



AGENDA

SELECTION AND MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE

Friday, 13th March, 2009, at 10.00 am
Wantsum Room, Sessions House, County
Hall, Maidstone

Ask for: **Andrew Tait**

Telephone **01622 694342**

*Tea/Coffee will be available from 9.45 am **inside the meeting room***

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

1. Substitutes
2. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting.
3. Minutes - 23 January 2009 (Pages 1 - 2)
4. Changing Council Governance Arrangements - Mayors and Indirectly Elected Leaders (Pages 3 - 30)
5. Informal Member Groups for Member Development and Member Information - Progress Report (Pages 31 - 40)
6. Electronic County Council Diary (Pages 41 - 44)

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership
(01622) 694002

Thursday, 5 March 2009

Please note that any background documents referred to in the accompanying papers maybe inspected by arrangement with the officer responsible for preparing the relevant report.

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**SELECTION AND MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Selection and Member Services Committee held in the Wantsum Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Friday, 23 January 2009.

PRESENT: Mrs P A V Stockell (Chairman), Mr N J D Chard (Substitute for Mr J A Davies), Mrs T Dean, Dr M R Eddy, Ms A Harrison, Mr A J King, MBE and Mr R J Parry (Substitute for Mr P B Carter)

ALSO PRESENT: Mr A H T Bowles, Mr M J Harrison and Mr R E King

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr G Wild (Director of Law and Governance), Mr P Sass (Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership), Mrs S Thompson (Head of Planning Applications Group), Mrs C Ingleton (Learning & Development Manager), Mr P D Wickenden (Overview, Scrutiny and Localism Manager) and Mr A Tait (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**1. Minutes - 26 November 2008**
(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2008 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

2. Webcasting of Committee Meetings
(Item 4)

(1) Mr M J Harrison and Mr R E King were present for this item pursuant to Committee Procedure Rule and spoke.

(2) Mr A J King moved, seconded by Mr R J Parry the motion set out in Paragraph (3) below. This was carried with no opposition.

(3) RESOLVED that consideration of webcasting the Planning Applications and Regulation Committees be deferred and reviewed within a period of no longer than two years. The review will incorporate (amongst other matters) the views of the two Committees themselves, developments in training for quasi judicial Committees and any advances in the technology available.

3. Proposed additional guideline for the appointment of LEA Governors
(Item 5)

(1) The Committee agreed to amend the recommended change to the Guidelines through the inclusion of the word "normally" within the new guideline (h).

(2) RESOLVED that the Guidelines for the Appointment of LEA Governors be amended by the insertion of a new guideline (h) to read:-

“A parent eligible for election as a parent governor should not normally be considered for appointment to the governing body of any school attended by one of their own children.”

4. Member Development Charter and Member Development
(Item 6)

RESOLVED to:-

- (a) note that the County Council's self-assessment and application for member Development Charter status will be delayed until after the County Council elections in June 2009;
- (b) commission the Informal Member Group: Member Development to consider the ten statements of the I&DeA "Giving Councillors the tools for the job: The Support Councillors Declaration" and the supporting "Skill Framework for Elected Members" with a view to making a recommendation to the Committee in March and then asking the County Council to agree the declaration at its April meeting; and
- (c) note the continuing work on the development of a programme of events for Members of the Council, the induction programme following the elections and the documentation that elected Members will receive immediately upon their election.

5. Appointment of Honorary Alderman
(Item 7)

- (1) The Committee was shown a draft version of a certificate for retiring Members. They agreed the content with a few suggested minor amendments.
- (2) RESOLVED that the criteria set out in paragraph 3 of the report for appointing Honorary Aldermen of the Council be recommended to the County Council for approval, and that (subject to approval of the criteria) nominations be sought and agreed with the Group Leaders prior to the arrangement of a Special Meeting of the County Council.

6. Appointments to Outside Bodies- Lady Joanna Thornhill Foundation
(Item 8)

RESOLVED that Mrs Glenda Hughes be appointed as the new County Council representative to the Governing Body of the Lady Joanna Thornhill (Endowed) Primary School in place of the Rev Steven Lillicrap.

By: Alex King – Deputy Leader
Peter Sass – Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership

To: Selection and Member Services Committee – 13 March 2009

Subject: CHANGING COUNCIL GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS – MAYORS AND INDIRECTLY ELECTED LEADERS

Classification: Unrestricted

File Ref: LL/03/09

Summary: To consider a response to the Department for Communities and Local Government Consultation Document entitled “Communities in Control: Real people, real power” on changing Council governance arrangements in respect of Mayors and Indirectly Elected Leaders.

FOR DECISION

Introduction

1. All Councils serving a population of above 85,000 electors are required to adopt one of two executive governance models – the directly elected mayoral model or the indirectly elected leader model. Most Councils in England operate the indirectly elected leader and cabinet executive model. To date, only 12 Councils have a directly elected Mayor. The Government has encouraged local communities to have a say in deciding on the governance model for their local community by giving them the power to petition the Council for a referendum.
2. The Consultation Document “Communities in Control: Real people, real power” is set out at Appendix 1 to this report. It sets out a range of options which aim to improve the mechanism for moving from one model to the other. It poses 7 Questions, to which I have set out a suggested response for this Committee to consider. The deadline for this response to be received by the Department of Communities and Local Government is Friday, 13 March 2009 – the date of this meeting.

Moving from a Mayor and Cabinet model to a Leader and Cabinet model

3. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 removed the requirement to hold a governance referendum in relation to a Council proposing to move to a Mayor and Cabinet model. Now, a Council considering such a move can either simply resolve to do so (following consultation) or make its own proposals, subject to approval in a governance referendum.
4. Similarly, the same two approaches can be taken by a Council wishing to move from the Mayor and Cabinet model to the Leader and Cabinet model. Currently there is an additional requirement that the Council’s proposals must include a statement setting out the arguments for and against the change, together with its reasons for

wanting to make that change. The Government is consulting on whether this additional special requirement should be removed.

5. If this additional requirement were removed, it would mean that a Council would be able to use an identical process to amend its governance arrangements from and to either of the two models. It seems fair and equitable that the same rules should apply for both eventualities. Some Councils may nevertheless prefer to follow the current rule because they take the view that they have a responsibility to their communities to explain their reasons for making such a significant decision.

Moratorium period between governance referendums

6. If a referendum results in a change of governance model, there is a moratorium period of 10 years before another referendum can be held. This is to ensure that there is a period of stability in which the chosen model of governance can be fully tried and tested. The Government is not proposing to alter this moratorium period

7. The Government now proposes that if a referendum results in no change to the governance model, the moratorium period should be reduced from 10 to 4 years. This is because it believes that local people should no longer be denied the opportunity to seek a change in the governance arrangements for a 10 year period.

Petition Threshold

8. The current arrangement is that 5% of the number of local government electors in the area served by the local authority can petition the Council for a referendum to change the governance model. The outcome of the resulting referendum is binding on the Council. The Government aims to ensure that the number of electors able to call for a referendum is such that it they are not triggered unless there is significant interest, but equally that there are no barriers or impediments to such interest being duly recognised when it exists. The Government has therefore put forward a number of options for consultation.

