

SURVEY RESULTS - 2010

Authority	Shropshire Council
No of Councillors	74
Controlling Group	Conservative
Secretarial	<p>A Members Secretary and two assistants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a single and central point of contact for support services to members • Full confidential and personal secretarial support which includes typing letters/memos/emails - some from dictation machine • Booking rooms for meetings and refreshments • Make travel and accommodation arrangements for conferences and keep records • Provide basic IT advice i.e. help with Lotus Notes/emails, assist with internet and intranet access on p.c.'s in the group rooms • Assist with photocopying and printing • Provision of business cards, • Prepare and supply surgery posters • Advertise members surgeries in the local press • Supply stationery – paper, printer cartridges, compliments slips, envelopes etc and keep a record • Maintain the information held in the members' lounge • Maintain and update the members' library • Maintain database of councillors contact details • Keep up to date the electronic diaries for some members • Deal with enquiries from members of the public etc concerning Members • Payment of invoices • Administer the use of VISA Purchasing Card – keeping accurate records • Keep information lists as up to date as possible so when relayed to members it is accurate <p>One of the assistants helps with Member Development</p>



SURVEY RESULTS - 2010

Authority	Cheshire East	Cheshire West & Chester	Herefordshire
No of Councillors	81		58
Controlling Group	Conservative		Conservative
Secretarial	<p>Provide personal and secretarial services to all Members of the Council, working in consultation with the Leader's PA, the Mayor's PA and the Cabinet Secretary, to ensure the most efficient and effective use of time.</p> <p>Act as first point of Service/member contact.</p> <p>Respect, understand and implement political conventions/protocols to ensure that cross party group confidentiality is not breached.</p> <p>Produce documents which may be of a political, conditional or personal nature accurately and to deadlines.</p> <p>Undertake research of a non-political nature, often complex and sensitive, to ensure Members have relevant information and advice.</p> <p>Manage and co-ordinate Group Leaders and Lead Members' commitments to ensure workload planned effectively.</p> <p>Prepare paperwork/agenda for Council Leader.</p> <p>Arrange transport and accommodation as required.</p> <p>Assist in the arrangement of</p>		<p>Full confidential and personal secretarial support which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typing of letters/memos/emails Booking rooms for meetings Make travel and accommodation arrangements for conferences Arranging all seminars involving members Provide general IT advise in the absence of an IT officer Support and administer the members development policy group Process members' claims and any invoices Information gathering / problem solving and assistance with ward work Analyse members' training evaluation sheets and feed back to officers Administration and registration for newly elected members Administration for retiring councillors Maintain the information held in the members' lounge and group rooms Maintain an extensive database of councillor's details Maintain councillor meeting attendance figures Maintain and update the members' library

	<p>Member learning and development. Maintain, as webmaster, the Council's website in respect of Democratic Services information. Administration in respect of Members' Allowances and Expenses.</p>	<p>Collate and administer councillors' evaluation of councillors' induction Order and distribute stationery for members Format and keep up to date documents for the council's website Maintain the registers of members' declarations of financial and other interests and gifts and hospitality Provide administrative support to the full Council meeting Collate responses to any FOI requests involving members Prepare and place any statutory advertisements Carry out any research to other authorities regarding best practice Administer publication subscriptions for members Maintain and update the database of councillors' appointments to outside bodies Maintain and update the corporate diary</p>
<p>Newsletters Posted out Electronically Hand Delivered Locations</p> <p>Websites</p>	<p>Weekly Members' Bulletin sent by email by Communications Team</p> <p>No</p>	<p>Yes, produced monthly Yes Yes Yes to pigeon holes Members lounge</p> <p>Some members have websites but not produced or supported by the Council</p>
<p>IT Equipment</p> <p>Phone lines</p>	<p>IT equipment in Members Rooms at 3 locations. PC's or laptops and printers at home Can claim line rental & broadband</p>	<p>Desk top or lap top with printer No Only Cabinet Members All Stationery – no limit</p>

<p>Blackberry's</p> <p>IT</p> <p>Consumables</p> <p>Other</p> <p>Assistance</p> <p>Accommodation</p>	<p>line rental if don't have designated Council line. All calls paid for out of basic allowance</p> <p>Cabinet Members, Group Leaders & some members due to personal circumstances</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Booking rooms etc for meetings</p>	<p>Limited research, non-political. Dedicated support to two councillor champions (Children's & Energy)</p>
<p>Cabinet Members</p>	<p>Has a PA</p>	<p>Members' Lounge & general office space with 2 desk tops & 2 docking stations for lap tops.</p> <p>Dedicated PA to 8 Cabinet Members – maintain diaries, prepares/publishes cabinet & cabinet member decisions</p>
<p>Leader/Deputy</p>	<p>Has a PA</p>	<p>Dedicated PA to Leader & Chairman. Maintains diaries etc & takes minutes at Group meetings. Arranges all civic events & annual council luncheon</p>
<p>Chairman/Vice Chairman</p>	<p>Mayor's PA – see Job Description</p>	<p>Arrange attendance at meetings/events on behalf of chairman & process monthly claims</p>
<p>Other Facility/Service</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>No political assistants</p>

Authority	Northumberland	Staffordshire	Telford & Wrekin
No of Councillors	67	62	54
Controlling Group	Minority Administration (LibDem)	Conservative	Conservative
Secretarial	Routine correspondence. Arrange surgeries "Sign post" queries/complaints Accommodation/Travel We have 3 staff in total – PA to Leader/Deputy Leader PA to Chairman Member Support Officer [mainly Back Benches] All cover for each other	Assistance with correspondence Assistance with allowances/expenses Member development (programme of internal/external development events, based on the member PDP process) – dedicated officer Booking of courses/seminars/travel and hotel accommodation Diary management – populate diaries with dates of meetings etc	Booking accommodation, travel, training and conferences. Provision of stationery and sundry items. Assistance with photocopying and printing Provision of business cards, surgery leaflets and posters Setting up surgeries if required
Newsletters	No	Monthly after each Cabinet meeting. Information collated by ICT & Communications Support Officer	Not currently
Posted out Electronically Hand Delivered Locations		Circulated electronically	No – have own page from contact details on borough website
Websites		Some do. Assistance to set up offered	Desktop computer, printer and scanner at home Landline at home Yes Paper & consumables unlimited supply but monitored
IT Equipment	Laptops & printers. Some Portfolio Holders have additional equipment at County Hall Rental paid Executive members have rather than mobile Reasonable quantities allowed	Desktop computer/printer/desk/chair/ filing cabinet Cabinet members are issued with laptop computers Yes, broadband lines on request. Pay line rental for members who have own broadband lines Smartphones	
Phone lines			
Blackberry's			
IT Consumables		Paper & Cartridges (no limit)	

