality assessment.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Joint Bodies and other Significant Bodies

Appendix 2 – Outside Bodies

Appendix 3 – Local Member Choice

Appendix 4 – Bodies deleted from the list

8. Background Papers

Report to Full Council – May 2019

9. Fundamental Review of Outside Bodies

9.1 At the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2019 members agreed that a member Task and Finish Group be established to undertake a fundamental review of Outside Bodies with a report back to Full Council. Those members who were appointed to Outside Bodies (Appendix 2) in May 2019 will remain the Council's nomination for the current 5 year term of office unless the member resigns, an alternative nomination is made by the Political Group Leader or the Outside Body is now included in Appendix 4 of this report and approved by Full Council.

9.2 In December 2019 a cross-party Member Task and Finish Group was established with the following members nominated by the Political Group Leaders:

Cllr L Fry (Chairman), Cllr S Jespersen, Cllr C Lugg, Cllr S Williams, Cllr P Kimber.

The group was supported by Susan Dallison, Democratic Services Team Leader and Helen Whitby, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

9.3 The Task and Finish Group has held 4 meetings to carry out an in depth review of the amalgamated list of bodies with a view to produce a list that better reflected the needs and role of Dorset Council by either supporting the strategic aims of the council, providing a link where the organisation receives funding from the council or linked due to the asset being owned by the council. The group considered a number of criteria that assisted in the decision making as part of the review:

- Should/must the Dorset Councillor sit on the panel, or do we need to attend. Does the body reflect/impact on Dorset Council priorities?

- Terms of Reference state that a Dorset Councillor serves on the body? Does the body get money from Dorset Council or does the asset belong to Dorset Council?
- Local member interest.
- Bodies that have been disbanded or no longer require a Dorset Councillor representative.

- 9.4 As part of the review the group carried out consultation on the proposals with all members of council via email and an open invite drop in session on 24 February, plus all of the outside body organisations via email and discussion with relevant officers. The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group responded to the comments made by organisations and members and all of the responses were considered by members of the Task and Finish Group.
- 9.5 The proposed list of Outside Bodies is appended to this report for approval and is broadly split into joint bodies and other significant bodies, outside (external) bodies, local member choice bodies and bodies that have been deleted from the original list from May 2019.
- 9.6 Dorset Council will continue to make formal appointments to the joint/significant bodies (in accordance with political balance where appropriate) and to the external outside bodies listed in Appendix 2. These appointments were made last year following the Annual Meeting of Council and are held until the next Council elections. Those bodies list in Appendix 3 'Local Member Choice' are no longer formal appointments and members can choose whether or not they attend meetings of these organisations; local member support at these meetings will not incur travel costs for Dorset Council. It should also be noted that just because a member is not formally appointed to a body listed in Appendix 3 officer support will still be available if or when required.
- 9.7 Members of the Task and Finish Group feel that it is important that members attending meetings of outside bodies have the facility to submit brief updates to Democratic Services so that information can be shared across the council. At the current time no digital feedback system exists however the provision of a suitable process is under consideration by the Democratic Services Team Leader and Chairman of the Task and Finish Group Cllr Les Fry. The Task and Finish Group felt that members would not need to submit any updates in respect of Local Member Choice bodies.

Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.