9. At present, the organisers of a governance petition need to collect actual signatures within a 12 month period and submit their petition to the relevant Council. Any signature older than 12 months is automatically invalid. The Government takes the view that this is a substantial logistical task for petition organisers and aims to make it easier for local people to petition for a governance referendum. Accordingly, the Government is consulting on whether the threshold for petitions should be reduced, and if so, how this is to be done. Three main options are set out in the consultation paper for comment: namely, reducing the 5% threshold across the board; introducing a range of numerical thresholds for various sizes of electorate; or applying a percentage threshold as in Option 1, but subject to set minimum and maximum numerical thresholds.

E-Petitioning

10. The Government proposes that e-petitioning should be an addition, where a petition organiser so wishes, to the current paper petitioning system. The aim is to ensure that it is easier for people to become involved in local democracy without excluding those who do not have access to a computer. The requirements would be the same as for paper petitioning. It would need the individual's first name, surname, address and the date of the signature. The individual concerned would have to be a

registered elector in the area served by the local authority. E-signatures would still only be valid for 12 months, as with actual signatures.

11. The Government also proposes that a request to start an e-petition should be submitted to the Council before any signatures are collected. The Council would be responsible for checking that the petition met the legal requirements and for uploading all qualifying petitions to a secure e-petitioning facility for local people to sign electronically.

12. The process of verification would continue as at present. The proper Officer of the Council must notify the petition organiser whether it is valid or not within one month of its receipt. If more than one petition is received, the "petition date" is the date of the last petition. This petition date dictates the timetable for checking its validity. The Proper Officer is responsible for verifying the names on the petition against the electoral register and for verifying the total number of valid signatures.

Suggested response to the Questions in the Consultation Document

13. I set out below the 7 Questions and the response that I would like this Committee to make on behalf of the County Council.

Question 1: Should we remove the special requirements that a proposal to move from a Mayor and Cabinet Executive must include a statement setting out the arguments for and against the change and the Council's reasons for wanting to make that change?

Response: Yes. This would enable a move from either model to the other to be treated in identical fashion. It should be noted that removal of this requirement would not preclude any Local Authority from applying the current requirement if it so wished.

Question 2: Do you agree with the proposal that the moratorium period should be reduced from ten years to four years where a governance referendum does not result in change?

Response: We agree that the moratorium period should be reduced from ten years to four years.

Question 3: Should the threshold for a petition to trigger a governance referendum be reduced across the board? If yes, to what level should the threshold be reduced, bearing in mind the considerations about the balance between the practicalities of collecting signatures and the demonstration of a significant level of interest in change?

Response: It is considered that potentially changing the governance arrangements of a Council is such a significant step that it needs to be demonstrated from the outset that such a change enjoys widespread support. For this reason, there should be no reduction in to the 5% threshold.

Question 4: Should numerical thresholds be set? If so, what should the basis and bands for these thresholds be?

Response: The threshold should remain at 5% of the electorate.

Question 5: Should the threshold be a percentage, but subject to certain minimum and maximum thresholds. What should these percentage and numerical thresholds be?

Response: The threshold should remain at 5% of the electorate with no numerical thresholds.

Question 6: Do you agree that a traditional paper based petition calling for a governance referendum may be supplemented, if the petition organiser so wishes, by e-petitioning.

Response: Yes, It is considered that this would serve to make it is easier for people to become involved in local democracy without excluding those who do not have access to a computer.

Resource Implications

14. The Deputy Leader has asked for an estimate of cost to be provided for a secure e-petitioning system, together with an estimate of the cost for any subsequent referendum. This information is being sought and will be reported orally to the meeting.

Recommendation

15. I recommend that the responses set out in paragraph 13 are sent to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

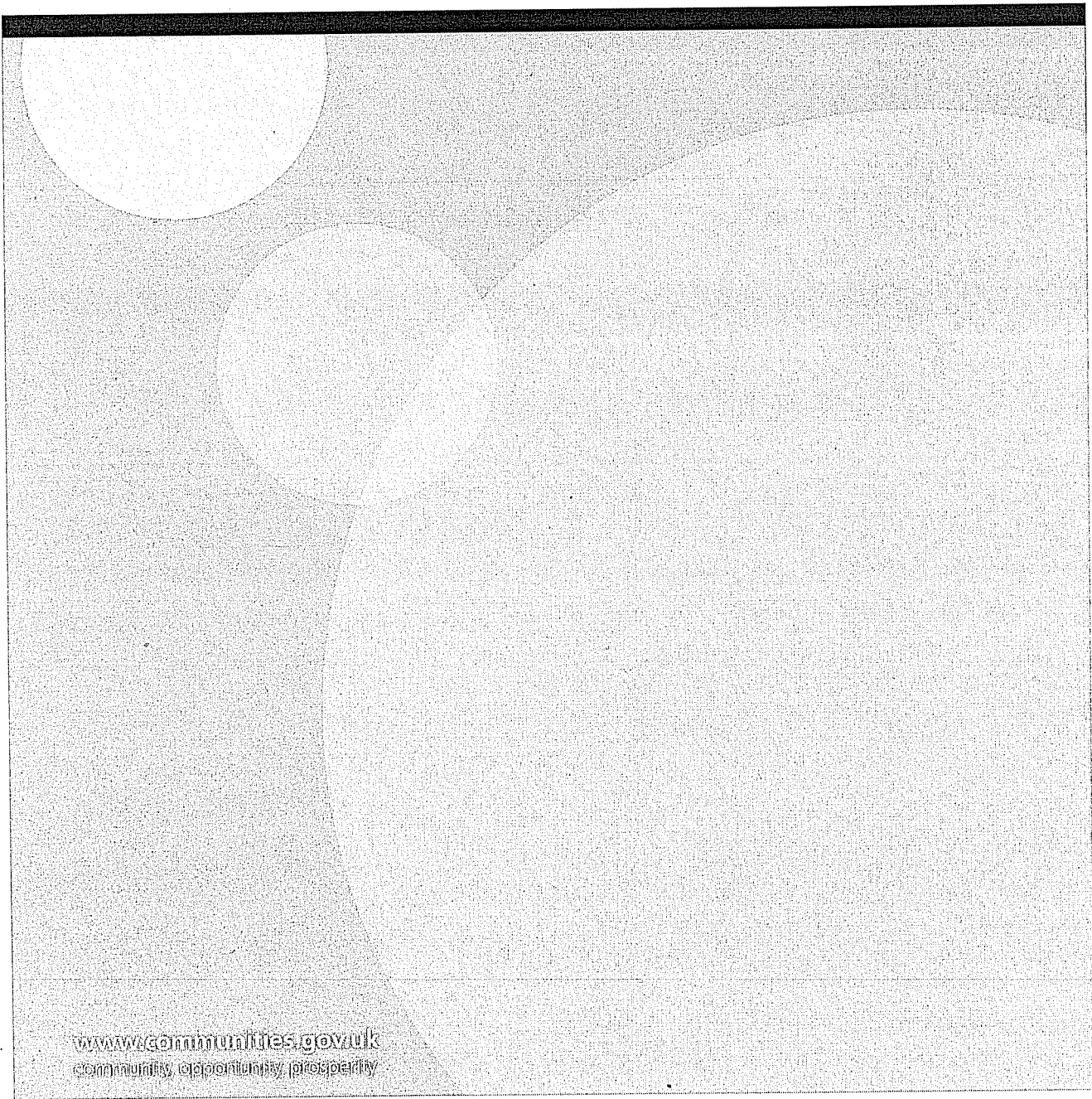
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01622 694377

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Background Documents
None.



