

To: City Executive Board Member for Corporate Governance and Strategic Partnerships

Date: 3rd August 2011

Report of: Head of Law and Governance

Title of Report: APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To agree nominations to outside and other bodies for the 2011/2012 Council Year.

Key decision? No

Policy Framework: None

Approved by: Legal - Jeremy Thomas, Head of Law and Governance.
Finance - Jackie Yates, Director of Finance and Efficiency

Recommendation(s): The Board Member is recommended to:

- (1) Appoint members to all those bodies to which CEB made appointments last year, as detailed in Appendix 5 to this report; and appoint members to those bodies to which Area Committees made appointments last year, also listed in Appendix 5;**
- (2) Note the list of appointments to Charities listed in Appendix 6, and make appointments for those that expire in 2011;**
- (3) Note that the appointments listed in Appendix 7 do not expire until 2012;**
- (4) Note the appointments to outside bodies made by Parish Councils within the City Council's area as shown in Appendix 8;**
- (5) Note, and where considered necessary, comment upon the feedback information contained in Appendices 1, 2 and 3;**
- (6) Note that the Scrutiny request detailed in paragraph 5 of the report has been carried out,**

(7) Agree the recommendation that no outside body be removed from the list on this occasion, and ask the Head of Law and Governance to carry out the actions outlined in section 5 of the report, in order to ensure that the outside body register be kept up to date;

(8) Determine the appointment to the District Council's Network Assembly shown in paragraph 6.3 of this report;

(9) Remind all Members of Council appointed to outside bodies of the importance of completing and returning the annual feedback forms in order that the effectiveness of groups can continue to be monitored

(10) Ask the Head of Law and Governance to arrange for a review of all the outside bodies to be carried out within the next twelve months, along the lines outlined in paragraph 8.3 of the report.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Analysis of Outside Bodies – details of number of representative from the City Council, representatives' role, expected number of meetings and any grant aid received from the City Council;

Appendix 2: Details of Councillor Involvement – notice of meetings given, meetings attended;

Appendix 3: Summary of comments from Members on organisations to which they were appointed;

Appendix 4: Full list of Outside Bodies, updated 2011, now including expectations of our appointed delegates where supplied by the body

Appendix 5: List of current nominations to appointments made by Executive Board, and details of Appointments made by the old Area Committees which have now expired and for which fresh appointments are needed;

Appendix 6: List of Charity Representatives (not all are City Councillors) and their expiry date;

Appendix 7: Appointments made by the old Area Committees which do not expire until 2012;

Appendix 8: Appointments made by Parish Councils to Outside Bodies

Appendix 9: Risk register

1 Background

The City Council currently nominates members to serve on 56 outside bodies and 11 charities. These range from local community associations and Policing boards to national organisations such as the Local Government Association General Assembly and the National Association of British Market Authorities.

The number of Councillor representatives appointed to each body and their roles vary. The majority sit on the committee of the body to which they have been appointed, with one or two acting in an advisory role or simply being invited to attend a meeting. All the Charity representatives are Trustees of the Charity.

The City Council has grant aided 17 of the outside bodies to which we appoint, and 1 charity in 2011/2012. This totalled £810, 276.

The above details are contained in **Appendix 1**

2 Councillor Involvement

2.1 Members who had been appointed to a body for 2010/2011 were sent a feedback form and asked to complete it, detailing:

- If they had been given notice of meetings by the organisation;
- If they had been involved in any special projects;
- Number of meetings to which they had been invited;
- Number of meetings they had managed to attend.

2.2 Not every member returned his or her feedback form, but most did. A summary of their comments is attached as **Appendix 2**.

3 Feedback on organisations from Councillors

3.1 Members were asked to make comments and observations on their feedback form about the body to which they had been appointed

3.2 Not every member returned his or her feedback form, but most did. Generally, the comments made were positive. Members had engaged with the groups in different ways; for example by attending meetings and providing information and advice, or by becoming involved with projects that the group organised. A summary of their comments is attached as **Appendix 3**.

