

# ***Information/Discussion Paper***

## **Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 1st December 2005**

### **Co-option and meeting locations**

#### **1. Why has this come to scrutiny?**

- 1.1 This discussion paper has been produced at the request of the Chairman of Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide an early opportunity for the Committee to consider the way forward with regard to co-option of members onto this Committee and possible alternative locations for some future meetings.

#### **2. Summary of the Issue**

- 2.1 The Council's Constitution provides that each Overview and Scrutiny Committee is entitled to appoint for a period not exceeding two years:
- (a) up to three non-voting co-optees; or
  - (b) with the Council's consent, such greater number of non-voting co-optees as the Council determines
- 2.2 A co-optee does not have to be a Member of the Council
- 2.3 If a co-optee is there to represent a particular interest or organisation, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may agree to the appointment of one substitute per interest or organisation.
- 2.4 Co-opted members are subject to the Code of Members' Conduct
- 2.5 In addition the terms of reference for Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee allows one non-voting housing tenant co-opted member.

#### **3. Summary of evidence/information**

- 3.1 With the consent of Council the Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee has four non-voting co-opted members as follows:-

- Housing tenant representative (currently vacant)
- Arts representative (Arts Council)
- Youth representative (MAD)
- Disabled representative (Formerly Equals)

**3.2** Following the Borough Council elections in May 2006, the co-opted membership of the Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee will need to be appointed. As an initial consideration the Committee should determine if the current organisations represented by existing co-optees should be retained or the opportunity taken to approach new interest groups to assist the Committee in the light of new issues arising from the future work plan. In particular, it should be recognised that a properly constituted disability forum have expressed an interest in being formerly represented on the Committee as the co-opted disabled representative.

**3.3** At its meeting held on 3rd October 2005, Council agreed that Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee, working with the Cheltenham Federation of Tenants and Leaseholders, select a suitable person to be invited to sit on this Committee. The Chairman of Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee indicated that the selection process would have to be discussed and agreed by the Committee. The Chairman has subsequently met with Mr Kevin Daws, the Development Officer of Cheltenham Federation of Tenants and Leaseholders to discuss a process which could culminate in the appointment of a tenant representative on the Committee and she has agreed to provide an update on these proposals at the meeting.

## **4. Alternative meeting locations**

**4.1** It has been suggested that public attendance at Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings might be improved if meetings were occasionally held away from the Municipal Offices, particularly when issues of local concern may be discussed. Although the principle of doing so is accepted, Committee should be made aware that to do so would incur additional associated costs for example room hire and transporting and setting up loop and sound equipment if not available at the venue. At this time there is no budget provision for such additional costs.

## **5. Next Steps**

**5.1** The Committee is asked to consider:-

- Which areas of interest it would like represented on the Committee as co-optees?
- How should co-optees be appointed and from what organisations?
- Does the Committee want the organisations to nominate a substitute?

- 5.2** Democratic Services are in the process of producing some guidelines for co-optees and will provide training where relevant.

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### **Background Papers**

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<b>Accountability</b>	Deputy (Built Environment and Democracy)
<b>Scrutiny Function</b>	Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee