

# Gloucester City Council

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Audit and Governance Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>20 January 2020</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Review of Appointments to and Representation on Outside Bodies</b>		
<b>Report Of:</b>	<b>Jonathan Lund, Corporate Director</b>		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Budget/Policy Framework:</b>	<b>No</b>
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<b>Appendices:</b>			

## FOR GENERAL RELEASE

### 1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To report the findings of the work undertaken to review the effectiveness of the Council's annual appointments to outside bodies and to make recommendations for next steps.

### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Audit Committee is asked to consider whether it wishes to :-

2.1.1 Consult with all of the City Council's outside bodies with a view to:

- a) Retaining a formal appointing relationship where there is a clear and continuing partner or contracting relationship which is best served by making appointments to the organisation.
- b) Exploring alternatives to annual appointees where there is a governance or constitutional obligation which could be revised in a way which does not undermine the organisation concerned.
- c) Ending the practice of making annual appointments where practical and inviting the organisations instead to consider the direct appointment of City Councillors where they feel that such an appointment would be beneficial and would not create a conflict of interest.

2.1.2 The Committee may wish to consider whether the Council should also develop a protocol for appointees to outside bodies setting out the purpose of the appointments, the role and expectations on appointees, the Council's expectations of host organisations and a mechanism to either enable or require appointees to provide a short structured annual report on the work of the organisation they have been appointed to and their work as an appointee.

### 3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 In July 2019 the Audit and Governance Committee began a review on the Council's appointments to outside bodies and the contribution of Councillors appointed to outside bodies.
- 3.2 It was noted that Gloucester City Council makes annual appointments to the managing boards, committees or trusts of 28 external organisations. 19 Councillors and 12 external appointees are appointed. A full list of appointments is considered and approved at the Council's Annual Meeting each May and the list for 2019/20 is attached to this report at appendix 1.
- 3.3 In broad terms the outside bodies fall into one of five types:

**Partner Organisations** – Bodies which the Council works with in a contractual or transactional relationship to deliver City Council objectives.

**Collaborative Organisations** – Bodies which have objectives or purposes compatible with or contributing to the objectives of the City Council.

**Charities** – Charitable organisations with governing documents which allow or require appointees from the local authority – often because of longstanding practice or statute.

**Other Public Bodies or Joint Committees (Non-Executive)** – boards, committees or groups set up by other public bodies with representation from Gloucester City Council

**Other Public Bodies or Joint Committees (Executive)** – boards, committees or groups set up by other public bodies with executive representation from Gloucester City Council.

The table below categorises each of Gloucester City's 28 Outside Bodies

<b>Partner Organisations</b>	
1	Aspire Sports and Cultural Trust
2	Gloucester Docks Estate Company Ltd
3	Citizens Advice Bureau
4	Gloucester City Homes Board
5	Gloucester Culture Trust
6	Gloucester Historic Buildings Ltd
7	Gloucester Law Centre Management Committee
8	Gloucestershire Airport Ltd
9	Gloucestershire Airport Consultative Committee
10	Marketing Gloucester Ltd
<b>Collaborative Organisations</b>	
11	Barton and Tredworth Development Ltd
12	Gloucester Playing Fields Association
13	Gloslink

14	Llanthony Secunda Trust
<b>Charities</b>	
15	Charity of John Ward
16	Free Hospital Fund for Children
17	Gloucester Charities Trust
18	Gloucester Relief of Sickness Fund
19	Gloucester United Schools Charity
20	St Ann Society of Gloucester
<b>Non-Executive Public Bodies</b>	
21	Environment and Ecology Forum
22	Gloucestershire Economic Growth O&S Committee
23	Gloucestershire health and Care O&S Committee
24	Lower Severn Drainage Board
<b>Executive Public Bodies</b>	
25	LGA General Assembly
26	National Parking Adjudication Service
27	South West Councils
28	South West Provincial Council

- 3.4 The Committee agreed to consider whether engagement with and participation in each of these organisations was:-
- 3.4.1 Worthwhile to the host organisation in terms of the time, input and outcomes achieved by having a City Council appointee(s)
  - 3.4.2 Worthwhile to the City Council in terms of the time, input and outcomes achieved through providing a City Council appointee(s)
  - 3.4.3 Achieving appropriate two-way dialogue so that the corporate objectives of the City Council are communicated clearly to the host organisation and the issues facing the host organisation are fed into the forward planning of the City Council.
  - 3.4.4 Providing appropriate mechanisms for communicating, highlighting and showcasing the City Council's engagement with the host organisations.
  - 3.4.5 Holding City Council appointees to account for their contribution to delivering 3.4.1 to 3.4.4 above.
- 3.5 The Committee also noted that the study might make some or all of the following recommendations:-
- 3.5.1 Withdrawing representation in appropriate cases
  - 3.5.2 Adding to the Outside Bodies if gaps become apparent
  - 3.5.2 Amending the support given to appointees where necessary or appropriate
  - 3.5.3 Introducing mechanisms to facilitate greater reporting back to Council
  - 3.5.4 Providing an Annual Report on the City Council's engagement with its Outside Bodies.
- 3.6 A Councillor Working Group consisting of Cllrs N Hampson, D Norman and D Wilson was appointed to agree the mechanics of the study and to interview a

number of outside bodies and appointees. A questionnaire was developed and sent to all appointees and all of the outside bodies. A number of outside bodies (Aspire Trust and Citizens Advice Bureau) were invited to the Audit and Governance Committee on 18 November 2019 as part of the review process and to facilitate direct discussion with the Committee.