4 Contact from the Outside Bodies.

4.1 Every outside body or charity to which the City Council appoints was sent a copy of the information that we hold on it, with a request that they update, confirm or correct this information as appropriate.

4.2 No response to our request in 2011 that their details be updated was received in 2011 from the following organisations. Some of them have not contacted the Council for several years. The date upon which we last had contact from them is in brackets after the name of the organisation. Notwithstanding that the organisations have not contacted the office with their updated details; they clearly have been in contact with members on some occasions, as members have reported their interactions with these groups. In some cases, for example Fusion Arts, the Councillor has made positive comments about the way the group is operating. It is not felt appropriate to summarily cease appointments to a group which is active and has member involvement, simply on the basis that it has not been in contact with the office. It would be appropriate to remind the group, when a fresh appointment is made, of the importance of maintaining contact with the Council as a body, especially where updating contact details was concerned. Section 5 of this report (paragraph 5.4), deals with this issue further.

- **APSE (2006)** – this group has invited the Councillor to meetings, but the Councillor was unable to attend;
- **Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground Management Committee** Letter returned marked “gone away, 2011. No response from the alternative contact provided by a Councillor;
- **Donnington Doorstep Management Committee (2006)** – the Councillor has been invited to meetings of this group and has been in contact with it;
- **Fusion Arts (2006)** – the Councillor has attended meetings of this group and commented positively upon it;
- **Headington Community Association (2004)** – the Councillor has attended meetings of this group and commented positively upon it;
- **Littlemore Community Association** - the Association corrected information by email to give name of new contact; however he did not respond when the update sheet was sent on to him;
- **North Oxford Association Council (2005)** – Two Councillors have attended meetings of this group and report that it is active;
- **Northway Community Association (2006)** - the Councillor has attended meetings, but reports some administration problems over the notification of dates and decision making. The group is trying to address these;
- **Oxford Asian Cultural Centre (2004)** – this group has not contacted the Councillor at all during the past year;
- **Oxfordshire Museums Council (2004)** – the Councillor has attended meetings during the year;
- **Regal Area Community Association (2005)** – the Councillor has attended meetings of this group, but reports that contact from it has been sporadic;
- **Risinghurst Community Association (2006)** - the Councillor has attended meetings of this group, and reports that the group is working hard to provide community activities;
- **Rose Hill Community Association Management Committee (2002)** – the Councillor has attended meetings of this group as and

when required. The group did not require him to attend every meeting and they have agreed contact that suits all parties;

- **South Oxford Community Association (2008)** - Two Councillors have attended this group, and report positively upon it as an active, well run group;
- **Wood Farm Community Association (2008)** – the Councillor has attended meetings of this group and reports that they are in a time of transition as their Centre is being rebuilt

4.3 As a result of the feedback exercise, both with Councillors and with the outside bodies, there are questions about the existence of a number of outside bodies and the City Council's involvement with them. Some questions have been answered, but others are still being investigated. These are as follows:-

- CCTV Monitoring Group/CCTV Inspections

Enquiries have revealed that there are no formal meetings or inspections of CCTV facilities. Instead, Members are very welcome to go and visit the CCTV HQ on a voluntary basis. This was confirmed in response to our enquiry made earlier this year. This information was not previously noted, and so the group remained on the database as an outside body. This is something for which appointments would be welcomed and might be useful, but it does not seem to be a formally constituted body.

The report to CEB concerning nominations to Outside Bodies in 2010 informed members that they would need to complete and return a confidentiality form in order to become an Inspector. This was an essential requirement of the role and should be adhered to.

- Oxfordshire Members Affordable Housing Group.

This group used to be administered by West Oxfordshire District Council. However, it has now folded and become part of the "SPIP" (Oxfordshire Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Partnership) group, which is administered by Oxfordshire County Council. Councillors Turner and Price have attended meetings on behalf of the City Council. The lead authority and Chair rotates on an annual basis and has just transferred to the City Council.

