

By: Alex King – Deputy Leader
Paul Wickenden – Overview, Scrutiny and Localism Manager

To: Scrutiny Board – 15 July 2010

Subject: Member Information

Summary: This report updates the Scrutiny Board on the work of the Member Information/Member Officer Group (MIMOG).

Introduction

1. The Scrutiny Board are aware that the conclusion from the IMG on Member Information report, agreed by County Council on 11 December 2008, is that there is a desire from Members to have a better understanding of/and access to 'information'. This piece of work is a very important strand of pivotal activity in the transformational change of the County Council.
- 1.2 The IMG recommendations roughly split into five areas:
 - (a) An audit of those involved in Information Management & research functions;
 - (b) Structure of information and research services;
 - (c) Growing of the analysis and research function;
 - (d) Member training;
 - (e) Web based applications: a Members 'Portal'; a data 'observatory ('Kent View').

Member Information/Member Officer Group

2. The Member Information/Member Officer Group (MIMOG) met on 15 June to review the recommendations of the IMG endorsed by the County Council. Set out below is a summary of the highlights

Progress on the recommendations:

- Member training programmes are largely being carried out. Greater joining-up between the differing units servicing Members would be advantageous;
- There is a significant amount of research and analysis already being carried out - it is just that a greater awareness of what exists is required, and a co-ordination of this work across the authority to eliminate duplication

Work in Progress

- An 'audit' of Information Management / research: A light-touch mapping exercise has taken place, high-lighting existing teams and individuals – however a more through exercise, ideally, needs to be carried out;
- A Members' 'Portal' was recommended as part of the IMG on Member Information in December 2008. Currently this is predicated on the refresh of K/net and further direction has been provided by the convening of further Members Focus Groups to ascertain commonalties of view.

An emerging theme from the Focus Groups is that a specific Member 'Portal' may not be the solution. Word of mouth and face-to-face discussion are still preferred ways of getting information. Information Point is critical.

Views expressed indicate that the KCC website might need to be re-engineered and that it is questioned whether the Intranet (K/Net) adds anything to our collective knowledge requirement.

- The data-centre (which is central to the IMG recommendations) is encompassed by the Kent Partnership led 'Kent View' - but is now reaching a point where a re-think is needed;
- The structure of information and research services is an Executive decision yet to be taken. This includes the appointment of a Head of Information and the placing of the Information Point.

Recommendations

3. The Scrutiny Board are asked to note the progress in implementing the recommendations of the IMG: Member Information endorsed by the County Council in December 2008.

Contact

Jude Sage, Staff Officer to the Lib Dem Leader
01622 694428 (x4428)
jude.sage@kent.gov.uk

Edward Thomas, Policy Officer
01622 694049 (x4049)
edward.thomas@kent.gov.uk