Communities in control: Real people, real power
**Changing Council Governance Arrangements –
Mayors and Indirectly Elected Leaders.
A Consultation**



www.communities.gov.uk
community, opportunity, prosperity



Communities in control: Real people, real power
**Changing Council Governance Arrangements –
Mayors and Indirectly Elected Leaders.
A Consultation**

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Chapter 1

The consultation and how to respond

Communities in Control consultation papers

- 1.1 The white paper, *Communities in Control: Real people, real power*, is about passing power into the hands of citizens and communities. It sets out a range of policies to achieve this, building on work in progress from the 2006 Local Government white paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*.
- 1.2 This is part of the Government's wider agenda to modernise our democratic system, to strengthen participatory democracy and, through the *Communities in Control* white paper, to deliver genuine empowerment to local people and local communities – passing more power to more people through every practical means. Central to this is a vibrant local democracy, at the heart of which are councils – providing strategic leadership, delivering services and empowering communities.

About this consultation paper

- 1.3 We now need to consult further about a number of policy commitments and are doing this through a series of *Communities in Control* consultation papers. This consultation is the next in the series and invites views about reducing the threshold for a petition to trigger a governance referendum on a council's governance model to below five per cent of local electors, and permitting e-petitioning for mayors. It also considers the commitment in the *Communities in Control* white paper that where a governance referendum is lost, a further governance referendum may be held after 4 years, rather than after 10 years as is currently the case.
- 1.4 Councils need governance models that readily deliver strategic leadership, sharp accountability, and effective and efficient decision taking. The Government recognises that the directly elected mayoral model can readily deliver this. It also recognises that governance models where there is an indirectly elected council leader can equally deliver these outcomes. It is for this reason that the Government has legislated in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to give councils a choice between directly elected mayors and indirectly elected leaders. This should be a choice that the local community can make.

- 1.5 Accordingly this consultation paper focuses on proposals to make it easier for people in England to demand that their local leaders hold a governance referendum on moving to a new form of governance arrangements. It includes proposals to make it easier for local people to decide to have a directly elected mayor. Equally the consultation includes a process whereby a decision to have a directly elected mayor can be reversed by a governance referendum or vote of the council.
- 1.6 Chapter 2 provides background on both governance models, and sets out the legislative provisions and processes for changing governance models. It seeks views on whether we should remove existing statutory requirements so that in future there would be a level playing field for moves between the two governance models.
- 1.7 Chapter 3 seeks views on proposals to reduce the threshold for a petition to trigger a governance referendum from the existing requirement, which is five per cent of local government electors.
- 1.8 Chapter 4 seeks views on permitting the use of e-petitioning to demonstrate support for a governance referendum.

Who we are consulting

- 1.9 This is a public consultation and it is open to anyone to respond to the questions which are summarised at annex A. We would particularly welcome responses from councils in England, national representative bodies, and electoral registration officers and returning officers.

How to respond

- 1.10 Your response must be received by **13 March 2009** and may be sent by email or by post to:

Changing Council Governance Arrangements Consultation
Communities and Local Government
Zone 5/A2
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU

email: governance@communities.gsi.gov.uk

- 1.11 It would be helpful if you could make clear in your response whether you represent an organisation or group, and in what capacity you are responding.

What will happen to the responses?

- 1.12 We will analyse the responses to the consultation and produce a summary of them within three months of the close of the consultation. This summary will be published on the consultation page of the Department's website at:
www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/publications/consultations/
- 1.13 The Government will take account of the responses received to this consultation before introducing primary and secondary legislation on the particular topics discussed in this paper.

Publication of responses – confidentiality and data protection

- 1.14 Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).
- 1.15 If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply, and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential.
- 1.16 If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.
- 1.17 The Department for Communities and Local Government will process your personal data in accordance with DPA and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

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The consultation criteria

1.18 The UK Government has adopted a code of practice on consultations. The criteria that apply under this code, and advice about who you should contact if you have any comments or complaints about the consultation process are included in annex B.

Additional copies

1.19 You may make copies of this document without seeking permission. Printed and alternative format (eg Braille or audio) copies of this consultation paper can also be obtained from the contact details at paragraph 1.10 above. An electronic version of this document can be found in the consultation section of the Departments website at: www.communities.gov.uk

Chapter 2

Governance arrangements

Executive governance models

- 2.1 All councils serving a population of above 85,000 electors are required to adopt one of two executive governance models – the directly elected mayoral model (“a mayor and cabinet executive”), or indirectly elected council leader model (“a leader and cabinet executive”). In the mayor and cabinet executive, the mayor is directly elected by local government electors in a council’s area, whereas in the leader and cabinet executive, the leader of the council is a councillor elected by his/her fellow councillors. In both models, the directly elected mayor or indirectly elected leader will have a range of policies to implement while in office with the help of their cabinet.
- 2.2 Under both models, the mayor or leader will lead the council and can be in charge of local services. However in addition, many councils have a ceremonial mayor who normally chairs council meetings. Where a directly elected mayor leads the council, he or she may carry out ceremonial functions or the council may decide to keep the ceremonial mayor as well. If they do, he or she will normally have a new title. The directly elected mayor will hold the formal title of ‘mayor’.
- 2.3 Most councils in England operate with the leader and cabinet executive. To date, twelve council areas have a directly-elected mayor: Bedford, Doncaster, Hackney, Hartlepool, Lewisham, Mansfield, Middlesbrough, Newham, North Tyneside, Stoke-on-Trent¹, Torbay and Watford. Of the 12 current mayors some are from political parties, and others are independent.

Changing governance models

- 2.4 In the *Communities in Control* white paper we undertook to consult on making it easier for local people to petition for a governance referendum on moving to a mayoral form of governance. This consultation seeks your views on two proposals for achieving this, as well as on making it as easy to move to a leader and cabinet executive. The first proposal is whether there should be a reduction in the petition threshold, i.e. the number of local government electors required to sign a petition, in order to trigger a governance referendum for a change in a council’s governance model, and the second proposal is whether e-petitioning for such a

¹ Following a governance referendum, Stoke-on-Trent will adopt a leader and cabinet executive from June 2009.

governance referendum should be permitted. The consultation also invites views on the proposal to facilitate change that a reduced moratorium period between governance referendums should apply in every case where a governance referendum results in no change of governance model. Subject to the outcome of this consultation, it is the Government's intention to seek the necessary primary legislation for any such reduction at the next convenient opportunity.

- 2.5 This is in the context where a local community should be able to decide a change in its council's governance model. Where there is demonstrable evidence that there is significant interest locally for such a change, then the local community should have the opportunity through a governance referendum to decide whether or not the change is to be made.
- 2.6 Equally, the democratically elected representatives of a local community should be able to decide if they wish to change their council's governance model. In such a case, just as where change is made through a governance referendum, it should be as easy to move to a leader and cabinet executive as to a mayor and cabinet executive. Accordingly, this consultation invites views on whether where a change in governance models is decided by a vote of the council without a governance referendum, the current special procedural requirements for a move from a mayor and cabinet executive should be removed. Subject to this consultation, it is the Government's intention to seek the necessary primary legislation for removing such requirements at the next convenient opportunity.