- Oxfordshire Supporting People Commissioning Body

The Councillor representative has commented that he believes that this body could be removed from the list. The convention in recent years has been to send the Head of Housing to these meetings, and this has worked well. Officers are checking the precise status of the group and the need for a representative.

- Radiolink Steering Group

Despite the fact that this group has made no contact with Councillors, it does still exist. Once the letters to all bodies go out, contact with this group will be formally re-established, and it will be asked to be sure to make contact with Councillors on a regular basis.

- Oxfordshire Ethnic Minorities Enterprise.

The appointed Councillor thought that this group had folded. Investigation has revealed that it has in fact moved, but it did not inform the Council of its change of address. Clearly, then, letters to it have not reached their destination for several years. A telephone call to the group has produced a request for City Council representation to continue, as they are keen for a relationship with the Council. Once the letters to all bodies go out, contact with this group will be formally re-established.

- Non Ecclesiastical Charities of St Mary Magdalen

The Charity has indicated that it does not wish to have a second appointee. The one it had failed to attend meetings and therefore the appointment has been terminated. They see no need to appoint a replacement.

- South Oxfordshire Adventure Playground Executive Committee

One Councillor has had no contact from this group, the other reports that they are a well run organisation with committed volunteers. It may be that the group did not realise that two delegates would be sent to it, and so only made contact with one.

- Florence Park Community Association

Similar situation to the one above; one Councillor has heard nothing, but puts this down to a change of Secretary; the other has been fairly well involved.

- Oxford Leon Trust

The Secretary emailed to say that she was no longer involved with the group and wished to be removed from our records. She stated that she had made this request before. However, she did not respond to further enquiries with the name of a contact to whom enquiries could be addressed in future. Information will be sought from the Councillor representatives.

- Oxford Asian Cultural Association

This group has not contacted the Councillor. It has not returned its contact update form since 2004.

- National Association of British Market Authorities

This body has once again expressed disappointment that Oxford had not been represented at meetings during the past year. It hoped that someone would attend in the future.

5. Scrutiny request to critically appraise outside bodies.

- 5.1 The Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in July 2010 made the following recommendation:-

(1) Critically appraise the existing list of outside bodies in order to confirm usefulness, and where possible rationalise the number;

(2) Seek advice from each outside body concerning the expectations of the elected representative and confirm what assistance could be provided by Councillors.

(3) Ask the Head of Law and Governance to implement the suggestions from the Committee.

- 5.2 The second recommendation has been carried out. Each outside body, when they received a copy of their details for confirmation or correction, was also asked to confirm their expectations of the Councillor representative and indicate what other assistance a Councillor might be able to offer. Of the bodies who replied to this, not all answered these questions, but many did. Where this information has been supplied, it has been added to the database of information that the Council holds on each outside body. A copy of this is attached as **Appendix 4** – the full list of Outside Bodies. A copy of the relevant sheet will be supplied to each Councillor representative upon his/her appointment.

- 5.3 The first recommendation has proved to be more problematical. How can a body be appraised for its usefulness? The main source of information on this is the Councillor representative. Appendix 3, as already cited above, contains a summary of Councillors views on the body upon which they have served. Not every Councillor returned his/her feedback form, but approximately 86% did. The bodies about which there are questions are listed in paragraph 4.3 above. Of these, there is only one organisation that has not been in contact with either the Councillor or the Council since 2004. Questions about other bodies have been answered, or are in the process of being answered. There have been no adverse comments from those Councillors who have returned their feedback forms. Therefore it is not suggested that any outside bodies be removed from the appointment list on this occasion.

5.4 It is suggested that those bodies that have not returned their feedback form within the past 2 years be contacted again, by telephone where a contact number is given, and asked to confirm their current contact details (even if they are not asked to confirm anything else at this stage). Each body should then be sent a second copy of the feedback form with a reply paid envelope to assist in its return. This does incur a cost, but these actions should help ensure that the database of outside bodies is as up to date as possible when the review is conducted in 2012.

