

IMPLEMENTATION EXECUTIVE

22 May 2008

**UPDATE ON THE IDeA PROJECT ON THE ROLE OF UNITARY COUNCILLORS
AND A RECOMMENDATION ON THE ROLE DESCRIPTION**

Purpose and Background

1. At the informal Implementation Executive meeting on 15 April 2008 it was agreed that the IE should take part in the IDeA project that has the objective of reviewing the role of new unitary councillors and producing a tool-kit that can be used by members and officers in authorities moving towards new unitary status. This work will be at no cost to any Wiltshire Council. The preliminary report is shown at Appendix 3.
2. Part of the project is to draft a role description to enable individuals to make an informed decision about whether they wish to stand for election or not.
3. The IDeA consultant has conducted interviews with existing Councillors and some officers in which key questions were identified. The report states that *"almost all members without exception wanted to know;*
 - *What meetings will I need to attend?*
 - *Where will these meetings be held and when?*
 - *What allowances will there be?"*

And

"Many of those interviewed believed that the demands of the new unitary role would be so great that it would require a full-time commitment from councillors. While this may or may not be the case, it was identified as a significant deterrent to many standing."

There is a need for candidates to know how much time the role will take and how it might be fitted in with other responsibilities.

4. There is a recognised need for the role description to be made available as soon as is possible in order that existing Councillors can decide whether they wish to stand again, to allow the political parties to start their selection process and to allow others wishing to stand to be informed. There is also a need for candidates to enter the selection process with their eyes open and with a clear understanding of the breadth and depth of the role.
5. The role description attached at Appendix 1 has been prepared in conjunction with the IDeA consultant; it aims to address the main issues raised during the interviews. It shows the average hours needed to carry out the role. These are distilled from the submission to the Boundary Committee and the National Census of Local Councillors carried out in 2006 by the IDeA, the supporting information is shown at Appendix 2.

Recommendation

That the role description shown as Appendix 1 be adopted.

Mr Dick Tonge, Leader of North Wiltshire District Council

Mrs Allison Bucknell, Deputy Leader of North Wiltshire District Council