

CABINET

20 APRIL 2005

DELEGATION TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS – AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Contact Officer: Alison Gavin Tel No: 01962 848233 agavin@winchester.gov.uk

RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB831 – Developing Member Roles and Responsibilities – 3 March 2004

CAB892 – Amendments to the Constitution – May 2004

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

A general principle, which was established, was that Cabinet should normally meet on a monthly cycle with effect from the 2004/05 Municipal Year and that it should concentrate its work on the more strategic items of business. In order to achieve this it was proposed that a system of portfolio holder delegation should be established, as envisaged by the Local Government Act 2000.

This report sets out a proposal to extend portfolio holder decision making to approve Equality and Diversity Service Reviews and Action Plans.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That, subject to any comments Members may have, it be recommended to Council that the Constitution be amended to extend the Scheme of Delegation to Portfolio Holders (as contained within the Constitution, Part 3 – Responsibility for Functions, Section 3) to include a delegation to each portfolio holder to approve Equality and Diversity Service Reviews and Action Plans.

CABINET20 APRIL 2005DELEGATION TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS – AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTIONReport of Director of Human ResourcesDETAIL:1 Introduction

1.1 This report looks at an amendment to the scheme of delegation to portfolio holders.

1.2 It is important to note that the use of the portfolio system does not obviate the need to involve other Members in the decision-making process. It is a more streamlined system which does not involve formal committee meetings. Cabinet and the scrutiny committee system are always available for the more important decisions. The report to Cabinet CAB831 contains the areas of activity that were originally identified as potentially suitable for portfolio holder delegation.

2. Equality and Diversity Policy

2.1 The Equalities and Diversity Policy was developed in response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act which imposes a duty on local authorities and other public bodies to promote race equality. The Race Equality Scheme has been incorporated in to the Equality and Diversity Policy which addresses other issues including disability, gender and age discrimination.

2.2 The Equalities and Diversity Policy is contained in CAB601. It is a statement of how we will make equality central to the way we determine policies and deliver services. It sets out a Corporate and Employment Action Plan and a timetable for the Review of Services.

2.3 The intention is to review all services by considering policies and functions and assessing whether they could have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity for some groups and whether or not the service is fully accessible for people. The reviews consider how policies and access to services can be improved and action plans are developed to ensure that there is continued progress on addressing equality and diversity issues and improvement to customer service.

2.4 It is proposed that these service reviews and detailed action plans be approved by the relevant Portfolio Holder under the portfolio holder delegated decision-making process. These actions will then be incorporated into the business planning process and monitored and reviewed on a regular basis along with other objectives within the business plan. The action plans will also be published on the web site as part of the Council's duty to promote race equality.

2.5 Any proposed significant changes to policy, service delivery or changes with resource implication above those already allowed for within the officer or portfolio holder schemes of delegation would be brought to Cabinet for approval. This would also be subject to the agreed scrutiny process.

- 2.6 The Personnel Issues Group (PIG) who are representatives from all Directorates are reviewing the Equality and Diversity Policy and the Corporate, Personnel and Services Review Action Plans and Timetable to monitor progress and make amendments particularly following the restructuring of the council's services.
- 2.7 Housing, Local Taxes, Benefits and Tourism have already undertaken significant work on reviewing services and it is imperative that we expand the learning and sharing of good practice across the organisation and fully utilise this work. A support network will be established for staff undertaking the service review process and implementing the action plans.
- 2.8 The intention is to create a balance so that the more important decisions are retained by Cabinet, but this work can be dealt with under the portfolio holder delegation system. It is believed that the approval of the Equality and Diversity Service Review Action Plans would be suitable for this method of operation.

3 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

3 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- 3.1 Relevant to the aim of providing efficient structures and procedures to provide political leadership to the Council and District. Also relevant to the aim to review and implement improvements to corporate policy which supports the council's value of diversity and equality of opportunity for all.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 4.1 The proposed changes can be accommodated within existing resources

4.2 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None.

APPENDICES:

None