The legislative framework for changing a council's governance model

- 2.7 The Local Government Act 2000 introduced reforms in order to make council decision making more efficient, transparent and accountable. As part of these reforms, local people were able to choose which form of executive governance arrangements their councils should adopt. Where a council receives a valid petition it must hold a governance referendum the results of which are binding. Such petitions and duties on councils to hold a governance referendum are separate to local petitions and the new duty on councils to respond to them as set out in the Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Bill.

Moving to a Mayor and cabinet model

2.8 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 made amendments to the 2000 Act which relaxed the procedure for changing governance arrangements². The requirement to hold a governance referendum in relation to a council proposing to move to the mayor and cabinet executive was removed; where the council wishes to move to the mayor and cabinet executive it can now take one of the following approaches:

- Following consultation and the drawing up of proposals for the change in its governance arrangements, the council can simply resolve to move to those arrangements
- The council can make its proposals subject to approval in a governance referendum

Moving from a Mayor and cabinet model to a leader and cabinet model

2.9 A council currently operating the mayor and cabinet executive model which wishes to move to the leader and cabinet executive can likewise take one of those approaches. In this case, where the council is seeking simply to resolve to make the change, special additional requirements apply. These are that it must also include in its proposal a statement setting out the arguments for and against the change and its reasons for wanting to make that change.

Consultation Question 1: Should we remove the special requirements that a proposal to move from a mayor and cabinet executive must include a statement setting out the arguments for and against the change and the council's reasons for wanting to make that change?

Moratorium period between governance referendums

2.10 Where a council has adopted an executive governance model following a governance referendum, it can move from that model only following a further governance referendum approving that change. A council may also be required to hold a governance referendum on proposals for a move to a mayor and cabinet executive by virtue of being petitioned by local people or directed or ordered by the Secretary of State to do so. Regulations made under the Local Government Act 2000 provide that in order to trigger a governance referendum petitions must be supported by a number of electors that is greater than or equal to five per cent

² The provisions for local people to trigger a governance referendum by submitting a valid petition remain unchanged.

(known as the threshold) of the number of local government electors for the council's area shown in the electoral register.

- 2.11 Legislation also provides that where a governance referendum has been held, a further governance referendum may not be held for a defined period – informally known as the 'moratorium period'. The moratorium period was extended by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 from 5 to 10 years to provide a period of stability where governance arrangements had changed to ensure time for the new arrangements to bed in.
- 2.12 The Government considers that this should remain the case where a governance referendum has resulted in a change of governance arrangements. It is right that there is a period of stability in which the new arrangements can be fully tried and tested. However, the Government considers that where a governance referendum results in no change, local people should not be denied the opportunity to seek a change in local governance arrangements for a further 10 years should they wish to do so. As suggested in the *Communities in Control* white paper, the Government considers a moratorium period of four years would strike the right balance between allowing local communities to change their councils' governance models with relative ease whilst avoiding unnecessary and damaging instability.
- 2.13 We therefore seeks views on whether to refine the 'moratorium period' arrangements, namely to remove the stipulation that no governance referendum may be held for 10 years where a governance referendum does not result in a change in governance arrangements, and permit a further governance referendum after four years in these circumstances.

Consultation Question 2: Do you agree with the proposal that the moratorium period should be reduced from ten years to four years where a governance referendum does not result in a change?

Chapter 3

Petition threshold

- 3.1 The purpose of a petition threshold is to provide the basis for recognising that there is demonstrable significant interest locally for a change in governance arrangements. The level of the threshold needs to be such that it ensures that on the one hand governance referendums are not triggered unless there is significant interest, but equally that there are no barriers or impediments to such interests being demonstrated where they exist. E-petitioning might also facilitate the demonstration of such interests and the use of e-petitioning is examined in chapter 4.
- 3.2 We know in practice that it can be a substantial undertaking for petition organisers to collect the number of signatures required to meet the current five per cent threshold to trigger a governance referendum. This is particularly the case in those council areas covering larger populations. We are therefore seeking views on whether to reduce the threshold, thereby making the task more achievable. Any new threshold should however continue to be at such a level as to demonstrate significant interest locally for a change.
- 3.3 This chapter explores options for changing the petition arrangements for triggering a governance referendum to make them both practical and reasonable, thereby encouraging local people to get involved, and stimulate debate about the leadership arrangements for their area. We are seeking views on the threshold of signatures required, and set out below three broad proposals which are:
- 1. reduce the single five per cent threshold to either four per cent, three per cent or two per cent of local government electors for the council area concerned**
 - or
 - 2. introduce a range of numerical thresholds**
 - or
 - 3. apply a percentage threshold as set out in option 1, but subject to set minimum and maximum numerical thresholds**

Reduce the five per cent threshold

- 3.4 There are large differences in the number of local government electors for councils across England. By way of example, table 1 shows that petition organisers in council areas serving a large electorate – say 500,000 local government electors for example, would need to collect over 25,000 signatures within the space of a year (since any signatures over a year old are invalid) to trigger a governance referendum, which would be a substantial undertaking.
- 3.5 Our view is that the current threshold of five per cent may pose a barrier to local people petitioning for a governance referendum, particularly in larger council areas. One option for altering the current arrangements would be to reduce the petition threshold to below five per cent. Table 1 below provides an indicative illustration of the effect of reducing the threshold to four per cent, three per cent or two per cent across a range of electorate sizes.

Local Government Electors	5%	4%	3%	2%
700,000	35,000	28,000	21,000	14,000
500,000	25,000	20,000	15,000	10,000
300,000	15,000	12,000	9,000	6,000
150,000	7,500	6,000	4,500	3,000
100,000	5,000	4,000	3,000	2,000
50,000	2,500	2,000	1,500	1,000

- 3.6 Reducing the percentage threshold has the advantage of retaining simplicity in the arrangements for petition thresholds. However, lowering the threshold generally may not address the wider practical issues faced by petition organisers in council areas serving a large number of local government electors. It is possible that, in order to make the practical task achievable for petition organisers in such areas, the threshold would need to be set at such a level as to be inappropriately low for the purposes of demonstrating significant support for change.
- 3.7 The Government is therefore interested in your views on whether the threshold should be reduced from the current five per cent and if so to what level.

Consultation Question 3: Should the threshold for a petition to trigger a governance referendum be reduced across the board? If yes, to what level should the threshold be reduced, bearing in mind the considerations about the balance between the practicalities of collecting signatures and the demonstration of a significant level of interest in change.

Introduce a range of numerical thresholds

3.8 An alternative option would be to introduce numerical thresholds to be set for various electorate ranges. The size of the numerical threshold could then be set so as to ensure a petition carries sufficient weight but is not a barrier to the demonstration of local support for a change.

3.9 Table 2 provides an illustration of how such numerical thresholds might be set in practice. For the purposes of the illustration, the numerical thresholds are based upon the median of five per cent of local government electors for each council in England within the corresponding electorate band on the left. The result is an achievable, yet significant level of signatures across all electorate bands.³

Number of local government electors	Threshold Figure
50,000 – 100,000	3,750
100,000 – 200,000	6,500
200,000 – 300,000	11,500
Above 300,000	18,000

Consultation Question 4: Should numerical thresholds be set? If so, what should the basis and bands for these thresholds be?

