D328

Mayoral Advisory Committee
26 March 2013

Recommendations of the informal Mayoralty review group

1. Summary and reasons for recommendations

1.1 In late 2012 the Leader of the Council initiated an informal review of the Mayoralty function. The aim was to examine the role of the Mayor and build on the valuable contribution which it makes not just to civic events, but more widely to communities in West Suffolk.

1.2 The review group consisted of 11 Councillors, including the Leader and the Deputy Leader who chaired the informal meetings. Several past Mayors sat on the group and the last five Mayors were all invited to comment in advance of the first meeting. In addition a number of Councillors who brought different perspectives to discussions about the Mayor were also included. The Mayor's Secretary sat on the group and played a full part in the discussions.

1.3 This report brings the recommendations of that group to this Committee for discussion. The bulk of the recommendations relate to working practices and if agreed will need to be reflected in an updating of the Mayoralty Protocol.

2. Recommendations

That the Committee recommend to full Council:

2.1 the adoption of the practices outlined at Section 4.2 below; and

2.2 that any changes required to the Constitution, working practices and the Mayoral Protocol as a consequence of the recommendations in Section 4.2 be made.

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3.   Corporate priorities

3.1   The recommendations meet the following, as contained within the Corporate Plan:

(a)   Corporate priorities 1 and 2: *'Working together for strong, healthy and diverse communities and Working together for prosperous and environmentally-responsible communities'*.

4.   Key issues

4.1   The aim of the review was to ensure that the role of the Mayoralty remained relevant and was re-examined with a particular emphasis on using civic events to promote networking with relevant business and community leaders, and that events should be accessible to the communities the Council serves.

4.2   The recommendations emerging from the review are as follows:

Prime Purpose of the Mayoralty

4.2.1   The Mayoralty Protocol should emphasise that the primary purpose of the role is to promote community engagement, the economic vitality of the Borough and the democratic process. This should inform decisions about the acceptance of invitations to attend events and the choice of invitees to events hosted by the Mayor.

4.2.2   To support 4.2.1 there should be a specific briefing for the in-coming Mayor from the Head of Economic Development and Growth in advance of taking up the role to highlight practical ways in which the Mayor can contribute to the economic vitality.

4.2.3   The invitation lists for all civic events to be reviewed in the light of 4.2.1 with input from the Head of Economic Development and Growth and wider input from the Joint Leadership Team regarding other key partners to update and maintain the list. The review group to meet once more to do this.

4.2.4   The Mayor to host at least one event each year focussed on young people, for example a debate or an event aimed at young entrepreneurs.

4.2.5   The Mayor to give regular feedback to the Mayor's Secretary to pick up on any contacts made. The Mayor's Secretary to forward these to the relevant Councillor and/or officer.

4.2.6   Quarterly meetings be held between the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Head of Economic Development and Growth and the Mayor's Secretary to review the meetings attended and their relevance to the objective of promoting the economic vitality of the Borough.

4.2.7   An overview to be taken of invitations to the Leader and Mayor to ensure appropriate representation/awareness when both are attending an event and shared travel arrangements where possible.

Communications

4.2.8   That the Mayor's Secretary works closely with the Communications team to support appropriate media coverage.

4.2.9   That the Mayor's Secretary and Communications team produce a profile of each new Mayor to be issued to the press along with a photo at the start of the Mayoral year.

4.2.10   To help capture the work of the Mayor, the Mayor's Officer to routinely take photos of events attended. Photos can then be provided to the press to encourage them to cover the events without the need for a photographer.

4.2.11   The Mayor's Secretary and Communications team to consider the use of social media to publicise Mayoral activity.

The role of the Mayoral Advisory Committee

4.2.12   That an informal discussion between Members of the Mayoral Advisory Committee and potential nominees about the role of Mayor form part of the process of consideration of nominations for the office each year. This would provide the opportunity for both candidates and the Committee to explore the commitment involved and for any myths to be dispelled.

4.2.13   That a meeting of the Mayoral Advisory Committee be held in September/October each year for the Mayor to provide an update on the Mayoral year to date and future plans.

