

## REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES – REVIEW BY CORPORATE OVERVIEW PANEL

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As part of its work programme for 2008, the Corporate Overview Panel has undertaken a review of the Council's representation on outside bodies. In deciding to undertake the review, the Corporate Overview Panel wished to ascertain whether benefits were accruing to the Council from the time and effort spent by members (and in some cases officers) serving on outside bodies as the Council's formal representatives, as well as from the administrative and other costs such as members' travel.
- 1.2 The Panel appointed a working group comprising Cllrs Hutchins, Pemberton and Mrs Robinson "to investigate the Council's partnerships with outside bodies in terms of value and benefits to the Council". The full report of the Working Group is available to view at <http://www.newforest.gov.uk/committeedocs/cop/CDR04170.pdf>
- 1.3 This report sets out the Corporate Overview Panel's recommendations arising from the report of the Working Group.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council's representation on outside bodies was last reviewed in 2003 by the then Corporate and Finance Review Panel. Following recommendations to the Cabinet, appointments to 16 organisations were discontinued. Further recommendations made by the Panel regarding the appointments process and the need for reporting back were deferred.
- 2.2 The Council is currently represented on 87 outside bodies.

### 3. CORPORATE OVERVIEW PANEL'S FINDINGS

- 3.1 The Overview Panel's recommendations appear below. In summary, they cover –

- **Guidelines for the Appointments Process**
- **Selection of Representatives and Timing of Appointments**
- **Number of Representatives on each body**
- **Reporting back**
- **Linking of Outside Bodies to Portfolio Holders/Review Panels and Lead Officers**
- **Rationalisation of Appointments**

### 3.2 Recommendation 1 - Guidelines for the Appointments Process

3.2.1 The Review Panel formed a clear view that it is important to establish criteria to guide the appointment of representatives. Having considered possible criteria in some detail, it recommends:

***Recommendation 1:***

***That before making appointments to outside bodies, the appointing body (generally the Cabinet) be satisfied that***

- (a) there will be a clear benefit to the Council and/or the inhabitants of the District through formal representation on that organisation; or***
- (b) the Council has made or is continuing to make a significant financial contribution towards the establishment or operating costs of the organisation and that appointing a representative will help ensure good governance.***

***If (a) or (b) are not met, the organisation concerned be encouraged to approach the local member(s) to serve in a personal capacity.***

### 3.3 Recommendation 2 – Selection of Representatives and timing of Appointments:

3.3.1 The review revealed that organisations had different expectations of their representatives. These were -

- (a) That their representative would be able to influence decisions affecting them and “plead their cause” at the District Council, particularly when there are funding considerations. In these cases most seemed to prefer a Portfolio Holder as their representative. This is understandable, given that the Portfolio Holders are able to take, or influence, funding decisions; while
- (b) others preferred a local member, with greater knowledge of the local community; and
- (c) yet others wanted representatives with particular skills, for example financial expertise.

3.3.2 Representatives on outside bodies are normally appointed at the June Cabinet meeting following quadrennial elections. Appointments are for the four-year life of the Council. The Review Panel recognised that, because of the pressures on political groups immediately following elections, it is difficult for the groups to establish by the June Cabinet meeting the skills, talents and interests of newly-elected councillors. Therefore, it sometimes happens that members who are not always be the “best person for the job” are put forward. Also, new members volunteering to serve on outside bodies before the June meeting of the Cabinet are not in a position to assess their own workloads and sometimes over-commit themselves.

- 3.3.3 To address this issue, the Review Panel suggests that the four-yearly appointments to outside bodies be held over until the October meeting of the Cabinet. This will give the political groups more time to make considered recommendations for the appointments. It is further recommended that, unless the constitution or other governing principles of the body specifically require a serving Councillor as the Council's representative, the sitting representatives continue to serve on that body until a fresh appointment is made. This will, in some cases, mean councillors who have not been re-elected to the Council continuing as the Council's representatives (provided of course that they are willing to do so). Earlier appointments could be made by the Cabinet if there is an urgent need.
- 3.3.4 There will be some administrative drawbacks to this course of action, but the Panel considers these preferable to the current arrangements. In addition, the appointment of representatives by office, for example "the XXXX Portfolio Holder", "the Leader of the Council", "the Chairman of the XXX Review Panel" or "the local member for XXX ward" will help to reduce delays in the appointments process.
- 3.3.5 The Panel also considers that there should be a presumption that members, and not officers, will be appointed as formal representatives. It feels that, in addition to other considerations, this will strengthen and demonstrate councillors' community leadership roles. The Panel accepts that there will be occasions when exceptions to this principle will be appropriate, for example where a representative with particular expertise in a certain field is required.