Apply a percentage threshold as set out in option 1, but subject to set minimum and maximum numerical thresholds,

3.10 Finally, a further option for change to the existing arrangements would be to retain the existing percentage threshold, but making that threshold subject to a minimum and maximum numerical threshold for signatures. Petition organisers would be required to obtain the percentage threshold in all cases except where the percentage threshold would be above or below the set maximum or minimum numerical thresholds. In such cases, the maximum or minimum numerical threshold would apply as appropriate.

³ The figures in table 2 were calculated using Office of National Statistics figures for local government electors in England (December 2007)

3.11 We are therefore seeking views on whether to introduce a numerical threshold as to the minimum and maximum number of signatures that would be required to meet the petition threshold to trigger a governance referendum in councils across England, to work in combination with a simple percentage threshold.

Introducing a minimum figure

3.12 Introducing a minimum figure for a petition threshold, would mean that there would need to be sufficient support in small council areas to meet the required level of signatures. An example would be to set the minimum level of signatures at 1,000. In areas where fewer than 1,000 signatures are required to trigger a governance referendum using the percentage system, the minimum figure would apply. This would mean that the petition would need to meet the threshold of 1,000 signatures in order to trigger a governance referendum. 1,000 signatures would show that there is significant support for a change in governance in that area, rather than a set percentage that is below 1,000.

Introducing a maximum figure

3.13 Introducing a maximum figure would mean that in council areas with a large amount of local government electors, petition organisers would be able to meet the threshold with less signatures than using a simple percentage threshold. An example would be to set the maximum level of signatures at 10,000, a significant undertaking for petition organisers. In areas where the percentage system alone would require more than 10,000 signatures, petition organisers would need to meet this maximum level to trigger a governance referendum.

Consultation Question 5: Should the threshold be a percentage, but subject to certain minimum and maximum numerical thresholds? What should those percentage and numerical thresholds be?

Chapter 4

The use of e-petitioning

- 4.1 The Government proposes to introduce electronic petitioning (e-petitions) alongside paper petitions, to trigger a governance referendum on governance arrangements. This will make it easier for people to become involved in local democracy, and provide another means for communities to add their support to a petition.
- 4.2 We realise that some members of the public may not have access to computers, and some will have no experience of using a computer. We therefore propose that e-petitioning should be an addition, where a petition organiser so wishes, to the current paper petitioning system. Local government electors that do not have access to, or do not want to use a computer, would still be able to sign a paper petition to show their support. Signatures from both types of petition could be combined for the purposes of meeting the petition threshold.

Consultation Question 6: Do you agree that a traditional paper based petition calling for a governance referendum may be supplemented, if the petition organiser so wishes, by e-petitioning?

Key current requirements for a governance petition

- 4.3. Currently petitions are only permitted in paper format. A valid petition must include the signatures of at least five per cent of the local electorate. Each signature must be accompanied by:
1. the person's first name and surname
 2. the person's address and
 3. date of the signature
- 4.4 A signature is not valid if it is dated more than 12 months before the petition date (usually the date the petition is received by the council), or the signatory is not registered to vote in the area of the council on the day the petition is submitted.

4.5 We propose that all of the requirements that are currently in place with regard to paper petitions would remain and apply to e-petitions. E-petitioning would give local people another convenient means in which they can register their support for a governance referendum. Some councils are already using e-petitioning for broader issues that are of interest to local people.

Receiving e-petitions

- 4.6 The process for submitting an e-petition will differ from submitting a paper petition. We want to make verification of signatures as easy as possible, to minimise the administrative costs to councils. The system that is used to register the details of those supporting the petition will also need to be secure.
- 4.7 We therefore propose that a request to start an e-petition should be submitted to the council before any signatures are gathered. The council would check the petition meets the requirements, and upload all qualifying petitions on an e-petitions facility for local people to sign electronically.
- 4.8 Councils will be required to provide a facility for e-petitions as part of the proposed duty to respond to petitions set out in the *Government Response to the Petitions and Calls for Action Consultation*, and we envisage this facility incorporating governance petitions. The Government will support councils to share best practice and develop processes to respond to electronic petitions.

Consultation Question 7: Do you agree that e-petitioning for a governance referendum must be through a secure e-petitioning facility provided by the council concerned?

Verification of petitions

- 4.9 The 'petition date' is usually the date that the council receives the petition. As soon as reasonably practicable after receiving a petition the council must notify the petition organiser of the petition date. The person who does this is known as the 'proper officer' – usually the officer of the council who is responsible for electoral matters. As soon as reasonably practicable after the petition date, and within one month of that date, the proper officer must confirm whether the petition is valid or not.

4.10 If the council adds two or more petitions together then the petition date is the date on which it received the last petition. The petition date dictates the timetable within which the council must check if the petition is valid, and the timeframe for holding the governance referendum. For electronic petitions, the petition date will be the date the petition closes on the e-petitions facility. There are rules governing when a petition is submitted after a previous governance referendum. The petition date and more information can be found in the 'petitioning for an elected mayor' information pack at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/petitioning>.

4.11 The petition will be verified against the electoral register that is current when the petition is received by the council. The number of signatures required to reach the petition threshold is called the verification number. Each year in the second half of February councils publish a figure that is equal to the petition threshold (currently set at five per cent of the number of local electors in the area). The verification requirements for paper petitions and electronic petitions would be the same.

Issues that might arise from permitting e-petitions

4.12 As with paper petitions, signatures on an e-petition will need to be verified. The e-petition facility provided by the council could recognise large scale duplicate signatures, or whether there is any interference in the process from hackers. For instance, existing council e-petition systems recognise duplicate signatures and compare the Internet Protocol (IP) addresses of those that have signed. An IP address is the address which identifies your computer on the Internet. If there is a lot of support for a petition emanating from one IP address, council staff are alerted that there may be a case of invalid signatures being registered.

Annex A

List of consultation questions

- Question 1** Should we remove the special requirements that a proposal to move from a mayor and cabinet executive must include a statement setting out the arguments for and against the change and the council's reasons for wanting to make that change?
- Question 2** Do you agree with the proposal that the moratorium period should be reduced from ten years to four years where a governance referendum does not result in a change?
- Question 3** Should the threshold for a petition to trigger a governance referendum be reduced across the board? If yes, to what level should the threshold be reduced, bearing in mind the considerations about the balance between the practicalities of collecting signatures and the demonstration of a significant level of interest in change.
- Question 4** Should numerical thresholds be set? If so, what should the basis and bands for these thresholds be?
- Question 5** Should the threshold be a percentage, but subject to certain minimum and maximum numerical thresholds? What should those percentage and numerical thresholds be?
- Question 6** Do you agree that a traditional paper based petition calling for a governance referendum may be supplemented, if the petition organiser so wishes, by e-petitioning?
- Question 7** Do you agree that e-petitioning for a governance referendum must be through a secure e-petitioning facility provided by the council concerned?

Annex B

Consultation Code of Practice

About this consultation

This consultation document and consultation process have been planned to adhere to the Code of Practice on Consultation issued by the Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform and is in line with the seven consultation criteria, which are:

1. Formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence the policy outcome;
2. Consultations should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible;
3. Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals;
4. Consultation exercises should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach;
5. Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained;
6. Consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation; and
7. Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience.

Representative groups are asked to give a summary of the people and organisations they represent, and where relevant who else they have consulted in reaching their conclusions when they respond.

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the department.