6. **Appointments needing to be made.**

Appendix 5 and Appendix 6 detail:

- Appointments previously made by CEB, with current nominations from the Administration (Appendix 5);
- Appointments previously made by South East Area Committee, East Area Parliament and Central South and West Area Committee for 2011/2012. These appointments have now expired and fresh ones are needed (Appendix 5);
- Expiry dates for appointments to Charities, with those expiring in 2011 highlighted. It is important to note that not all the Charity representatives are City Councillors. (Appendix 6).

The six Area Committees have made appointments to outside bodies since their inception. However, Area Committees have now ceased to exist. There might however be scope to re-examine the whole issue of the appointments previously made by all Area Committees when the current appointments made by North, North East and Cowley Area Committees (referred to in paragraph 6.2 below) expire in 2012; as opposed to considering three now and three next year.

Appendix 7 shows the appointments previously made by North, North East and Cowley Area Committees. As these were made for 2 years, they do not expire until 2012 and so do not need to be considered here. They are supplied for information.

There is one **new** appointment to be made. The Board Member is asked to consider making this appointment. It is for the District Council's Network Assembly. This body has been in existence for approximately 2 years and states that this is the first time that it has asked for formal representation. In the past, it has assumed any delegate would be the Leader of the Council, unless informed otherwise. This body holds three meetings a year, one at the Local Government Conference and two at Local Government House in London. Its stated aims are:-

- To provide a strong voice for District Councils;
- To represent almost all the 201 District Councils in England;
- To support District Councils to improve efficiency, share learning and implement good practice.

- 6.4 There is one **replacement** appointment needed, for the City of Oxford Charities. Councillor Price has indicated a wish to resign from this body, so a replacement would be needed. This is listed under **Appendix 6**. The appointment would expire in December 2012.
- 6.5 Appointments made by the four Parish Councils within the City Council's area are shown in **Appendix 8**. This is for information only.

7. **Nominations from Other Groups.**

The Leaders of the Liberal Democrat and Green Groups were asked to nominate representatives to sit on the bodies formerly appointed by South East, East and Central South and West Area Committees.

The Green Group has made the following nominations, to bodies previously appointed by East Area Parliament:-

Donnington Community Association Management Committee	Councillor Williams
Donnington Doorstep Management Committee	Councillors Benjamin and Williams
East Oxford Action Charity	Group has been wound up, so no appointment needed
East Oxford Community Association Management Committee	Councillor Young
Oxford City Local Policing Board	Councillor Benjamin
Rose Hill and Donnington Advice Centre Management Committee	Councillor Williams

8 **Future Considerations**

- 8.1 It has been noted in this report that some groups have not made contact with the Council for many years, even though in most cases Councillors have been attending their meetings. Nor has there been, for some considerable time, a thorough evaluation of the value of sending a Councillor to a group, both in terms of value to the Council as a body and value to the local community (and even to the group itself).
- 8.2 Some information that we hold on a particular body is now very out of date, despite repeated requests from us for an updated copy. Scrutiny requested that a "critical appraisal" of each group be carried out, but in order to do this most effectively, we need to be sure we hold up to date information on each group. It would also be helpful to know in which ways a group was of value to the local community.

8.3 Therefore, it is recommended that a further review of the outside bodies is carried out within the next twelve months. This should include:-

- (1) Gathering the most up to date terms of reference from each group, and ensuring that all contact details are in order, as outlined in paragraph 5.4 of this report;
- (2) Asking Councillor representatives to outside bodies to assess their experience of the value of the group, and in particular its contribution to the Council's corporate objectives and the local community.

8.4 As a result of this exercise, it may be that the number of outside bodies to which the Council appoints will be reduced from 2013.

9 Level of Risk

9.1 A risk assessment has been undertaken and the risk register is attached at **Appendix 9**. All risks have been mitigated to an acceptable level.

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List of background papers: None

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