

AGENDA ITEM

CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

23 September 2009

ANNUAL MEMBER REPORTS

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: IAN PARKER

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 To ask the Corporate Affairs Committee to consider proposals to discontinue Member annual reports and replace with annual Member newsletters.

BACKGROUND

- 2 At previous meetings of the Member Development Working Group, concerns were expressed in relation to the level of take up and effectiveness of Member Annual Reports.
- 3 Since their introduction, there has been a steady decline in the number of councillors producing annual reports and there has been concern about the relatively low take up of copies from residents.
- 4 The Working Group agreed to look at alternative ways to promote the work of Councillors both in the ward and at the Town Hall.
5. Officers have explored the possibility of introducing annual Member newsletters, which would contain some key elements of the annual report i.e. objectives and participation in meetings.
6. The benefits of producing annual Member newsletters in place of Member annual reports are explained below:
 - Ward members can collaborate on the Newsletters should they wish, rather than producing individual Annual reports.

- There are no time constraints or timescales; therefore Members can produce an annual Newsletter anytime during the year.
- Members have greater freedom and flexibility (subject to certain conditions) in the type of information and images they might wish to include.

Distribution of the annual newsletter

7. Members will be provided with sufficient numbers of annual newsletters for every household in the Member's ward. It is anticipated that Members will hand deliver their newsletters or distribute during surgeries.
8. The majority of reports being provided to Members will be black and white, however 50 coloured copies will be made available to Members should they wish for their own personal use.

Costs

9. Annual Reports

In 2005 each Member was given the opportunity to have 200 Annual Reports printed. However, take up was low and only 4500 copies were produced in total.

10. Annual Newsletter

It is proposed to produce newsletters for each household in a ward, per Member. On average this equates to 2500 households per ward. An annual newsletter would consist of a double-sided A3 sheet, folded down the middle i.e. 4 sides.

	Average Cost Per Report/Newsletter	No of Reports	Average Cost Per Member Cost	Total Possible Expenditure
Total Annual Report (2005)	£0.50	200	£100	£4800
Annual Newsletter (2009) Mono	£0.21 (mono)	2500	£118.81	£5702.88
Annual Newsletter (2009) Colour	£0.55	50	£27.50	£1320

11. The final costs of producing the newsletter will ultimately depend on the uptake from Members. However, it is envisaged that savings can be made, if Members are prepared to jointly produce a report within their ward.
12. It is perceived that costs for annual newsletters will be met from the Members' Office budget as were the annual reports in previous years.
13. An example of the newsletter is attached at appendix A.
14. Should the Corporate Affairs Committee support this new approach, further work would need to be undertaken on a revision to the editorial policy currently used for

annual reports, including further guidance on the officer support that can be provided.

15. RECOMMENDATION

16. That the Corporate Affairs Committee agrees to discontinue the production of annual Member reports and replace with annual Member newsletters.

17. REASON

18. Annual Member newsletters will allow greater freedom and flexibility for Members to promote their work both in the ward and at the Town Hall.

19. There are no time constraints in producing the annual newsletters.

20. AUTHOR

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