

SALISBURY DISTRICT COUNCIL

SPECIAL DELEGATION PROCEDURE

COMMITTEE CONCERNED: Cabinet

FROM: Ciaran Regan **SERVICE UNIT:** Forward Planning & Conservation

DATE: 22 September 2006

SALISBURY DISTRICT COUNCIL DESIGN AND HERITAGE CHAMPION

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinet's endorsement of Councillor Westmoreland as the Council's Design and Heritage Champion

Background

The government continues to strengthen its commitment to achieving the highest standards of quality in the design of new buildings and spaces and in the conservation of built and natural heritage. As part of the ongoing planning reform agenda the government published PPS1: *Delivering Sustainable Development* in February 2005. By superceding the previous negative advice in PPG1 (published March 1992) that 'local planning authorities should reject obviously poor designs' with the implicit suggestion that mediocre design solutions are no longer acceptable, PPS1 heralds a significant step-change and a raising-of-the-bar in terms of the acceptable standard for design.

To match this commitment and apply it to the local area the Council has adopted a strategic approach to enhancing design standards which, to date, has involved the establishment of the Salisbury Design Forum and the adoption of 'Creating Places', a guide to high-quality design tailored to the District.

The government is also placing ever greater emphasis on the role of both Design Champions and Heritage Champions in local government by introducing a new Best Value Performance Indicator, BVPI 205 'Quality of service checklist', (which affects the level of funding via the Planning Delivery Grant) and through their executive agency for all matters related to design, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (known as CABE). Accordingly, as part of the next stage of the Council's design and conservation strategy it is proposed to formally nominate and agree a suitable person to represent the Council as its Design and Heritage Champion.

The role

The essentially three-fold role of the Design and Heritage Champion would be to ensure that the Council provides a vision for promoting and sustaining excellence in the design and conservation of the built environment and to lead an integrated approach to 'place-making' by ensuring a joined-up 'corporate' approach.

The Design and Heritage Champion would essentially work to ensure that historic environment and design issues play a central role in the development of all the local authority's policies and strategies. The third key role is that of figurehead and public spokesperson, ensuring that the key messages on design and heritage are effectively transmitted to the public.

The role is currently held by the Head of Forward Planning and Transportation. However, the government advises that the role should be held by a high profile elected Member who forms part of an Authority's controlling executive. This is to ensure that the roles are taken seriously and can have meaningful influence on the policy and decision-making functions of the Council.

The suggested nomination

Councillor Westmoreland has responded enthusiastically to an informal invitation from officers acting on behalf of the Head of Forward Planning and Transportation inviting him to take over the role from Eric Teagle. It was considered appropriate to invite Councillor Westmoreland, as he has been a regular participant and contributor in the Salisbury Design Forum ever since its establishment over two years ago. As a well-respected Councillor with excellent communication skills and an ability to bring stakeholders together in his capacity as Deputy Leader it is considered that Councillor Westmoreland would be an ideal candidate for the role.

Recommendations: Endorse the Head of Forward Planning and Transportation’s nomination of Councillor Fred Westmoreland as Design and Heritage Champion

(Please tick relevant box)

IMPLICATIONS	OFFICER	COMMENTS (incl)	NONE	NOT APPLICABLE
Legal		All members are regularly reminded not to express opinions early in the planning process if this could prejudice their ability to give the case a free hearing at the decision-making committee. The nominee is very aware of this through his work on the Design Forum and must be mindful of this in the new role		
Financial		From within existing planning budgets		
Procurement Manager				√
Personnel		Design and Heritage Champion will be supported by existing staffing structures, therefore no change is needed		
Environmental				√

Co-ordinated with _____ Officer (s) _____ Unit (s) _____

APPROVED :

Leader : Portfolio Holder :

Copy to: Chair & Vice Chairman of relevant Scrutiny Panel