

Report

Subject: : Support to Leaders of Political Groups and the Chair of the Council
Report to : The Cabinet
Date : Wednesday 05 September 2007
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Leader of the Council : Councillor Paul Sample

1. Purpose of report:

To agree:

- 1.1. Revised proposals for administrative support to the Chair of the Council, and
- 1.2. Formal support arrangements for Group Leaders.

2. Background:

- 2.1. In the past the PA to the Chief Executive has provided secretarial and administrative support to the Chair of the Council and Leader of the Council, as well as supporting the Management Team. In addition to this post there were 3 other PA posts supporting the directors.
- 2.2. Increasingly over the last few years the type of support required has changed from fairly traditional secretarial support to wider project and research activity. This shift led to the Management Team, in consultation with key councillors to undertake a review of the role of the support team.
- 2.3. The review resulted in two conclusions. Firstly it was recognised that support to the Chair and Councillors could more effectively be provided within the Democratic Services Unit and secondly support to the Management Team could best be provided through project support.
- 2.4. Implementation of the review resulted in the creation of an executive support team to work with the Management Team and the transfer of a budget of £9,340 to the Democratic Services Unit to support the Chair and Leader.
- 2.5. The aim of this report is to address support to the Chair and Councillors



Awarded in:
Housing Services
Waste and Recycling Services



3. Support to Councillors:

3.1. The review recognised that the support required by the Chair and Leader ranged from secretarial duties to more in depth research work.

Given the wide range and nature of the work the Head of Democratic Services had initially planned to recruit an additional Democratic Services Officer with specific time allocated within their brief to undertake the higher level work and to re-allocate administrative and secretarial activities within the unit.

3.2. However, given the decision on the future of local government in Wiltshire and the need to protect the position of permanent staff the proposal is now to incorporate all support work within the existing unit.

3.3. During the course of this work the Leader of the Council has requested that support arrangements be formally extended to other Group Leaders should they so wish.

3.4. Feedback from the Group leaders suggests that the support they require is modest.

3.5. A brief outline of the proposed support to be made available to the Chair and Group Leaders is outlined in **Appendix 1**.

4. Recommendations:

4.1. It is recommended that the Democratic Services Unit make available the support outlined in Appendix 1 to the Chair and Group Leaders with effect from mid-September.

5. Implications:

Financial: It is anticipated that these changes can be contained within existing budgets. If after the system has been in place for a period any additional resources are required, a further report will be brought to cabinet with a costed proposal to be built into the future financial strategy.

Legal:

Personnel	: Contained within the report
Community Safety	: N/A
Environmental	: N/A
Human Rights	: N/A
Wards affected	: All

Appendix 1

1. Support to the Chair of the Council in the civic role

- i. Arrange "induction" into the role for newly elected Chairs, including press briefing through the Communications Team.
- ii. Support Chair in their chosen priority theme for the year, through a programme of events, meetings etc
- iii. Support the ambassadorial role, through arranging events hosted by the Chair, including an annual dinner for past chairs, an end of year reception etc.
- iv. Manage the Chairs diary, including accepting and declining invitations.
- v. Manage the budget that supports the civic role.
- vi. Updating the Chairs pages on the Council website.
- vii. Researching material for the Chair to use in speeches.
- viii. Typing correspondence.
- ix. Ensuring enquiries received by the Chair are investigated and responded to by the relevant staff.
- x. Making arrangements for travel and accommodation whilst on Council business.
- xi. Liaison with local organisations and other councils.

2. Support available to Group Leaders in their Salisbury District Council capacity

- i. Diary arrangements, including accepting and declining appointments and invitations.
- ii. Typing correspondence from constituents and organisations on council matters.
- iii. Making arrangements for travel and accommodation whilst on Council business.
- iv. Researching local government issues eg best practice, government white papers etc and producing briefing notes.