<p>Other Assistance</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Supporting members with their community grant applications - dealing with the administration processes and budget control of the grant fund – dedicated officer. Each member has a budget of £10,000 to spend on their local community. Assistance with case management – provide a one stop shop for members. Deal with member generated research requests. Provide IT support for day to day technical problems – dedicated office. Provide a “buddy” scheme for newly elected members (33 at the 2009 local elections!), with a named officer as a first point of contact for support. Group rooms provided for 4 groups. Member resource room for all members</p>	<p>Sign posting, member development, general support as requested</p>
<p>Office/Other Accommodation</p>	<p>Member support (mainly backbenchers)</p>	<p>Shared office to ‘hot desk’ plus use of meeting rooms Support from Cabinet Office Team - Each Executive Support Officer has 3 to 5 members dependant on demand/workload. Plus 2 PA roles who work with Exec Support Officers to support 10 Exec Members (8 cabinet plus Leader & Deputy Leader Management of diaries; arranging all meetings/events, travel, accommodation, briefing notes, background papers/information.</p>	<p>Have own PA support, office space and meeting room</p>
<p>Cabinet Members</p>			

		<p>Sending apologies, re-scheduling any meeting clashes. Attend meetings to take minutes/actions if required. Screening of phone calls and actioning as appropriate. Processing of expenses. Processing of post/correspondence.</p>	
<p>Leader/Deputy</p>	<p>Dedicated PA</p>	<p>The Leader and Deputy Leader each have their own office, with meeting facilities, and receive support from the Senior Executive Support Officer.</p> <p>In addition to above they receive the following support; Management of email accounts, actioning requests etc as appropriate. Managing attendance across all members for annual conferences (CCN, LGA etc), including booking of places, travel, accommodation, attendance at workshops, dinners, events etc. Royal Garden party nominations and completion of paperwork. Processing all post including correspondence, liaising with appropriate officers to gather information, preparing draft responses for approval. Management of regular meetings for the Cabinet, preparation of agenda items, relevant reports, minutes/actions (Informal Cabinet etc).</p>	<p>Have own PA support, office space and meeting room</p>

		<p>Ensuring they are up to speed with any important/urgent information, developments/changes that they need to be aware of.</p> <p>Processing enquiries/requests for information on their behalf, providing a briefing on progress where necessary.</p> <p>The Cabinet Office work very closely with the Chief Executive's Office who provide support the Executive Officers of the authority.</p>	
Chairman/ Vice Chairman	Dedicated PA	<p>Civic Support Team (2.5 FTE) provides dedicated support to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the County Council and to the Lord Lieutenant for Staffordshire including the arranging of civic functions and general secretarial support.</p>	Mayor had part-time officer to manage diary, engagements, Civic & Charity events
Other Facility/ Service	None		None

Authority	Wiltshire	Wolverhampton	Worcestershire
No of Councillors	98	60	57
Controlling Group	Conservatives	Conservative Liberal Democrat Coalition	Conservative
Secretarial	Conferences and Course places are booked for members along with any rail tickets. All requests for attendance on the above are first approved by the Councillor development group	<p>Members Support office has 2 staff who deal with any non-political admin/secretarial work for all 60 Councillors. Please see attached draft job description which is currently under review</p> <p>Liaise with Leaders of the Political Groups, Councillors and Political Assistants.</p> <p>Provide a single and central point of contact for support services to Members.</p> <p>Assist Members with casework through the Administration of the Councillors Enquiry Service including progress chasing and monitoring and assistance with the development of an online enquiry service.</p> <p>Provide efficient management, coordination and payment of all Members allowances; advise and guide on procedures/regulations relating to allowances; monitor claim forms; data collection and liaise with finance and audit as appropriate.</p> <p>Assist in processing Members Enquiry Forms and implementing procedures to follow-up and monitor action.</p>	<p>Review being undertaken – Current Structure – Member Support Manager (resigned post will go), PA to Chairman/Member Support Officer (4 days currently), Member Support Officer (vacant may not be filled), PA to Leader (1 day)</p> <p>As required –Secretarial support to all Councillors, research, arranging meetings, dissemination of information to and from Councillors, liaising between officers and members, booking conferences, maintaining web pages, members allowances, production of Councillor Handbook and diary pages, assisting with work on Member Development programme, assisting with Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillor allowances, assisting with Councillor ICT difficulties, problem solving for Councillors</p>

Manage the provision and training on the use of IT equipment including PDA's and/or mobile phones.
 Provide a central point of contact for assistance with IT problems.
 Manage the supply of stationery to Members including business cards, letterheads, travel cards, identity cards, Members Surgery notices and posters etc.
 Confidential typing service for Members and assistance with access to p.c's, laptops, internet and intranet access, printers, photocopiers, fax machines and personal postal pigeonholes.
 Diary / email account management and correspondence.
 Deal with enquiries from members of the public etc concerning Members, MP's, Wards and Constituencies and case work.
 Administer Councillors Web pages on the Committee Management Information System and the Council's Corporate Website and develop individual Members Web pages.
 Manage and update, where necessary, the Protocol and procedures relating to the issue of mobile telecommunications to Elected Members.
 Administer all arrangements in connection with Conference/Seminar bookings for Elected Members

including travel arrangements by the use of VISA Purchasing Card.
 Keeping accurate records of all expenditure of said card.
 Assist Elected Members with casework through the processing of Members Enquiries and contact with relevant departments in and outside the Council.
 Assist the Principal Learning and Development Facilitator in offering a range of training and development opportunities to support Members in fulfilling their responsibilities in the Council and community.
 Responsible for ensuring all necessary recording systems associated with the provision of Members Services relating to Members are adequately maintained, extended and available, where required, for public inspection.
 Provide research and respond to enquiries by Members, Chief Officers and members of the public where required.
 Responsible for the online completion and annual renewal of Member Data Protection notifications including the processing of payments and record maintenance.
 Provide information relating to Members if required for FOI requests.
 Monitor Budgets relating to Members Services and ensure Value for

	Money on any expenditure.	
Newsletters	Yes, some produce own – secretarial support not involved although occasional photocopying requested. One member produces own surgery notices	Member Communication Officer who is part of the Planning, Economy & Performance Directorate (leaving in September – post may not be retained) who issues regular bulletins. No Yes No Libraries
Posted out Electronically Hand Delivered Locations		To members not on email Members on email & on Intranet No No
Websites	Some members have websites – not supported by council – looking at for future. Scrutiny Task Group set up to consider how to support members in their locality	Each member has own page in Corporate website, updated regularly by members Support. Some have own political websites
IT Equipment	Lap top / desk top, printer scanner for home use	PCs in each Party room plus phone lines & fax machines. Printer/scanner etc in general Members area
Phone lines	£250 pa technology allowance – covers IT consumables, telephone lines & broadband	Phone lines is party rooms Offered a Council Issues Mobile Phone or PDA
Blackberry's	Cabinet members – Smartphones – other members by request	Palmtreo PDA's provided on request
IT Consumables	Printer cartridges & paper	Paper. Ink cartridges
Other Assistance	None	No
Accommodation	Group rooms at County Hall and	Hire free of charge Council owned Chairman and Leader have offices.