The Department for Communities and Local Government will process your personal data in accordance with DPA and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Individual responses will not be acknowledged unless specifically requested.

Your opinions are valuable to us. Thank you for taking the time to read this document and respond.

Are you satisfied that this consultation has followed these criteria? If not or you have any other observations about how we can improve the process please contact:

Communities and Local Government Consultation Co-ordinator
Zone 6/H10
Eland House
London SW1E 5 DU

or by e-mail to: consultationcoordinator@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Are you satisfied that this consultation has followed these criteria? If not, or you have any other observations about ways of improving the consultation process please contact:

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By: Alex King, Deputy Leader
Peter Sass, Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership
Amanda Beer, Director of Personnel & Development
David Cockburn, Executive Director, Strategy, Economic Development & ICT

To: Selection and Members Services Committee – 13 March 2009

Subject: Informal Member Group (IMG's): Member Development and Member Information – Progress Report

Classification: Unrestricted

Introduction

1. This report sets out progress on:-
 - (a) Developing a programme of induction following the County Council elections in June;
 - (b) Continuing work on the County Council's bid to achieve the South East Employers Member Development Charter; and
 - (c) Implementation of the IMG: Member Information recommendations approved by the County Council on 11 December 2008

IMG: Member Information

2. (1) The IMG Members, Mrs Dean, Mr Davies and Mr Parker reconvened with officers from across the authority on 28 January 2009. Officers were invited to volunteer to take ownership and to identify a lead for each of the recommendations.

(2) Attached as appendix 1 to this report is a copy of the recommendations and an indication of the lead officers for each of the recommendations.

(3) Arrangements have been made for the management Board to meet later on this month. The Management Board comprises Mrs Dean, Mr Parker, Mr Davies, Paul Wickenden (representing the Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership). Dr Peter Welsh, Head of Analysis and Information (Project Manager) and Christel Pobjee, Information Services Manager.

(4) Mr King, together with Mrs Dean, Mr Parker and Mr Davies will be meeting again on the afternoon of 13 March 2009 to assess the progress made in taking forward the implementation of the IMG recommendations.

(5) The intention is to have as many of the recommendations implemented prior to the County Council election in June 2009. To achieve this, we propose that delegated authority is given to the Dr Peter Welsh, Project Manager, Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership (or his nominee) in consultation with Mr King (or his nominee), Mrs Dean, Mr Parker, Mr Davies to implement the recommendations of the IMG and to report back to this Committee on a periodic basis.

IMG: Member Development

Induction and Member Development Programme

3. (1) Mary Cooper is moving into a new role to support Members through the County Council election period. Mary will be working with Coral Ingleton, Learning and Development Manager together with colleagues in the directorates to pull together an innovative induction programme. In addition to the 4 days of Great Road trips which are being organised in conjunction with the Directorates to show Members the “jewels in the crown” and challenges for each of the Directorates a General Induction day has also been added to the programme on 9 June 2009.

(2) Attached as Appendix 2 is the draft proposed Member Development and Training programme. This is by no means comprehensive at this stage – but it does indicate for the Committee the ongoing commitment to Member Development and Training. The programme reflects a number of events which have been arranged to reflect the views of Members following the survey conducted by the three political groups in the summer of 2007.

(3) The programme is by no means exhaustive and more events will be added. These already include some bespoke training for Members who will serve on the Committee for Planning Applications, training for all Members on Corporate Parenting, a range of events for health and social care in particular for those Members who will serve on the Scrutiny committee for this area of activity, and the interface with the voluntary sector.

(4) In accordance with the instructions of the IMG a number of events are being organised for the days immediately following the election until the annual meeting of the County Council on 25 June 2009 to give every Member the opportunity to attend sessions around procedural rules for meetings of the County Council, Chairmanship skills, the etiquette of webcasting, questioning techniques, being aware of the role of the Standards Committee and other key topics relevant to the role of a County Councillor.

IMG: Member Development

(5) At its meeting on 24 February the IMG considered:-

Recording of events

(6) Officers are exploring how the recording of events can best be achieved. Whilst events can be webcast and built into the contract for this service to be effective the recording needs to be of TV quality and interactive. This will lead to a competitive tender being prepared.

Member Mentors

(7) The Committee’s views are sought on the suggestion that some of the Members who are not seeking re-election might consider for the first few weeks of the new Council acting as a mentor to some of the new members. This has proved to be very worthwhile in other Authorities.

Member Development Charter

(8) The Committee agreed at its last meeting to delay further work on its bid for the South East Employers Members Development Charter until after the elections.

(9) A complementary tool to the Charter is the Improvement and Development Agency's (IDeA) declaration providing elected Members with the support to deliver the Member role. The IMG looked at this declaration of giving support to elected Members and have made a number of observations which are being explored with the three political groups.

(10) The work of the IMG is not completed on this declaration and therefore the Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership is seeking the delegated authority to finish this piece of work in consultation with the IMG Member Development to enable a report to be submitted to the April meeting of the County Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. The Committee is asked to note the report and agree to delegate authority to:-
 - (a) Dr Peter Welsh, Project Manager and the Head of Democratic Services to implement the decisions of the IMG Member information in consultation with Mr A J King, Mrs T Dean, Mr J Davies and Mr R Parker; and
 - (b) the Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership in consultation with the IMG Member Development to prepare a report to enable the County Council to support the IDeA's declaration.

Paul Wickenden
Overview, Scrutiny & Localism Manager

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RECOMMENDATION:	DISCUSSION/MINUTE OF THE MEETING	ACTION AGREED	LEAD OFFICER/ GROUP TO ACTION
<p>R1. A Head of Information Management (IM) be appointed reporting to the Chief Executive. Prime duties of this post holder would be to ensure that information is managed as a corporate resource, that officers work as a coordinated network, and that Information Point (IP) staff and Members receive in a timely and user friendly manner the information to which they are entitled in law and which they require to carry out their jobs.</p>	<p>Head of Information appointment required enable the work on some of the recommendations to begin,</p>	<p>The Chief Executive to appoint the Head of IM, which it is recognised may not be a new post.</p>	<p>Peter Gilroy</p>
<p>R2. It is recommended that to address the complex nature of Member Information, a collaborative Management Board for the Information Point be set up - comprising a Member from each political party, the Head of Democratic Services & Local Leadership and a library manager.</p>	<p>The IMG Members agreed to be involved in the Board, John Davies will need to stand down in summer, and Alex King will appoint John's replacement, who is welcome to join the Board at any point.</p>	<p>Organise inaugural meeting of the Management Board.</p>	<p>Paul Wickenden</p>
<p>Staff within the Information Point should ideally be dedicated posts and the unit be positioned as a corporate resource. A Service Level Agreement should therefore be put in place between the Chief Executive and the Libraries Service to ensure continuity of existing training, library resources and tolls (i.e. use of the public library catalogue and all library databases and subscriptions), currently used, can be accessed by the Information Point staff.</p>	<p>Management Board membership: John Davies, Trudy Dean, Ray Parker, Paul Wickenden, Peter Welsh, Christel Pobgee</p>		
<p>R3. An urgent audit of staff engaged in Information Management across the authority be carried out, and duplication of processes and output be eliminated.</p>	<p>Head of Information is guardian of information. Information must be seen as a corporate resource not just for the select few.</p>	<p>Head of IM to project manage urgent audit</p>	<p>Peter Welsh, assisted by Edward Thomas, Carol Patrick and Christel Pobgee</p>
<p>R4. Time released by eliminating duplication is invested in increased analysis, archiving and proactive reporting of information to assist Members.</p>	<p>This recommendation is tied to R.3. IMG found too much gathering and not enough using. Information is disjointed and needs to be better packaged.</p>	<p>Action: As R.3</p>	<p>Peter Welsh, assisted by Edward Thomas</p> <p>Analysis: Debra Exall with Peter Welsh</p>