**Recommendation 2:**

- (a) ***That, except in those cases where there is an urgent or other demonstrable need for fresh appointments to be made earlier, or where appointments are made by office, the four-yearly appointments to outside bodies be made at the October meeting of the Cabinet in the year of ordinary elections to the Council;***
- (b) ***That there be a presumption that representatives on outside bodies will be elected members of the Council, but that it be recognised that there will be occasions when exceptions to this principle will be appropriate;***
- (c) ***That, where feasible, appointments to outside bodies be made by office rather than by name;***
- (d) ***That, in making appointments, careful consideration be given to selecting the most appropriate representative taking into account the nature of the appointment and other issues such as local representation and the relevant experience and expertise of the appointee;***

- (e) ***That, in principle and subject to the exception below, existing appointments of named Councillors (not appointments made by office) including those where the representative has not been re-elected to the Council, continue after the quadrennial election of Councillors until a new appointment is made.***

***The exception to this principle will be where there is a legal or other requirement for a serving councillor to be the representative on the organisation concerned.***

### **3.4 Numbers of Representatives Appointed**

- 3.4.1 The Panel found that there was no consistency in the numbers of representatives appointed to the various bodies – some have one representative only, some have two or more, some have deputies, etc. It is appreciated that these numbers are sometimes dictated by the organisations, particularly those where the Council's representatives have voting rights, but where this is not the case the Panel recommends that appointments generally be one only.

#### **Recommendation 3:**

***That, where there is no requirement for the appointment of a greater number, the number of representatives on each outside body be limited to one per organisation.***

### **3.5 Reporting back by representatives**

- 3.5.1 Of concern to the Panel was the fact that members and officers generally receive little or no feedback from representatives serving on outside bodies. It found that, whilst there are some informal arrangements in place for representatives to pass on information to officers and for officers to brief councillors before meetings of organisations, there is no common approach. Disseminating information to other Councillors is rare. The Working Group learned much about the activities of the various groups on which the Council is represented through undertaking the review, and the Panel feels strongly that some form of reporting mechanism should be introduced so that information individual members gain from their representation is shared.
- 3.5.2 The Panel considered a range of options but, as a first stage, recommends the following:

#### **Recommendation 4**

- (a) ***That the principle of the introduction of a formal process of members reporting back on the activities of the outside bodies on which they represent the Council be agreed; and***
- (b) ***That all representatives on outside bodies be required to produce a brief written report as and when appropriate, but at least once a year, and that these be placed on the Councillors' area of ForestNet.***

### 3.6 Linking of Outside Bodies to Portfolio Holders/Review Panels and Officers

- 3.6.1 The Panel considers that there would be merit in linking more effectively each outside body on which the Council is represented with a Portfolio Holder, Review Panel and officer to be the “lead” for that particular body. While in some cases these are obvious (for example the New Forest Environmental Protection Liaison Committee), others (for example the Court of the University of Southampton) are not. More formal links will facilitate clear reporting guidelines and help representatives who might need advice or assistance in connection with their representation.

#### ***Recommendation 5***

***That the officers be requested to prepare a schedule, to be available on the Councillors’ area of ForestNet, of the links to Portfolio Holders, Review Panels and lead officer(s) for each of the outside bodies on which the Council is represented.***

### 3.7 Current Representation

- # 3.7.1 Arising from the review, the Panel has concluded that representation on the 22 outside bodies set out in Appendix 1 to this report is no longer required. Reasons why representation is no longer needed are shown in the Appendix. The Panel recommends that representation on these bodies be discontinued.
- # 3.7.2 Appendix 2 shows those outside bodies in respect of which immediate changes to representation are recommended for the reasons set out in the Appendix.