3.7 In broad terms the findings were as follows:-

**3.7.1 Worthwhile to the host organisation in terms of the time, input and outcomes achieved by having a City Council appointee(s)**

The response was mixed. Some pointed to the historical or constitutional nature of the appointments rather than the tangible benefits, one reported that the post was vacant and had been for some time. One questioned whether as many as seven appointees were necessary. Others said that the representation was valuable because of the contribution made by the particular appointee or by virtue of their role in the Council or as a representative of the community.

**3.7.2 Worthwhile to the City Council in terms of the time, input and outcomes achieved through providing a City Council appointee(s)**

Benefits were cited in terms of providing access to training, helping keep councillors informed and enabling the Council to show commitment to the organisation or the services they provide. Others thought that the benefits to GCC were debatable or were a hangover from the past that had never been questioned or reviewed. Stronger benefits were cited in terms of the Council's oversight of its assets or the delivery of contracted services.

**3.7.3 Achieving appropriate two-way dialogue so that the corporate objectives of the City Council are communicated clearly to the host organisation and the issues facing the host organisation are fed into the forward planning of the City Council.**

Responses to this question were less emphatic. The commitment of the appointee or their role within the Council appeared to affect the effectiveness of two-way dialogue. Other respondents either didn't answer or pointed to other mechanisms such as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and SLA or service contract meetings as the more effective way of having a dialogue with the City Council.

**3.7.4 Providing appropriate mechanisms for communicating, highlighting and showcasing the City Council's engagement with the host organisations.**

None of the respondents pointed to effective mechanisms except via other means, e.g. SLAs where they exist.

**3.7.5 Holding City Council appointees to account for their contribution to delivering 3.4.1 to 3.4.4 above.**

None of the respondents indicated that they were aware of mechanisms to hold appointees to account for their work as an appointee.

**3.8 Conclusions**

- 3.9 It is perhaps unsurprising that the responses and findings are mixed.
- 3.10 The Council appoints representatives to some outside bodies because that is the established custom and practice or because it is a longstanding historical or constitutional obligation. In these circumstances it would be worthwhile to seek to review and untangle these obligations in a way which does not undermine the organisations themselves.
- 3.11 Some appointments reflect past or current contractual or grant giving origins. A proportion of these are likely to remain valuable and relevant whilst others could be safely ended, with other arrangements (SLAs and contract management) providing more suitable ongoing relationships.
- 3.12 Some appointments may be worth maintaining because they emphasise or symbolise the Council's commitment to those organisations and/or the services they provide within the City.
- 3.13 The Committee may wish to instruct officers to consult with all of the City Council's outside bodies with a view to:
- a) Retaining a formal appointing relationship where there is a clear and continuing partner or contracting relationship which is best served by making appointments to the organisation.
  - b) Exploring alternatives to annual appointees where there is a governance or constitutional obligation which could be revised in a way which does not undermine the organisation concerned.
  - c) Ending the practice of making annual appointments where practical and inviting the organisations instead to consider the direct appointment of City Councillors where they feel that such an appointment would be beneficial and would not create a conflict of interest.
- 3.14 What appears to be more evidenced is that beyond making the appointment, the Council's expectations of appointees is not clear and the mechanisms for dialogue and reporting are weak.
- 3.15 The Committee may wish to consider whether the Council should also develop a protocol for appointees to outside bodies setting out the purpose of the appointments, the role and expectations on appointees, the Council's expectations of host organisations and a mechanism to either enable or require appointees to provide a short structured annual report on the work of the organisation they have been appointed to and their work as an appointee.

#### **4.0 Social Value Considerations**

- 4.1 The Council's engagement with 28 outside organisations demonstrates a high degree of commitment to working with partner organisations as harness the potential of the assets based in Gloucester and Gloucestershire. This report seeks to propose mechanisms to audit that engagement and make recommendations to strengthen and improve our approach to ABCD

#### **5.0 Environmental Implications**

5.1 Not applicable

**6.0 Alternative Options Considered**

6.1 Not applicable

**7.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

7.1 To enable to Committee to consider the findings of its study into Outside Bodies.

**8.0 Future Work and Conclusions**

8.1 Potentially as set out in paragraphs 3.13 and 3.15 above, but subject to the Committee's determination.

**9.0 Financial Implications**

9.1 None arising from the content of this report

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

**10.0 Legal Implications**

10.1 None arising from the content of this report

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

**11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications**

11.1 There is a risk that Outside Bodies will not engage fully with and consultative review.

**12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:**

12.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

**13.0 Community Safety Implications**

13.1 Not applicable

**14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications**

14.1 Not applicable

**Background Documents:** None