	<p>Assumption made by IMG by removing duplication provides officer time for proactive work. Need to be clear freeing officer time is not the same as freeing up skills.</p> <p>KCC needs a good knowledge management system – KCC's is not fit for purpose as primarily a content management system. There is currently an information gathering exercise re: KCC websites / design and raised implication of additional budget implications.</p> <p>Kent View will have built into the design Members base – discussions continue next week.</p>		<p>Archiving: Christel Pobgee</p> <p>Proactive reporting of information: Christel Pobgee/ Directorate, Cabinet and Leaders Staff Officers</p> <p>Peter Welsh</p>
<p>R5. Members' induction should encompass the rights of Members to information, and the services available at the Information Point in depth, and interviews with each Member arranged to determine their needs, with the option for Members to review their needs at least every six months.</p>	<p>Discussion on the inconstancy of some Members and officers knowledge, <u>all</u> Members are entitled to all KCC information. Members are aware of issues of sensitivities i.e. commercially sensitive information, but this should not preclude provision of information as there is evidence it is used to withhold information Members have a legal right to.</p>	<p>Members Right to Information and their responsibilities regarding the use of information must be embedded in Members Induction and training manuals</p>	<p>Peter Sass, assisted by Coral Ingleton & Christel Pobgee</p>
	<p>Agreed recommendations 12 & 13 were linked and would be worked on as part of R.5 i.e. linkage to R.12 needs a constant message.</p>	<p>Information Point plan to pilot interviews with current Members.</p>	<p>Christel Pobgee, assisted by Peter Sass (or Democratic Services nominee)</p>
	<p>Member Interviews – jointly via Information Point and Personnel (Training). Planned interviews will be offered after member Induction, as in theory all Members will be on the same level, and at 6 monthly intervals.</p>	<p>Members to be part of the training provided to Officers on provision of information to and the role of Members</p>	<p>Coral Ingleton</p>
	<p>All Officers to be trained with regard to providing information to Members and the role of Members.</p>		

<p>R6. A Local Member Notification Protocol to be developed, and electronic alerts introduced to systems, indicating when Members need to be consulted and informed and by whom, with current contact details.</p>	<p>Protocol in providing information to local members i.e. events in their patch does exist but is not universally applied. Should be a stage of event arrangements, that it cannot proceed unless the local Member(s) have been notified appropriately. Peter Gilroy has stated events will be cancelled if there is not the appropriate timely notification to Members. Needs to be a tick box on Event database re: notification of Members.</p>	<p>Set up electronic alerts and system so staff reminded of protocol and receive alert to notify.</p>	<p>Peter Welsh assisted by Peter Sass, Carol Patrick, Jane Clarke & Tracey Gleeson</p>
<p>R7. A Members' Focus Group be set up to produce a list of information members require continuously 'on tap' on their Members' database</p>	<p>A selection of Members had initial brainstorm session to produce a list of information Members require 'on tap'. Details are in appendices of IMG report.</p>	<p>Head of IM to set up Focus Group with Members to work on the 'on tap' database and Information Portal</p>	<p>Peter Welsh assisted by Peter Sass, Carol Patrick & Tracey Gleeson</p>
<p>An Information Protocol is prepared which sets out contact details for named individuals within the Directorates who are responsible for providing and updating this information, and sets out how their work fits in with the work of the Information Point</p>	<p>Need a descriptive directory of contacts, as often titles are meaningless. Currently information is owned by individuals, should be owned by the Authority. These ties in with the Knet revamp which will offer a long-term solution, but need a quick fix solution for post elections in June. This links with R.3. Audit as will need officer commitment to keep undated and accurate.</p>	<p>Members to consult their political Groups to nominate for Members' Focus Group</p> <p>Draft information protocol which sets out named individuals responsible for information within the directorates.</p>	<p>Trudy Dean, John Davies & Ray Parker</p> <p>Edward Thomas</p>
<p>R8. An electronic Members' 'portal' or dashboard be developed to give easy access to the information requested in R7. The portal should be trialled by the Members' Focus Group to ensure it meets Members' needs.</p>	<p>Discussed with terms of R.7</p>	<p>Develop electronic Members' 'portal' or dashboard be to give easy access to the information</p>	<p>Peter Sass assisted by Peter Welsh, Carol Patrick, Jane Clarke & Member's Focus Group</p>
<p>R9. Where researchers work is heavily relied on in published reports, they should be named on the publication to recognise their work.</p>	<p>Flagged a shoddy attitude to referencing information used within pieces of work.</p>	<p>Publication of reports</p> <p>Referencing</p>	<p>Peter Sass</p> <p>Peter Welsh</p>
<p>R10. We believe a system such as we describe would be of value to colleagues in other Kent authorities and that a subscription service should be marketed.</p>	<p>KCC has tried to initiate subscription services with partners – key issue has always been the funding. Kent Partnership has an information sharing protocol re crime, duty to do so. Key issue, not the funding but sensitivity of information/</p>	<p>Work will be incremental and best fit initially</p> <p>Leader/CEO to raise at meetings at joint CEO & Leaders meetings. Member Reps to raise at meetings with Police</p>	<p>Peter Welsh assisted by Christel Pobgee</p> <p>Paul Carter & Peter Gilroy</p>

	power base.	and Fire.	
R11. Consideration should be given to enabling details of KCC (and partner) establishments to be entered onto Tom Tom or a similar guidance system.	BlackBerry capable of providing information from services.	To be actioned and advise Members re: BlackBerry	Carol Patrick assisted by Ollie Jackson
R12. Member training should include [soft] research skills, and the use of electronic tools to enhance their effectiveness and information exchange with residents.	see R.5		Peter Sass assisted by Christel Pobgee & Coral Ingleton
R13. All Member training sessions be recorded, put on the portal, and marketed.	See R.5 Have to crack this one, approached Kent TV too expensive. Virtual presenter may be a way forward.	Members training sessions to be recorded, loaded onto Members Portal and marketed.	Peter Sass assisted by Christel Pobgee & Coral Ingleton
R14. KNet be improved, with easier navigation, an improved search engine, and regular updating of information.	KCC intranet and website revamp has been approved and funded	Keep Group updated on progress	Peter Welsh, assisted by Tracey Gleeson & Carol Patrick
R15. The Kent Partnership Board be encouraged as a matter of urgency to progress work on sharing of information and use of compatible systems to facilitate this	Kent Partnership has an information sharing protocol re crime, duty to do so. Key issue, not the funding but sensitivity of information / power base.		Peter Welsh assisted by Carol Patrick & Christel Pobgee
R16. This IMG or a successor body be charged with driving through the actions agreed from this report, and that quarterly reports on progress are presented to the Selection and Member Services Committee	This Group of Members and Officers is the successor body. Report expected at the Selection & Members Services Committee 30.03.09. This Group to meet 2-weeks prior to the Committee meeting to update on progress.	Lib Dem Office to arrange meeting	Jude Sage
	NB: Wrong date given of the next Selection and Members Services Committee meeting.	Selection and Members Services Committee meeting maybe rearranged or additional meeting agreed.	Paul Wickenden

