

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

Governance Committee - 11 July 2019

Report of	Chief Officer Communities and Business Chief Officer Corporate Services Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Status	For consideration
Key Decision	No

Executive Summary: A Member-only working party is proposed to consider the role of the Chairman of the Council

Portfolio Holder	Cllr Peter Fleming
Contact Officer	Martin Goodman, Ext. 7245

Recommendation to Governance Committee: That

- (a) A Member working group be established to consist of five Governance Committee Members nominated by the Committee, with the purpose of defining the roles of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council (other than as relates to the chairing of Council meetings);
 - (b) A report on this work of the Member working group and any recommendations be brought to a future meeting of the Governance Committee for consideration, such report to include a clear indication of proposed growth.
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Reason for recommendation: To clarify and define the roles of Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council for the benefit of Officers and Members.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Chairman's role is defined in Part 2 to the Constitution. This sets out that the Chairman of the Council will carry out the ceremonial duties of the Council attending such civic and ceremonial functions as the Council and/or s/he determines appropriate.
- 2 The Chairman is the "first resident" of the District and takes precedence over others present at any function (except for the Sovereign or

representative of the Sovereign). The Chairman is also responsible for Chairing Council meetings.

- 3 The role of the Chairman of the Council was significantly reduced by Members during the 2011/12 budgeting process, resulting in a saving of £68,000 per year (SCIA 39). At that time Members voted for a major reduction in Chairman's activities with the ceasing of all civic events and the deletion of the Chairman's administrative support role.
- 4 It was understood by Members at the time that this would lead to a much reduced profile for the District's Chairman except for attendance at events at no cost. At the time, Members were reminded that a small Chairman's transport fund would remain available and could be used until it was exhausted, although it was noted that many former Chairmen had driven themselves to most events. Members also noted that the Chairman and Vice Chairman would still receive significant allowances they could spend as they wished to support their roles.

The Chairman

- 5 The Chairman is invited to a wide range of events both inside and outside the District. A large number of these are social in nature and a good number involve significant travel implications. There are at present no constitutional provisions limiting the scope of attendance at such events and it is unclear which events are supported by the Council's resources. There is no clarity on permissible travel expenses, for example by taxi, although there is a limited budget from which such claims may be paid.
- 6 Members will be aware that there is at present no secretarial or dedicated administrative support for the Chairman. Officers of Democratic Services offer limited assistance by way of diary and event management over and above their normal duties.
- 7 Defining the role of the Chairman and Vice Chairman will provide clarity to Members and Officers. It will clarify what the Chairman's allowance is intended to cover and the travel expenses which may legitimately be claimed. Carrying the review out at this time will allow for any growth item to be included within the 2019/20 budget setting process.

Key Implications

Financial

Greater administrative support than is currently made available to the Chairman will need to be budgeted as a growth item. It is not possible to widen the scope of Officer support, or to provide greater support for travel expenses, without a growth item.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

No relevant legal implications or Risk Assessment.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Conclusions

This report proposes a Member working group and makes no recommendations as to outcome.

Appendices None

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Chief Officer Communities and Business

Jim Carrington-West

Chief Officer Corporate Services

Martin Goodman

Head of Legal and Democratic Services