	Area hubs provided & equipped.	building in their ward for surgeries	The Conservative & LibDem Groups have dedicated rooms. Two minority parties access to shared room when required. Have a Members Lounge.
Cabinet Members	Dedicated office with meeting room. Each has desk, telephone & docking station. Two PA's support	All members are offered same admin/secretarial support.	Cabinet Members with Responsibility have 4 offices to share.
Leader/Deputy	Has own office & PA support	Each political party has a political assistant	Leader has mobile provided but pays for private calls
Chairman/Vice Chairman	Chair has secretarial/admin support to help with civic duties		County car currently on a 3 year lease agreement and use a driver service. Predominantly used by the Chairman when attending official functions but can be booked by senior Councillors and Chief Officers if there is a saving against public transport costs – a recharge is made where appropriate.
Other Facility/Service	None	Each political party has a political assistant	None

Review of services provided to elected members

1. GENERAL SERVICES

We are carrying out a review of the services we provide to elected members.

We are seeking detailed constructive comments on each aspect of how to better support elected members in carrying out their frontline duties.

1. We currently provide the following range of secretarial and administrative services.

- * Typing correspondence
- * 24 hour dectaphone answering machine
- * Provision of IT consumables and stationery, including compliment slips and business cards
- * Arranging and promoting local member surgeries
- * Organising travel and accommodation for seminars/conferences
- * Freefone facility

How could we improve the current range of services available to better help you?

2. Which of these services do you find most helpful and why?

3. Are there any services that you do not use at present and if so, is there a reason?

Review of services provided to elected members

4. Which of these services could be provided more conveniently or effectively in other ways?

5. What other services do you think would be valuable to assist you in your frontline, community leadership role?

2. MEMBERS' IT / BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

1. Are you satisfied with the level of IT support which is available to you?

2. How could the current range of IT services for members be improved?

3. How can the council make greater use of IT to disseminate papers for council meetings or give you greater access to useful information?

Review of services provided to elected members

4. What use (if any) do you make of the members' web pages / councillor corner, and how could these be improved?

3. COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

1. What additional support and information do you need from the council to support you in your community leadership role? (eg, would a dedicated neighbourhood support officer be useful)

2. How are you informed about things that are happening in your division and do these arrangements meet your needs well?

3. How could this be improved?

4. What events/activities do you get invited to as a local councillor?

Review of services provided to elected members

5. Of the invites you receive, which events do you attend?

6. How could the council assist your greater involvement with community activity (voluntary groups, liaison with local businesses, etc) within your division?

7. How could the council make greater use of your community knowledge and network of local contacts to provide better local services?

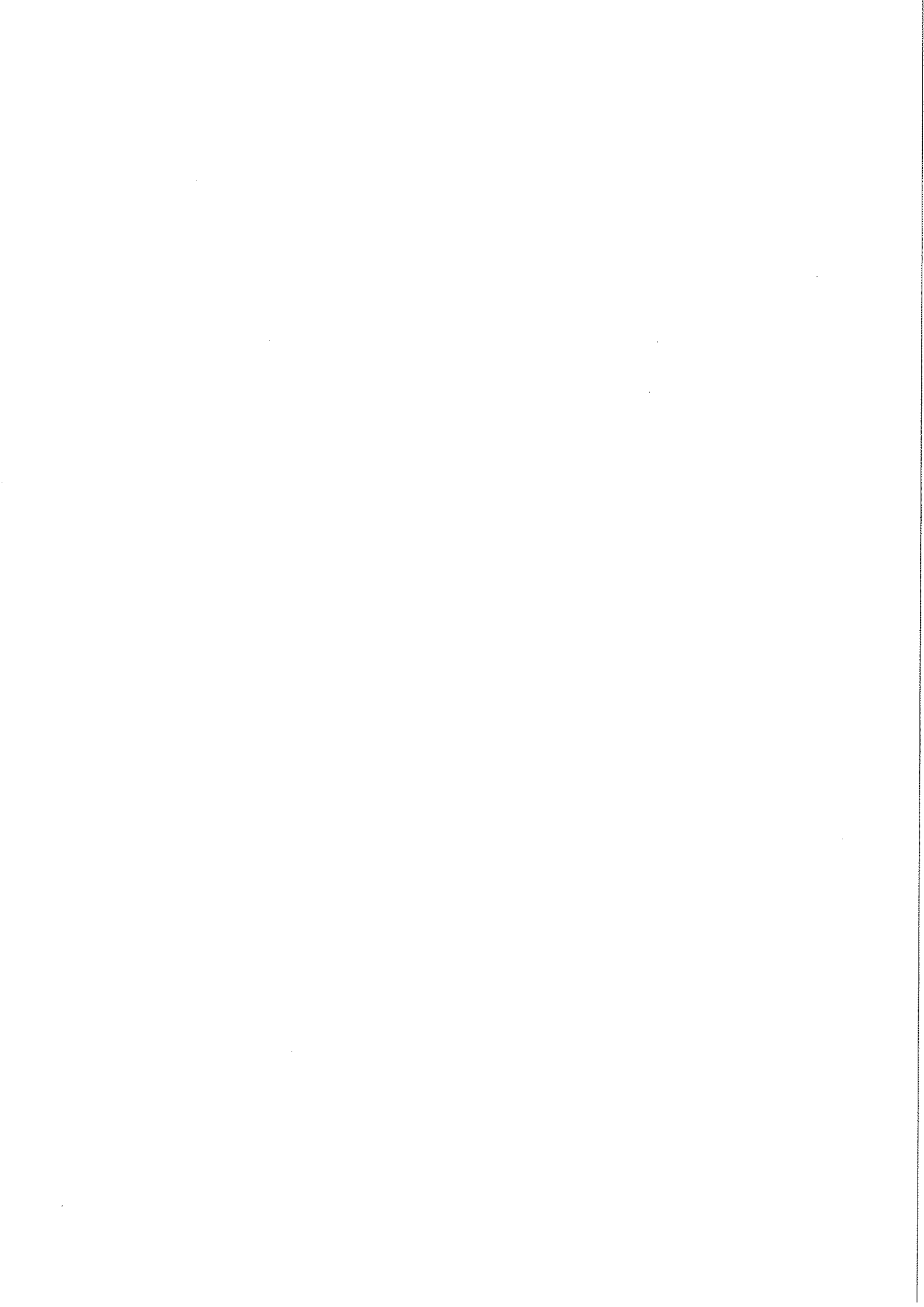
8. What measures do you think should be used by local people to judge the effectiveness of their local councillor?

