

By: Alex King – Deputy Leader  
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To: Selection and Member Services Committee – 8 October 2008

Subject: REGULARISING APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Classification: Unrestricted

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Summary: This report makes the case for the use of a centrally-held and maintained public register of KCC appointments and nominations to Outside Bodies.

FOR DECISION

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1. Kent County Council is represented on a number of outside bodies. Appointments to them are made either by this Committee or by the Leader in line with the provisions set out in the Constitution.
2. To date, there is no document that can be accurately described as an official register of such appointments. The table attached to this report at **Appendix 1** has been used by this Committee to make appointments and has been added to from time to time as the Head of Democratic Services & Local Leadership has become aware of organisations and meetings which have, on occasion, been taking place unrecorded for a number of years. The current status of this table is therefore best described as a working document (or draft register).
3. This state of affairs, whilst understandable on a historic basis, is not appropriate in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, when the technology exists to both maintain and communicate a centrally-held register. It is essential for the purposes of open government that this register is correctly compiled, maintained, published and updated.

## **COMPILING THE REGISTER**

4. The table as it stands represents the best understanding by the Head of Democratic Services & Local Leadership of the Council's current outside body membership. Its accuracy cannot, however, be confidently asserted for a number of reasons:
  - (a) A number of outside bodies have made appointments of KCC Members without reference to the County Council itself (see previous report on the Kent Community Rail Partnership Steering Group). Consequently, the County Council as a corporate body is not always aware of their existence.

(b) The County Council occasionally sets up or agrees to participate in short-term working groups involving outside partners. It appoints representatives to them without ensuring that these appointments are centrally recorded.

(c) Members occasionally resign their membership and been replaced without informing the Head of Democratic Services & Local Leadership.

### **PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

5. The mechanism for ensuring that the County Council's list is accurate is through the payment of expenses. As a principle therefore, the County Council will need to adopt a policy of only paying allowances to those Members whose membership of an outside body is centrally registered.
6. It would be unfair to impose such a policy without a preparatory period. I suggest that following the County Council elections in 2009 would be a sensible time for implementation of this policy. From then onwards, the Director of Finance would be instructed to only pay allowances to those Members whose membership is recorded on the register.
7. This preparatory period would enable the Head of Democratic Services & Local Leadership to write to all Members and Managing Directors asking them to identify their membership of any outside body that does not appear on the draft register. These responses would then be reported to a future meeting of this Committee for a decision as to whether or not to confirm the appointment. The schedule will also include details of any funding or other non-financial support provided to particular outside bodies. It is also proposed that the schedule should include details of the period of these appointments, particularly those to key regional bodies, where the Council needs as much notice as possible of forthcoming vacancies.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

8. That the Committee:
  - (i) AGREES to the principle of creating, maintaining and publishing a centrally held register of membership of outside bodies;
  - (ii) ADOPTS the procedure set out in paragraphs 5 to 7 of this report, to be implemented following the County Council elections in 2009.

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*Background Documents*

*Report to Selection and Members' Services Committee on the Kent Community Rail Partnership Steering Group – 8 October 2008.*