#### **Recommendation 6**

- # (a) ***That the appointments to the outside bodies set out in Appendix 1 to this report be discontinued;***
- # (b) ***That the representation on the outside bodies set out in Appendix 2 to this report be amended as set out in the Appendix; and***
- (c) ***That when fresh appointments to outside bodies are made, unless there is an overriding need for more than one, the Council’s representatives on each outside body be limited to one.***

## 4. PORTFOLIO HOLDER’S COMMENTS

- 4.1 The Policy and Resources Portfolio Holder supports the recommendations contained in this report.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Minimal. Discontinuing representation on some outside bodies might result in a slight decrease in members' travel costs, but they will not be significant. Managing the recommended process for reporting back will involve additional administration but this will be contained within existing resources.

## **6. ENVIRONMENTAL, CRIME & DISORDER AND EQUALITIES & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Environmental benefits would accrue from any reduction in members' travel to meetings of outside bodies.
- 6.2 There are no crime & disorder or equalities & diversity implications.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 6.1 That the recommendations set out above be adopted.

### **For Further Information Please Contact:**

Rosemary Rutins  
Democratic Services Manager  
Tel: (023) 8028 5381  
E-mail: [rosemary.rutins@nfdc.gov.uk](mailto:rosemary.rutins@nfdc.gov.uk)

or members of the Corporate Overview Panel's Working Group:

Cllr John Hutchins  
E-mail: [john.hutchins@newforest.gov.uk](mailto:john.hutchins@newforest.gov.uk)

Cllr Michael Pemberton  
E-mail: [michael.pemberton@newforest.gov.uk](mailto:michael.pemberton@newforest.gov.uk)

Cllr Mrs Maureen Robinson  
E-mail: [maureen.robinson@newforest.gov.uk](mailto:maureen.robinson@newforest.gov.uk)

### **Background Papers:**

Published documents

***Recommended for Deletion***

<b>Name/Contacts</b>	<b>Purpose/Aims</b>	<b>Representative</b>	<b>Meeting Frequency</b>	<b>Reason for Deletion</b>
Ashurst Birthing Centre Steering Group	To act as liaison body during establishment of Centre	Employment, Health & Wellbeing Portfolio Holder		<i>Centre now open. Liaison between the Council, users and the public will exist as for the rest of the NHS.</i>
Bournemouth Orchestras Local Authority Forum	A forum for one-off information exchanges and consultation	Cllr Pemberton		<i>Defunct</i>
Bury Farm Marchwood Liaison Group	A group set up by the site operator so they can keep aware of local feeling, and to enable any problems or complaints to be discussed and ironed out.	Cllrs D Harrison and Lagdon		<i>No longer meets. Issues are discussed at Parish Council. Both District Councillors for Marchwood serve on Parish Council and are informed.</i>

Calmore & District Community Association	Runs the Calmore Community Centre and bar. Their constitution provides for a District Councillor to be an ex-officio member	Cllr Britton	4 times a year in the evenings in Calmore	<i>Inconsistent approach to appointment of representatives to Community Associations. Panel recommends deletion of formal representation and that Association be asked to approach a local District Councillor to serve on an informal basis</i>
Dorset New Forest Tourism Partnership Steering Group		Cllr Puttock		<i>Partnership arrangements under review. Meetings attended in interim by Employment and Tourism Manager. Will be reviewed at appropriate time.</i>
Friends of Forest Front Nature Reserve for the Disabled	A charitable body that runs the reserve. NFDC appointee is a Trustee.	Cllr S S Wade	3 times a year during daytime – also some working parties	<i>Cllr S S Wade considers formal District Council representation no longer necessary. He will continue to serve as trustee in his own right.</i>
Hampshire Archaeological Committee	Promotes the advancement of public education in archaeology	Cllr Rippon-Swaine	Meets 4 times a year at 4.30 p.m. in Winchester	<i>No response from HCC to request for information. Cllr Rippon-Swaine has not been invited to a meeting since his appointment in June 2007.</i>