Review of services provided to elected members

9. What training or development opportunities (eg, induction checklists of actions for newly appointed members, monitoring by or shadowing of, other members, skills influencing, negotiating, mediating and brokering consensus), would help you perform your community leadership role more confidently and effectively?

4. ANY OTHER COMMENTS

1. Please add any further comments or observations on current service levels and possible improvements which would be helpful to you.





<u>Committee and date</u>
Task and Finish Group
1 November 2010

<u>Item No</u>
4
Public

REVIEW OF SERVICES PROVIDED TO ELECTED MEMBERS

Responsible Officer Richard. Thomas

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1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of the survey was to establish if the current services offered to Members are sufficient and whether additional support would assist Members in their community leadership role.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Task and Finish Group is requested to agree the requested improvements in support for elected Members set out in Section 4 of the report; the need for Member training in the use of electronic information, as set out in Sections 5 and 6; and the Community Leadership role of frontline Members set out in Sections 7 and 9, including the provision of new training and development opportunities.

REPORT

3.0 Introduction

- 3.1 In August a survey form was issued to all Members inviting responses in relation to four particular topic areas, namely:

- General service offered by the Member's Secretariat;
- IT support and accessibility;
- Community leadership; and
- General comments on service levels and possible improvements.

- 3.2 To enable responses to be given in the most convenient way Members were invited to complete the questionnaire either electronically or in writing.

- 3.3 To date 48 replies have been received, giving a response rate of approximately 65%. The detailed responses to the individual questions are set out in Appendix 1 to this report. The most important finding is the relatively low level of usage of the services available. Although the current range of services compares favourably to the eight other Councils contacted, details of which are contained in Appendix 2, a significant number of respondents (60%) say that they do not use either the typing (35%) or dictation (25%) service and prefer to compose their own correspondence.
- 3.4 Indeed, some Members stated that services could be provided more conveniently and at lower cost by allowing them to access a letter template and to update a 'blog' on their own webpage. Similarly, few members (10%) seem to utilise the freephone service which costs £x per annum to provide and discontinuance could provide an immediate saving.
- 3.5 The majority (52%) only use Members' Services for ordering and collecting stationery which is a service which could be undertaken in a number of different ways. The booking of surgeries, travel and accommodation another service that is well used by members, although 15% of respondents stated that they did not use the travel/accommodation booking arrangements because they could often locate cheaper travel and accommodation themselves.
- 3.6 Other comments regarding general improvements to the range of services on offer centre on the reinstatement of the pocket diary, the regular provision of up-to-date printed internal contact lists and the opportunities for Members' Services staff to manage individual members' diaries (15%) as some of them find it difficult to access the electronic diary remotely.
- 3.7 Some of the respondents who are not Shrewsbury-based (12%) would also like to see secretarial facilities located in the local area HQs so as to reduce the need for them to travel to Shirehall.

4.0 Matters for Consideration

- 4.1 The Task and Finish Group is requested to consider and agree the following requests from members for improved support:
- Provide access to Members' services at area headquarters;;
 - Re-introduce the paper internal telephone directory or investigate the alternatives;
 - Provide a list of key contacts to all members. (An updated list was distributed recently).
 - Provide letterheads and accessible templates to enable Members to type their own correspondence if they so wish;
 - Introduce diary management for members by the Members' Secretariat;

- Remove the freephone facility due to lack of use, (with consequent savings);
- Evaluate the travel and accommodation booking service to determine if the most cost effective methods are used;
- Re-introduce the paper Council diary or investigate the alternatives. (Members will recall the decision at the last meeting not to issue a pocket diary in future).

5.0 Members IT / Business Management

- 5.1 A very significant number of respondents (84%) regard the level of IT support as satisfactory. However, a small number (4%) favour a change in the operating system and email platforms, because the current systems do not meet their current needs.
- 5.2 A slightly larger proportion of respondents (12%) identified the need to improve members' IT skills through member training which would then make them less dependent on IT and Members' Services staff.
- 5.3 The need for further training was again seen as paramount amongst the 54% of respondents who either stated that they did not use the Members' area of the webpage (24%) or Councillors' Corner (30%) or who use them only occasionally. Training was also seen as the best way to encourage members to gain an increased understanding of the facilities available which includes electronic access to committee papers through the web site, as well as a variety of documents and other relevant information.
- 5.4 With regard to the Council diary, the recent decision not to produce a printed pocket version is at odds with the expectations of a small number of respondents. However, a further 15% of respondents would prefer to see the retention of paper based agendas and reports, rather than see any increased use of electronic media.
- 5.5 Clearly, knowledge levels amongst members about the types of information available electronically and how to access it varies. Perhaps the comments in paragraph 5.4 above are a reaction to actual or perceived difficulties in accessing material by electronic means. Hopefully, as these comments pre-date the most recent training given to all political groups on the content of the website, getting the best out of Councillors' Corner and also the Members' webpages, the number has diminished. Nevertheless, the related criticism that members receive a large number of communications that are not specific to their needs and, consequently, spend a lot of time searching for info that is, has to be borne in mind.
- 5.6 Given the differing levels of knowledge about using electronic media it is clear that additional training in this area is essential if the Council wishes to utilise

more electronic applications, to communicate with and provide additional information/services for members.

6.0 Matters for Consideration

The Task and Finish Group is requested to agree the following changes, based on comments from members:-

- Improve the information about and training on navigating Councillors' Corner.
 - Training sessions have been provided to all political groups since the survey was undertaken.
- Review the arrangements for providing general information to members.
 - Hopefully, the improvements to the Councillors' Corner and the introduction of the monthly Bulletin will have addressed most of the concerns about general information for members.
- Review the capabilities of the Council's electronic diary, with a view to improving its functionality.