DRAFT
Members Induction and Training Programme

Subject	Location	Date	Duration
Time Management	Maidstone	Thurs 05/03/09	½ day (pm)
Business Writing Skills	Maidstone	Wed 18/03/2009	½ day (pm)
Participatory Budgeting Workshop		Thurs 23/04/2009	(pm)
General Induction Day		Tues 09/06/2009	
KCC Road Trip		Wed 10/06/2009	
Overview & Scrutiny Induction		Thurs 11/06/2009	½ day (pm)
Standards Committee: The Role of the Members and the Ethical Framework (two sessions)		Fri 12/06/2009	9.30 – 12.30 1.30 – 4.30
KCC Road Trip	Various	Mon 15/06/2009	
KCC Road Trip		Tues 16/06/2009	
Democratic Services and Local Leadership “Showcase”		Wed 17/06/2009	
Procedural Rules for Council and Committee Meetings (two sessions)		Thurs 18/06/2009	9:30-12:30 1:30-4:30
Procedural Rules for Council and Committee Meetings (two sessions)		Fri 19/06/2009	9:30-12:30 1:30-4:30
KCC Road Trip		Tues 23/06/2009	
KCC Road Trip		Fri 23/06/2009	
Planning Applications Committee		Mon 29/06/2009	
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee		Tues 30/06/2009	(pm)
Chairmanship Skills		Wed 01/07/2009	(pm)
Scrutiny and Questioning Techniques		Thurs 02/07/2009	(am)
Webinars x 4	At any computer	Thurs 02/07/2009	1 day

Localism Team Induction		Mon 06/07/2009	(pm)
Standards Committee: The Role of Members and the Ethical Framework		Mon 20/07/2009	(pm)
Participatory Budgeting Workshop		Tues 21/07/2009	(pm)
Standards Committee: The Role of Members and the Ethical Framework (two sessions)		Fri 24/07/2009	9.30 – 12.30 1.30 – 4.30
Local Government Law	Maidstone	Thurs 06/08/2009	1 day
Webinars x 4	At any computer	Mon 10/08/2009	1 day
Business Writing/Time Management	Maidstone	Wed 12/08/2009	1 day
Diversity and Equalities	Maidstone	Wed 19/08/2009	1 day
Local Government Law	Maidstone	Fri 21/08/2009	1 day
Effective Reading Techniques	Maidstone	Mon 24/08/2009	1 day
Voice of Influence	Maidstone	Wed 26/08/2009	1 day
Diversity and Equalities	Maidstone	Mon 07/09/2009	1 day
Media Training	Maidstone	Wed 09/09/2009	1 day
Chairmanship Skills		Wed 09/09/2009	(pm)
Scrutiny and Questioning Techniques		Fri 11/09/2009	(pm)
Scrutiny and Questioning Techniques		Tues 15/09/2009	(pm)
Time Management/Business Writing	Maidstone	Thurs 01/09/2009	1 day
Effective Reading Techniques	Maidstone	Tues 13/09/2009	1 day
Voice of Influence	Maidstone	Thurs 22/10/2009	1 day
Media Training	Maidstone	Wed 18/11/2009	1 day

By: Alex King, Deputy Leader
Peter Sass, Head of Democratic Services & Local Leadership

To: Selection & Member Services Committee – 13 March 2009

Subject: Electronic County Council diary

Introduction

1. As part of the IMG Member Development's consideration of the Improvement & Development Agency (IDeA) framework and invitation to all local authorities to sign up to a "Supporting Councillors Declaration" (which complements the Members Development Charter) to put in place and make available to elected Members the tools to perform their role as a County Councillor a discussion took place on making available on KNet the official County Council diary.

Official County Council diary

2. (1) The IMG's aspirations is that elected Members of this Council should be better informed 'electronically' of all the events taking place in which Members are/could be involved so that as far as possible clashes do not occur and Members are aware for example, when visits by other Members, i.e. Cabinet Members, are taking place within their electoral division.

(2) I recognise that this is a 'cultural shift' for the organisation and will be difficult to develop unless it is done effectively but in incremental steps. I have however decided that the most appropriate repository for maintaining this information should be the Head of Democratic Services & Local Leadership. I have accordingly asked that an electronic diary be prepared which can be piloted on the County Council's intranet (KNet) as from the beginning of April and made more widely available following the elections in June 2009.

Modern.gov

(3) The Selection and Member Services Committee will be aware that the Democratic Services and Local Leadership Unit has recently purchased and is using the modern.gov software to electronically prepare and publish meeting papers. One of the applications of this package is the production of a diary which can be linked to the public papers. It will therefore be possible to have this element of the system up and available for piloting on the intranet by the beginning of April 2009.

IMG Member Information

(4) Members are also reminded of the ongoing work of the IMG Member Information in implementing recommendations of that Group approved by the County Council on 11 December 2008. Implementation is being led by me with the IMG Members and Dr Peter Welsh, Head of Analysis and Information.

(5) This is the subject of a further report on this agenda at item 5. However, Members will note that this review of information will also impact on the work to

develop a comprehensive electronic diary which will be available to Members and staff across the County Council.

What this electronic diary should include?

(6) Achieving an electronic diary that is completely comprehensive will take some time and this Committee's views are sought on what information ideally they would like to see in the electronic diary. For example, the County Council diary currently comprises all meeting dates of the County Council and public meetings of its Committees which as indicated above in sub paragraph 3 (1) can be linked to the publicly available papers for that meeting.

(7) The second range of meetings relate to events such as briefings, visits outside of a democratic Committee process such as the Planning Applications Committee site visits, visits of Cabinet Members to Member(s) electoral division(s) etc. The Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership or his Unit are not aware of all official County Council Members activities to another Member(s) electoral division(s) e.g. Cabinet Member.

(8) Thirdly, there are a whole range of single party events which take place which are not in the public domain and therefore the Committee's views are sought on whether it would be appropriate in an electronic calendar to be made available to include them in the intranet.

Paper diary

(9) Depending on the responses to the questions above and recognising that it is unlikely that an electronic diary could ever entirely be 'foolproof' or comprehensive the Committee's views are sought on whether a paper diary will still be required.

Next steps – Protocol

3. (1) Over and above the public meetings relating to County Council Committees which will be piloted on a modern.gov calendar as from the beginning of April the Committee's views are sought on what other meetings/events should be included in an electronic diary.

(2) The 'culture of the organisation' needs to change. I propose that a protocol is developed so that officers from across the organisation are clear of all those meetings/events which must be included in the County Council electronic diary. I recommend to the Committee that the Head of Democratic Services & Local Leadership in consultation with the Managing Directors and myself prepare and implement a protocol on the events (which involve Members) which should be included in the electronic diary.

Recommendation

4. The Committee is asked to:-

- (a) note that a pilot electronic diary to include all County Council public meetings will be available on the County Council's intranet site as from 1 April; and

- (b) authorise the Head of Democratic Services & Local Leadership to prepare in consultation with the Managing Directors and myself a protocol for those events (which involve Members) which mandatorily should be included on the electronic diary which will be available on KNet.

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