Hampshire Children and Families Forum, North West New Forest Branch	A forum aiming to promote high quality provision for children and families to enable all children to fulfil their potential by effective two-way communication, proactive working, influencing policy, and community development	Cllr Greenfield	Meets 3 times a year in the evenings in Fordingbridge/Ringwood area.	<i>Working Group considers unnecessary because arrangements now changed following establishment of new children's centres. Children's Centres should be encouraged to invite local members.</i>
Hampshire Children and Families Forum, South West New Forest Branch	A forum aiming to promote high quality provision for children and families to enable all children to fulfil their potential by effective two-way communication, proactive working, influencing policy, and community development	Cllr Mrs Carpenter	Meets 3 times a year in the evenings in Lymington/New Milton area	<i>Ditto</i>
Hampshire Children and Families Forum, Hythe and Totton Branch	A forum aiming to promote high quality provision for children and families to enable all children to fulfil their potential by effective two-way communication, proactive working, influencing policy, and community development	Cllr Mrs Hoare	Meets 3 times a year in the evenings locally	<i>Ditto</i>
Hyde Housing Association Ltd - Hampshire Regional Committee		Cllr Tipp		<i>See "Hyde Marlet" below</i>

Hyde Martlet	Aims to deliver quality customer-led services to Hyde Housing Association and Martlet Homes with emphasis on communities and neighbourhoods			<i>No longer an operating Committee comprising representatives. Regular one-to-one meetings with relevant Cabinet member considered by Hyde Martlet most appropriate way forward.</i>
Lymington Coastal Area Joint Management Committee and Coastal Advisory Panel	Manages county-owned land between Hurst Spit, Keyhaven and Lymington River and makes recommendations on policy issues to HCC Executive	Cllrs Edward Heron, Mrs McEvoy & Pemberton	Twice a year in the evening in Lymington	<i>No response from HCC. Cllrs Pemberton and Mrs McEvoy advise not invited since June 2007. Cllr E Heron never invited. Cllr Mrs McEvoy attended meetings some years ago in her capacity as County Councillor. However, she found the meetings not very productive and cannot see any benefit to the District Council through continued representation.</i>

Manor Farm Pennington Liaison Panel	Acts as means of liaison between site operations and local representatives and residents to solve problems through dialogue	Cllrs Mrs Jackman and Pemberton	As and when required (rarely) during the evening at Lymington	<i>No response from HCC. Cllrs Jackman &amp; Pemberton not invited to meeting since June 2007. Working Group recommends deletion. Local members could attend if need arises in future.</i>
Mockbeggar Lake Ibsley Liaison Panel	Acts as means of liaison between site operations and local representatives and residents to solve problems through dialogue	Cllrs Dow and Edward Heron	About twice a year during day-time at Blashford	<i>No response from HCC. Cllr Dow advised Panel about to be disbanded</i>
Mount Pleasant (IDO) Sway Liaison Panel	Acts as means of liaison between site operations and local representatives and residents to solve problems through dialogue	Cllr Rickman	About twice a year during day-time at Sway	<i>No response from HCC. Cllr Rickman has not attended "for ages". Cllr Rickman suggests he would attend as local member if need arose in future</i>
New Forest Supported Housing Forum	Forum for small housing providers to share information	Cllr Cleary		<i>Discontinued in previous format. Now meets without Councillor involvement. Organisation considers formal Councillor representation would not benefit the Group</i>
Options New Forest Management Committee	A Registered Charity offering alcohol and drug counselling, advice and information	Cllr Beck		<i>Discontinued.</i>

Ringwood & District Community Association	Responsible for management of Community Centre (and general aim to promote benefit of inhabitants of Ringwood and area). Their constitution provides for District Council representation	Cllr Thierry	3 meetings per year, plus AGM	<p><b>Organisation comments:</b> <i>The Council is made aware of the diverse number of activities which we have to offer, also the wide age range which we cover and the large area of the community which we service and have done for the past 50 years. Feel current representation is most appropriate.</i></p> <p><b>Cllr Thierry</b> reports he is invited to AGM only, as are all members of Association – sees little point in continuing if not on management committee.</p> <p><b>Panel</b> recommends deletion and that Association be advised to contact a Ringwood local member if it wishes continued representation</p>
Solent Water Quality Association	Supports other agencies in protecting and improving the quality of coastal waters – including making annual awards to sites complying with national standards	Cllr Pemberton and Head of Environmental Health	Meets once a year during daytime anywhere in coastal area of Hampshire	<i>Subsumed into Solent Forum which now runs this as a Water Quality Sub-Group</i>