7.0 Community Leadership

- 7.1 Members were invited to comment on the value they would place on dedicated neighbourhood officer to assist them to develop and maintain their role as community leaders. While some respondents (15%) believed that this could be helpful, the same proportion asked for the precise nature of this role to be defined before committing themselves. They regard such operational support as putting up posters and the distribution of leaflets as being of particular benefit. However, a much more significant proportion (39%) felt there was no need for such support at all.
- 7.2 A number of respondents again expressed their concerns about the availability of local service-based information to them. They want a list of Directorate contacts to be established, circulated and maintained so as to enable most enquiries to be directed to the correct officer. They also consider that the lack of up-to-date information in a consistent style actually inhibits them in their role as community leaders. Some respondents (9%) consider the greatest support they could receive would be the dates when major projects or maintenance works are to take place within their divisions prior to that work commencing. A further 6% consider there is a need for officers to treat their requests for information with more urgency
- 7.3 Respondents appear to receive information about events planned for or occurring in their division by a variety of means. The majority (52%) state that they have to find the information themselves through the media. A further 38% of respondents tends to receive this information from Council staff, either personally or via email. The majority feel that the current arrangement do not meet their needs or the needs of their communities. Just over a quarter

(27%) of respondents state this could be improved by officers or departments informing them direct and a further 12% feel that a policy or protocol should be established to ensure that information is distributed in an agreed fashion, rather than being left to individuals to decide. Conversely, 21% of respondents said that they consider the current service to be satisfactory and do not feel that it requires any improvement.

- 7.4 The opportunity to identify the types of local events members support revealed that a very significant proportion of respondents (70%) attend as many events occurring in their Division as possible. Most members have an extensive knowledge of their local communities and the events attended is wide-ranging. Apart from the usual Parish/Town Council meetings, they include school, community ad fund-raising events, police, charity and residents' meetings, as well as Local Joint Committee meetings.

Some members would like to develop this role but state that they need more training in such matters as mediating (15%), directorate/service matters (15%), mentoring (12%) and public speaking and control (12%).

- 7.5 In response to the question how could greater involvement in the local community be promoted, respondents highlighted the ability to recover travel costs, the general promotion by the Council of members a community leaders. A large proportion (39%) believe that members should be actively involved in decisions affecting their divisions and, where appropriate, they should be consulted, or at least informed, before any local action is taken. Some members suggested their involvement on project boards and the ability to have control over some part of the budget within their own divisions.

8.0 Matters for Consideration

- 8.1 The Task and Finish Group is requested to agree the following changes based on comments from members:

- Improve communications between officers and local members about key events and actions in their Divisions.
 - Since the survey, members have received two monthly bulletins informing them of key Council decisions which they can use to brief their local parish/town councils.
- Reinforce the terms of the Local Member Protocol with regard to planned works/events prior to their commencement.
 - The protocol has been reviewed and found to be fit for purpose.
- Better promote the role of local members as community leaders.
 - Action is being taken to define members' role as community leaders and to enhance their standing in their local communities, including:-

How should members be involved in decisions which affect their own divisions?

Should the Council introduce devolved budgets for individual members?

Should public information be provided identifying the achievements of local members?

- Conduct a skills audit to analyse and determine the skill levels and training needs of local members.
 - This work is ongoing.

8.2 The reaction of the majority of respondents to the question about measuring their own personal effectiveness was that this should be left to the judgment of the electorate at local government elections. This is not entirely consistent with other points made elsewhere in the survey. Some respondents consider that effectiveness could be measured by reference to their accessibility, (18%) their individual profile in their local communities (18%) and time taken to respond to (12%).

9.0 Conclusion

9.1 It is probable that a 65% return is statistically robust enough to make a realistic assessment of members' views on the quality and range of Members' Services. And if those who did not reply are assumed to be satisfied with the facilities currently available, there appears to be high levels of satisfaction among those members using the service. But, despite this much of what is being provided is used by relatively few of the membership.

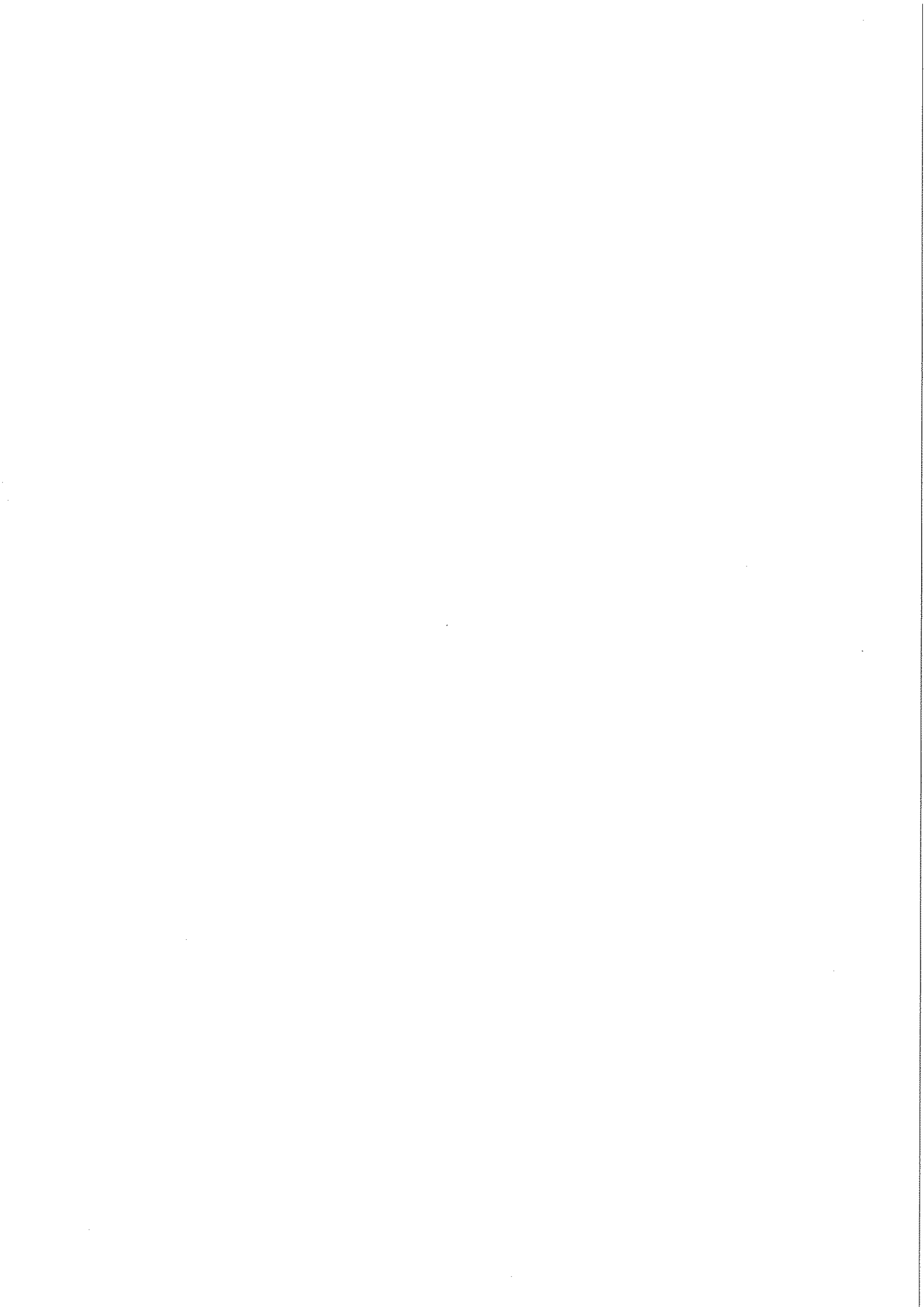
9.2 While some parts of the current service are valued, they would be undertaken more efficiently elsewhere and savings could be made by discontinuing those parts which have been either superseded or are now classes as unnecessary. Consequently, it is proposed to conduct a review of the efficiency of Members' Services function.