Budget considerations

4.2.14   Confirmation that the Mayoral budget is subject to the same scrutiny and constraints as any other budget. Decisions about acceptance of invitations and the provision of hospitality must be made in the light of the available budget.

4.2.15   Accountancy support to be given to assist the Mayor's Secretary in profiling the budget to match the pattern of spend.

4.2.16   Any underspend at the end of the Deputy Mayoral year to be transferred to Council reserves.

4.2.17   Set up a charity account for the fundraising so contributors are clear they are giving to charity, not the Council.

4.2.18   Move to a mix of electronic and paper invitations to reduce printing and postage costs.

4.2.19   Officers to continue to take all opportunities to achieve the best value from the available budget for the Mayoralty.

Mayor Making/Annual Council
For 2013 (for consideration alongside Report D326)

4.2.20 Hold the ceremony in the Athenaeum for one final year.

4.2.21 Process from Moyse's Hall.

4.2.22 Investigate whether the start time could be put back by an hour.

4.2.23 Introduce a fixed start time for the procedural meeting following Mayor Making.

4.2.24 Invite a school choir to perform while the Mayor is being robed.

4.2.25 Place a time limit on the length of the proposer's speech to engage the audience (detailed biographical information will be available to the press via the profile).

4.2.26 Those seconding to do so without an additional speech.

4.2.27 Give each Councillor the opportunity to nominate a maximum of two people from their ward to receive an invitation to Mayor Making.

From 2014

4.2.28 Move to a 2pm start followed by tea and cake for guests.

4.2.29 Hold the event in the Apex with the evening dinner at the Athenaeum.

4.2.30 Vary the starting point for the procession; options include Moyse's Hall and the Guildhall.

Civic Events and Twinning

4.2.31 Whilst appreciating the importance of all forms of remembrance the review group noted that over recent years the list of such services and events has grown. It was considered appropriate to identify which are borough-wide events that St Edmundsbury should lead, and which events are of a more local nature where the individual towns or organisations may wish to play a bigger role.

4.2.32 The Holocaust Memorial Service is predominantly a Cathedral event; liaise with the Cathedral over their role in running the event.

4.2.33 Limit any disruption from homecoming parades by investigating opportunities to combine the parade with the Armed Forces Day or Battle of Britain celebrations to keep costs contained and limit Angel Hill closures.

4.2.34 Following local discussions work towards including partners' contributions to the organisation of the Armistice Day service in Bury St Edmunds and the Haverhill service and parade.

4.2.35 Investigate a Spring Charity Ball hosted by the Mayor, rather than the New Year's Eve Ball.

4.2.36 The Apex to promote one charity concert per year for the Mayor, the timing to be agreed with the Apex management.

4.2.37 Review the twinning charters and potential options for twinning activities.

5. Other options considered

5.1 To continue with current working practices or to dispense with the role of Mayor are both alternative options, but the review group felt there was a valuable role to be played by the Mayor.

6. Community impact

6.1 **Crime and disorder impact** *(including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998)*

6.1.1 There should be no adverse impact in terms of Crime and Disorder.

6.2 **Diversity and equality impact** *(including the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment)*

6.2.1 A number of the recommendations reflect a desire to see opportunities for further community engagement in civic events resulting in wider involvement from all communities.

6.3 **Sustainability impact** *(including completing a Sustainability Impact Assessment)*

6.3.1 Some reductions in mileage will be achieved if these recommendations are accepted.

7. Consultation *(what consultation has been undertaken, and what were the outcomes?)*

7.1 This was an internal review with the review group being the consultees.

8. Financial and resource implications *(including asset management implications)*

8.1 The recommendations make clear that Mayoralty budget codes will be subject to the same scrutiny as all other budgets and that decisions about which invitations to accept need to be made in the light of the available budget.

9 Legal and policy implications

9.1 These recommendations largely relate to working practices but where they go beyond that acceptance of the recommendations by Council will be taken as authority to update the Constitution and the Mayoralty Protocol.

10 Ward(s) affected

10.1 All.

11. Background papers

11.1 The Mayoralty Protocol and budget monitoring reports.

12. Documents attached

12.1 None.