Standing Conference on Oil and Gas Development in the English Channel	To consider any issues relating to oil and gas development in the English Channel	Cllr Kendal Deputy - Cllr Vickers	Has not met for some time and no future meeting fixed – though it is not being disbanded because if at any time new development proposals arise it could be called to discuss them. If it does meet, could be anywhere in southern England	<i>If meeting is called appropriate representation could be arranged. Working Group does not consider continued formal representation necessary</i>
Western Challenge Housing Association Ltd Regional Services Group	Manages over 2,500 properties	Cllr Pemberton		<i>Regional Services Group now defunct.</i>

## Changes recommended to representation

Name/Contacts	Purpose/Aims	NFDC Rep	Meeting details	Remarks	Comments
Age Concern Hampshire	To promote the welfare of the aged within Hampshire in any manner deemed by law to be charitable	Cllr Mrs Holding	Meets twice a year in Winchester during daytime – AGM all day, other meeting morning only		<p><i>Organisation hopes NFDC will continue to appoint representative. Working Group wishes to encourage other members to attend.</i></p> <p><b>RECOMMEND: Amend representative to Employment, Health &amp; Wellbeing Portfolio Holder</b></p>
Blashford Lakes Consultative Forum	Forum for all interested parties to discuss issues related to the management of the Blashford Lakes complex (no voting powers)	Cllr Dow	Meets twice a year during day-time locally	<i>The Forum requires a local District Councillor. The Council's appointment becomes the Chairman</i>	<p><i>Management Plan for Blashford Lakes agreed in 2006. Part of the agreed arrangements included the Forum, and for the Council's appointee, who must be a local member, to be the Chairman. Important for current arrangements to continue.</i></p> <p><b>RECOMMEND: Amend representative to "Member for Forest North West Ward"</b></p>

Community Safety Operational Joint Action Group	Aims to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors by addressing crime and anti-social behaviour by mobilisation of effort. This includes giving financial support to projects that complement the Community Safety Strategy.	Cllr Beck (The Crime & Disorder Portfolio Holder) who Chairs the meeting	Monthly		<i>Working Group considers representation of clear benefit to NFDC. <b>RECOMMEND: Amend representative to "Crime &amp; Disorder Portfolio Holder"</b></i>
Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership Panel	Governing body to AONB	Cllr Edward Heron	3 times a year at the AONB offices, during the day.	<i>NFDC has statutory responsibility to conserve and enhance AONB. One of 11 Local Authorities on Partnership.</i>	<i>Continued representation necessary in view of statutory responsibility. Organisation considers current representative appropriate <b>RECOMMEND: Amend representative to "Member for Forest &amp; Downlands Ward"</b></i>
Forest Arts Consultative Forum	Consultative group that reviews performance of the Centre and advises management on Centre programme and out-reach projects	2 and 1 Deputy  Cllrs Rickman and Woods Deputy - Cllr Davies	Meets 4 times a year in the evening in New Milton	<i>Forum happy to reduce representation to 1.</i>	<i>Funding provided by District Council. Forest Arts is an important key provider and links with the District Council are important. <b>RECOMMEND: reduce number of representatives to 1 – Portfolio holder for Leisure, Culture and Youth Matters or his representative.</b></i>

Hanson Concrete Charitable Trust	A Charitable Trust that disperses contributions within the Blashford Lakes Consultation Area (e.g. through ward of grants) arising from Hanson's sale of concrete blocks	1 Cllr Dow	Meets at least twice a year – time and place to be fixed at previous meeting	<i>Our representative is a Trustee</i>	<i>Requirement of the Trust's articles for NFDC Trustee <b>RECOMMEND: Amend representative to "Member for Forest North West Ward"</b></i>
Marchwood Energy from Waste Liaison Panel	Acts as means of liaison between site operators and local representatives and residents to solve problems through dialogue	2 Cllrs Puttock and Mrs Ford	About twice a year during the evenings at Marchwood		<b>RECOMMEND: Amend representation to members for Marchwood (Cllrs Mrs Hoare and Shotter) – seen by Corporate Overview Panel as part of the community leadership role.</b>