9.3 The views of respondents on how they could be assisted in their community leadership role remain uncertain. While a third felt that direct and dedicated support would be of assistance, a greater proportion felt that there was no need for this.

9.4 One of the areas where a more consistent view could be discerned was in regard to training. Members feel that their community leadership role could be enhanced through the development of new specific skills in this area. A community leadership and development framework will be presented to the next meeting of the Task and Finish Group.

9.5 Some concern has been expressed about the timelines of information provided to members by officers. While the necessary requirements are

contained in the Local Member Protocol, which has been endorsed by the Task and Finish Group, these responses indicate a lack of consistency in the way the protocol is being implemented at present. This is probably due to a lack of clarity amongst the senior officer corp and attention will be drawn to its contents once the structural review has been completed



Survey Responses - General Services

Question 1 We currently provide the following range of secretarial and administrative services:

- Typing correspondence
- 24 hour dictaphone answering machine
- Provision of IT consumables and stationery, including compliment slips and business cards
- Arranging and promoting local member surgeries
- Organising travel and accommodation for seminars/conferences
- Freephone facility

How could we improve the current range of services available to better help you?

The following trends were identified:

- Paper Council diary
- Paper internal telephone directory / departmental contacts list
- Member services available at area headquarters
- Access to letterhead with Member details electronically
- Training to enable Members to undertake tasks themselves
- Access to electronic diaries / Diary / meeting organisation
- Full list of services available
- Members able to provide a list of problems / issues that will then be directed to the correct department for action
- Conference calls

Main improvements identified

- Access to electronic diaries / Diary / meeting organisation (15%)
- Paper Council diary (12%)
- Paper internal telephone directory / departmental contacts list (12%)
- 17% felt that the services offered at present were sufficient

Question 2 Which of these services do you find most helpful and why?

The following trends were identified:

- Provision of stationery and consumables
- Typing / Dictaphone
- Arrangement of surgeries
- Organising travel / accommodation
- Advice and signposting

Main services identified as most helpful

- Provision of stationery and consumables (52%)
- Typing / Dictaphone (23%)

Question 3 Are there any services that you do not use at present and if so, is there a reason?

The following trends were identified:

- Typing
- Dictaphone
- Travel / Accommodation arrangement
- Freephone
- Surgery organisation
- All
- Diary Management

The main reason identified for not using the services is that Members undertake the tasks themselves.

Main services identified as not used

- Typing (35%)
- Dictaphone (25%)
- Travel / Accommodation arrangement (15%)
- Freephone (10%)

Question 4 Which of these services could be provided more conveniently or effectively in other ways?

The following trends were identified:

- Members type their own letters

- Members undertake all tasks themselves
- Member services available at area headquarters
- Leave the services as they are

Main improvements identified

- Leave the services as they are (30%)
- Member services available at area headquarters (12%)
- Members type their own letters (9%)

Question 5

What other services do you think would be valuable to assist you in your frontline, community leadership role?

The following trends were identified:

- Webpage / Blog for Member updates – accessible to public
- Answers to frequently asked questions
- General awareness of what is available
- Nothing – keep services at they are
- Better IT accessibility
- Paper internal telephone directory / departmental contacts list
- Paper Council diary

A wide range of other services were listed within individual responses.

Main improvements identified

- Webpage / Blog for Member updates – accessible to public (21%)
- Nothing – keep services at they are (15%)
- Paper internal telephone directory / departmental contacts list (6%)

Survey Responses - Members IT / Business Management
--

Question 1

Are you satisfied with the level of IT support which is available to you?

The following trends were identified:

- Yes (84%)
- No (4%)
- Mostly (9%)

Question 2 How could the current range of IT services for members be improved?

The following trends were identified:

- Training
- Change operating system / email platform
- Nothing to improve
- Webpage with blog

A wide range of other services were listed within individual responses.

Main improvements identified

- Nothing to improve (24%)
- Training (12%)
- Webpage with blog (9%)

Question 3 How can the council make greater use of IT to disseminate papers for council meetings or give you greater access to useful information?

The following trends were identified:

- Better designed / more accessible 'Councillor Corner' with papers listed
- Provide paper copies
- Access via IT / email
- Profile members information needs so that only the required information is directed

Main improvements identified

- Provide paper copies (15%)
- Better designed / more accessible 'Councillor Corner' with papers listed (12%)

It is apparent that the knowledge of the services available electronically is inconsistent, therefore, training in navigation and 'Councillor Corner' may increase electronic accessibility.

Question 4 What use (if any) do you make of the members' web pages / councillor corner, and how could these be improved?

The following trends in usage were identified:

- Not used (24%)

- Hardly used (30%)
- Used (24%)

Main improvements identified

- More training / understand capacity (21%)
- Reduce complexity / increase accessibility (15%)
- Increase functions of diary (9%)

Survey Responses - Community Leadership
--

Question 1

What additional support and information do you need from the council to support you in your community leadership role? (e.g. would a dedicated neighbourhood support officer be useful)

The following trends were identified:

- Informing Members of what work is to be carried out in their area before work commences
- Officers to reply promptly to enquiries
- Directorate contacts
- Advice on what is available
- Operational support – e.g. putting up posters, distributing leaflets

Main improvements identified

- Informing Members of what work is to be carried out in their area before work commences (9%)
- Officers to reply promptly to enquiries (6%)
- Directorate contacts (6%)
- 15% stated that a dedicated neighbourhood support officer would be useful
- 15% stated that they already had a neighbourhood support officer
- 39% stated that dedicated neighbourhood support officer was not needed
- 15% stated that further role definition was required before deciding

Question 2 How are you informed about things that are happening in your division and do these arrangements meet your needs well?

The following trends were identified:

- Media (52%)
- Email / internet / blackberry (20%)
- Regeneration Officer / Staff (18%)
- Public (9%)
- Own means (1%)

The majority felt that the current arrangements did not meet their needs as they were rarely informed by the Council and found the information from other sources, particularly the media.

