
**EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE
EXECUTIVE
HELD ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2003**

EX.222/03 OPTIONS FOR ELECTED MEMBERS' SUPPORT SERVICES

Portfolio Corporate Resources

Subject Matter

To consider a report from the Head of Member Support and Employee Services (ME.11/03) considering a number of options for increasing the support available to elected Members acting in their representational and constituency role.

The report was based on any appointments being non-political. If this was not the case, then the City Council would need to agree that the support be in accordance with Section 9 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

The report detailed the following three Options:-

Approach A - A pool of staff located in Member Support and Employee Services and available to support all Members irrespective of party.

Approach B - Individual Officers apportioned to support Political Groups.

Approach C - A proportional allocation of Officer time to each Political Group according to the number of seats held on the Council.

Should staff be allocated to work directly for Political Groups, this would be for work of a non-political nature in support of their work on the Council.

The Head of Member and Employee Support Services pointed out that a Democratic Engagement Best Value Review was currently being undertaken within the Authority, although it did not have specific implications for this Member support issue.

The Head of Finance pointed out that the costs of the various options ranged from £10,000 up to £74,000 and a supplementary estimate would need to be approved to fund appointments in 2003/04. However, given that the current projected revenue gap for 2004/05 onwards was estimated at over £600,000, it may be that the Executive would wish to recommend to the City Council to defer any immediate funding of these posts and consider the proposals further as part of the budget process.

Councillor Geddes, Corporate Resources Portfolio Holder, reported that the Executive did not wish to see the appointment of Political Assistants. The Executive supported Approach A, Option A5, i.e. the appointment of three part time Member Support Officers, available to all Members on demand with the scale of the posts to be assessed based upon the detailed job description and person specification. The duties of the posts should include certain administrative tasks so that Illustrative Option A7 for an Administrative Assistant would not be required.

The Executive asked that the report and this recommendation be referred to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee for comment and report back to the Executive prior to a recommendation being made to the City Council.

Summary of Options Rejected

Approach B and Approach C were rejected.

Decision

That Report ME.11/03 and the preferred approach of the Executive be referred to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee for comment and report back to the Executive at the 27 October 2003 meeting prior to any recommendation being made to full Council.

Reasons for Decision

Provision of administrative support for elected Members should be considered and progressed as the lack of support to Councillors is impacting on their ability to carry out their roles effectively. A concern of this nature emerged during the recent Comprehensive Performance Assessment exercise.