Question 3 How could this be improved? (based on question 2 of this section)

The following trends were identified:

- Officers to keep Members informed
- Policy and protocol created to ensure information is disseminated
- Email information
- Opportunity for Members to comment on press releases prior to release to media

Main improvements identified

- Officers to keep Members informed (27%)
- Policy and protocol created to ensure information is disseminated (12%)
- 21% felt that the current service was satisfactory and does not require improvement.

Question 4 What events/activities do you get invited to as a local councillor?

The following trends were identified:

- School events
- Community / Fundraising events
- Church events
- Town Council

- Parish Council
- Police / Community meetings
- LJC's
- Equality and Diversity groups
- Local / County Shows

A wide range of other events were listed within individual responses and several stated that there were too many events to list.

Question 5 **Of the invites you receive, which events do you attend?**

The following trends were identified:

- All possible (70%)
- Local only (12%)
- Community events (15%)

Question 6 **How could the council assist your greater involvement with community activity (voluntary groups, liaison with local businesses, etc) within your division?**

The following trends were identified:

- Pay travel costs
- Promote Members as community leaders
- Create a directorate contact list
- Better communication of key Council messages
- Promotion of Members and their contact details
- Training and ongoing support
- Diary of events
- Reduced workload
- Dedicated local officers
- Liaison with other wards / areas

Main improvements identified

- Diary of events (9%)

A wide range of other improvements were listed within individual responses.

27% felt that no further support was required.

Question 7

How could the council make greater use of your community knowledge and network of local contacts to provide better local services?

The following trends were identified:

- Ask / Inform Members before local action
- Greater involvement
- Members on project boards
- Control of budgets within their ward / division
- Named officer to direct requests to

Main improvements identified

- Ask / Inform Members before local action (39%)
- Members on project boards (9%)

Question 8

What measures do you think should be used by local people to judge the effectiveness of their local councillor?

The following trends were identified:

- Council elections
- Response times
- Accessibility
- Profile
- Questionnaires
- 'Rate your Councillor' website
- Seeing action

Main methods identified

- Council elections (30%)
- Accessibility (18%)
- Profile (18%)
- Response times (12%)

Question 9

What training or development opportunities (eg, induction checklists of actions for newly appointed members, mentoring by or shadowing of, other members, skills influencing, negotiating, mediating and brokering consensus), would help you perform your community leadership role more confidently and effectively?

The following trends were identified:

- Induction checklists
- Mediating / Negotiating training
- Mentoring
- knowledge of all services and directorate contacts
- Public speaking / Meeting control training
- IT training

Main training needs identified

- Induction checklists (15%)
- Mediating / Negotiating training (15%)
- Knowledge of all services and directorate contacts (15%)
- Mentoring (12%)
- Public speaking / Meeting control training (12%)

A wide range of other training needs were listed within individual responses.

Survey Responses - Any Other Comments

Question 10 Please add any further comments or observations on current service levels and possible improvements which would be helpful to you.

The following trends were identified:

- Happy with current situation and services provided by Member Services
- Initial first contact with the public is important
- Officers see themselves as employees of the Council and not as promoters for their local community
- Online list of Officers and their job descriptions would be a useful tool to identify responsible officers
- Be informed of decisions before they are released to the public
- Paper diary was a useful resource and should be reintroduced

- Press cutting service was a useful resource and should be reintroduced
- General training should be improved
- Include Members in identifying priorities for cost savings
- Council should be run like a business



Review of services provided to elected Members

Summary of Findings

September 2010

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Question 1

We currently provide the following range of secretarial and administrative services.

- **Typing correspondence**
- **24 hour detaphone answering machine**
- **Provision of IT consumables and stationery, including compliment slips and business cards**
- **Arranging and promoting local member surgeries**
- **Organising travel and accommodation for seminars/conferences**
- **Freefone facility**

How could we improve the current range of services available to better help you?

The following trends were identified:

- Paper Council diary
- Paper internal telephone directory / departmental contacts list
- Member services available at area headquarters
- Access to letterhead with Member details electronically
- Training to enable Members to undertake tasks themselves
- Access to electronic diaries
- Diary / meeting organisation
- Full list of services available
- Members able to provide a list of problems / issues that will then be directed to the correct department for action
- Conference calls

Main improvements identified

- Paper Council diary (12%)
 - Paper internal telephone directory / departmental contacts list (12%)
-

Question 2

Which of these services do you find most helpful and why?

The following trends were identified:

- Provision of stationery and consumables
- Typing / Dectaphone
- Arrangement of surgeries
- Organising travel / accommodation
- Advice and signposting

Main services identified as most helpful

- Provision of stationery and consumables (60%)
 - Typing / Dectaphone (27%)
-

Question 3

Are there any services that you do not use at present and if so, is there a reason?

The following trends were identified:

- Typing
- Dectaphone
- Travel / Accommodation arrangement
- Freephone
- Surgery organisation
- All
- Diary Management

The main reason identified for not using the services is that Members undertake the tasks themselves.

Question 1

Are you satisfied with the level of IT support which is available to you?

The following trends were identified:

- Yes (82%)
 - No (6%)
 - Mostly (9%)
-

Question 2

How could the current range of IT services for members be improved?

The following trends were identified:

- Training
- Change operating system/ email platform
- Nothing to improve
- Webpage with blog

A wide range of other services were listed within individual responses.

Main improvements identified

- Nothing to improve (24%)
 - Training (12%)
 - Webpage with blog (9%)
-

Question 3

How can the council make greater use of IT to disseminate papers for council meetings or give you greater access to useful information?

The following trends were identified:

- Better designed / more accessible 'Councillor Corner' with papers listed
- Provide paper copies
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Main improvements identified

- Provide paper copies (15%)
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It is apparent that the knowledge of the services available electronically is inconsistent, therefore, training in navigation and 'Councillor Corner' may increase electronic accessibility.

Question 4

What use (if any) do you make of the members' web pages / councillor corner, and how could these be improved?

The following trends in usage were identified:

- Not used (24%)
- Hardly used (30%)
- Used (24%)

Main improvements identified

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- Reduce complexity / increase accessibility (15%)
- Increase functions of diary (9%)

Question 4

What events/activities do you get invited to as a local councillor?

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- Diary of events
- Reduced workload
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- Liaison with other wards / areas

Main improvements identified

- Diary of events (9%)

A wide range of other improvements were listed within individual responses.

27% felt that no further support was required.

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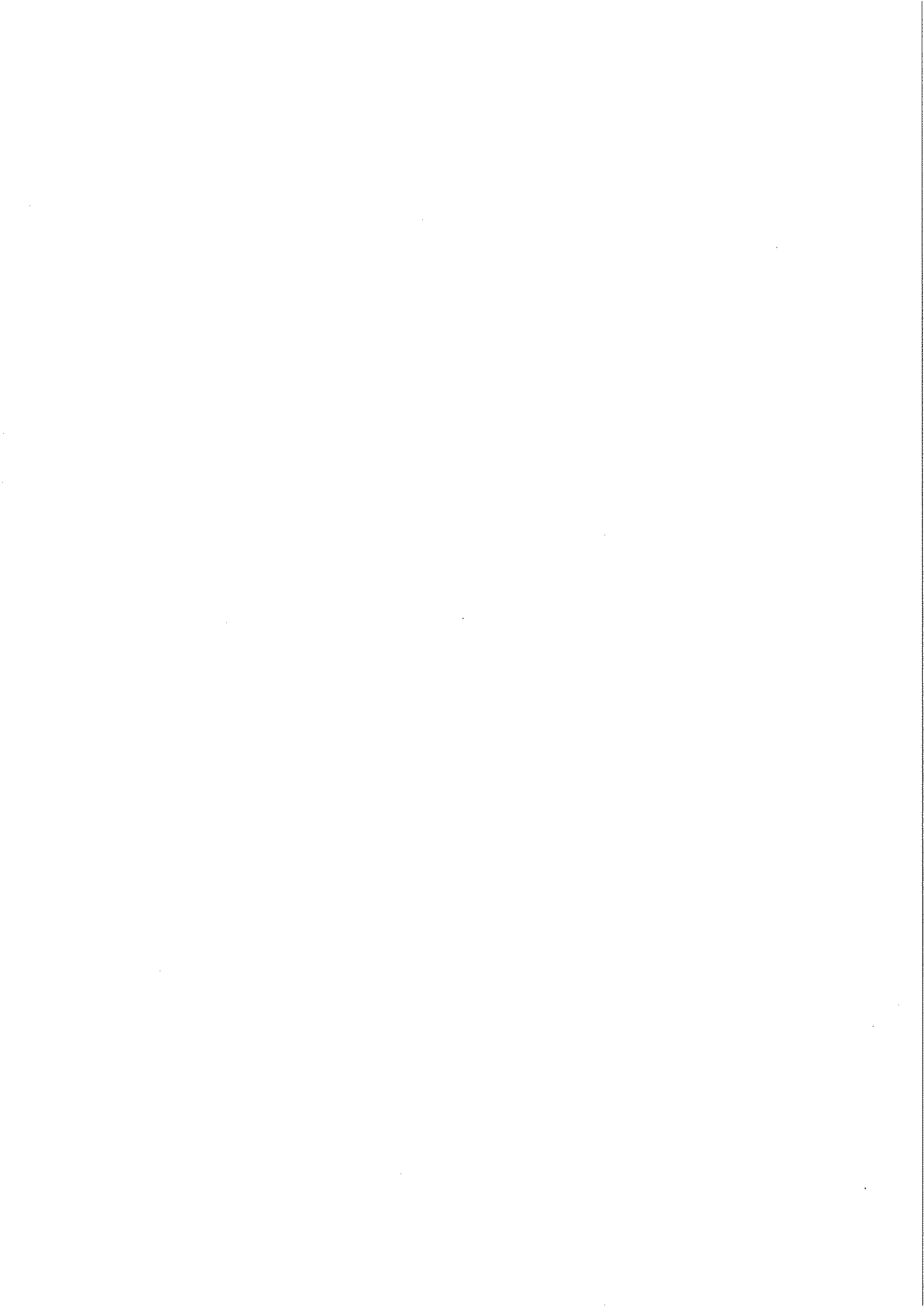
Any Other Comments

Question 1

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- Include Members in identifying priorities for cost savings



Elected Member Role Description

1. Accountabilities

- To the Division and its communities and to Full Council.

2. Role Purpose and Activity

▪ **Community Leadership**

- To represent the community, to serve them all fairly and equally, promoting tolerance and cohesion.
- To engage with and champion the interests of the local community.
- To encourage the community to participate in the governance of the area.
- To develop an in-depth understanding of local concerns, by consulting the community especially the most vulnerable.
- To create and develop partnerships with and between all sections of the community to encourage them to do more for themselves and ensure resources are used effectively to meet the needs of the area.
- To regularly communicate with the community using e.g. newsletters, emails, phone or local media, to keep local communities informed and to manage expectations.

▪ **Making Decisions and Overseeing Council Performance**

- To contribute to the debate at all Council meetings attended, reaching and making informed and balanced decisions, overseeing and improving the outcomes for both your Division and for Shropshire as a whole.
- To contribute to the formation and scrutiny of the council's policies, budgets, strategies and service delivery.

▪ **Representing communities and the Council**

- To accurately represent the community to the Council and the Council to the community.
- When appointed, to represent the Council on local outside bodies, as an appointee of the Council, promoting common interest and co-operation for mutual gain.
- When appointed, to represent and be an advocate for the Council on national bodies and at national events.
- Attending meetings of each Parish Council in a Member's division annually.
- To attend and pro-actively contribute to Local Joint Committee meetings.

▪ **Internal Governance, Ethical Standards and Relationships**

- To promote and support open and transparent government.
- To adhere to the highest standards of behaviour in public office and promoting respectful and effective relationships.

3. Values and Behaviours - To be committed to the values of the Council which are :

- To focus on meeting our customers' needs.
- Working and learning together.
- Valuing our differences.
- Building trust together.
- Making resources count.

Skills Required to Carry Out Effective Role as a Member

To fulfil their role as laid out in the role description, an effective Member requires the following:

Community Leadership

- Analytical thinking, including asking good questions and listening to enable people to feel heard.
- Facilitation and negotiation skills to enable different voices to be heard and to help groups work effectively together.
 - Creating conditions needed to build trust
 - Relationship building
- Self awareness, eg, being aware of own impact on situations and being able to manage own feelings and responses.
- Able to achieve results in different situations through influencing and using feedback effectively.
- Working with diverse groups to identify problems and find solutions effectively.

Making Decisions and Overseeing the Council's Work

- Knowledge and understanding of the Council's rules and procedures in relation to meetings.
- An understanding of strategic priorities and key policies.
- An understanding of the service contexts behind decisions.
- A basic understanding of local government finance and audit procedures.
- The ability to challenge ideas and contribute positively to policy development.

Representing the Community and the Council

- Good public speaking skills.
- Good presentation skills.
- The ability to persuade others and act with integrity.
- The ability to work with the media and to identify when additional support from public relations is required.
- Identifying when additional support is required.

Internal Governance, Ethical Standards and Relationships

- An understanding of the structure of the Council, roles of officers, members and different agencies and partners.
- Respect for, and desire to work with, different groups and individuals.
- Have knowledge and understanding of the Member/Officer Protocol.
- Have knowledge and understanding of Legal responsibilities e.g. Corporate Parenting, Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity and Regulatory Committees.
- A knowledge and commitment to the values of the Council.