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REPORT TO:	COUNCIL	AGENDA ITEM: 25
DATE OF MEETING:	28 <sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2011	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE	OPEN PARAGRAPH NO: N/A
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	FRANK McARDLE (595700)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	ROLE OF CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	

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### **1.0 Reason for Exempt**

1.1 Not applicable.

### **2.0 Recommendation**

- 2.1 (1) That the duties outlined in paragraph 4.2 in the section "Role of the Chairman" be adopted.
- (2) That the NACO principle be adopted of accepting 'quality engagements', 90% of which should be within South Derbyshire.
- (3) That consideration be given to whether or not the Chairman's Charity appeal is continued or alternatively, whether the Chairman focuses on attending and raising the profile of charities within the District.
- (4) That the use of the civic car by other members and officers be promoted to save costs and reduce the environmental impact when a number of people are travelling to the same venue by car (subject to availability).
- (5) That e-mail be used for issuing and replying to invitations where possible.

### **3.0 Purpose of Report**

3.1 To consider the role of the Chairman of the Council as part of a review of the service provided by the Civic Office.

### **4.0 Detail**

4.1 A review of the service provided by the Civic Office has been undertaken to help improve efficiency and effectiveness, particularly in view of the local government modernising agenda. The priority is to assist the Chairman of the Council in promoting the Council's vision and core values, i.e. **"Make South Derbyshire a better place to live, work and visit"**, through:-

- Sustainable Growth and Opportunity
- Safe and Secure
- Lifestyle Choices
- Value for Money

#### Role of the Chairman of the Council

4.2 A lot of the prestige associated with the role is bound up in the traditions and ceremonial activities that surround the position. However, it is important to recognise that there is also a valuable role for the Chairman in promoting the Council's vision and core values. It is important to show that the role of the Chairman of the Council is being undertaken efficiently and to the benefit of the District. Therefore, each Chairman will be encouraged to have personal aims and objectives which are linked to the overall aims and objectives of the Council. The Chairman will be encouraged to:-

1. Project the image of the District Council which is in line with the Council's vision (**Make South Derbyshire a better place to live, work and visit**).
2. To support initiatives which further all of the Council's core values (**Sustainable growth and opportunity**).
3. To host events on behalf of the District Council of a celebratory nature (**Lifestyle choices and Value for money**).
4. To represent the Council at events held within the District (**Sustainable growth and opportunity, Lifestyle choices, Value for money**).
5. To work with Council departments to encourage inward investment and tourism (**Sustainable growth and opportunity**).
6. To encourage the work of the voluntary sector within the District (**Sustainable growth and opportunity, Safe and Secure**).
7. To represent the District at events outside the District (**Lifestyle choices**).
8. To support charitable causes within the District (**Lifestyle choices**).

4.3 It is desirable that the Chairman of the Council should attend the majority of his/her engagements within the District in order to promote the area (**Sustainable growth and opportunity, Value for money**).

4.4 A Guidance and Protocol manual has been produced to assist the Chairman in preparation for when he/she comes into office.

#### Staffing

4.5 The administrative duties are carried out by one full time member of staff who also provides some support to other Members of the Council, i.e. ordering stationery, booking accommodation for advice surgeries, placing adverts and typing. Driving duties are carried out by a part-time chauffeur/attendant. A chauffeur/attendant manual has been produced to assist the member of staff in their duties. The team is managed by the Democratic Services Manager and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

### Civic Car

- 4.6 The current civic car is a Toyota Avensis, registered in 2009. The vehicle is used by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Council when carrying out official engagements. The Policy and Resources Committee agreed on 8th July 1999 that other councillors and senior officers could use the civic car when not in use by either the Chairman or Vice-Chairman. The availability of the car for use by other members and officers can save costs and reduce the environmental impact when a number of people are travelling to the same venue by car (**Lifestyle choices, Value for money**). Fuel used and the chauffeur's time is coded to the relevant department.
- 4.7 Clearly, it is important that the Chairman/Vice-Chairman must use the civic car when attending civic functions but the Council should review the use of the civic car for charitable events on the civic circuit which are outside the District. For example, transport costs to a charity event outside the District may cost £100, whilst the tickets to the event have only cost £10 each. It may not always be in the interests of the Council to attend. The following issues should be addressed:-
- Is the engagement benefiting the authority?
  - Is the engagement cost effective?
  - Is the engagement supporting the Council's objectives?

In such cases, if there is a negative response to any of these questions then it is felt that the invitation should be declined. If appropriate, a small donation could be made.

### Civic Calendar of Events Hosted by the Authority

- 4.8 The Council, under the office of the Chairman, hosts the following civic events during each municipal year and instruction and guidance manuals have been produced for each event:-

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Invitees</b>
May	Civic Council	<b>Lifestyle choices / Value for money</b> (Community involvement)	District & County Councillors, Parish Councils, Voluntary Sector, Businesses, Organisations
June/July	Civic Service	<b>Lifestyle choices / Value for money</b> (Community involvement)	Civic Heads, District & County Councillors, Voluntary Sector, Businesses, Parish Councils
September	Visit to Toyota Motor Manufacturing (UK) Ltd and Calke Abbey	<b>Sustainable growth and opportunity</b>	Civic Heads
November	Remembrance Day Parade and Service (in conjunction with the Royal British Legion)*	<b>Lifestyle choices / Value for money</b> (Community involvement)	Voluntary Sector, Parish Councils, Businesses, Organisations

Date	Event	Purpose	Invitees
November	Switch on of the Christmas Lights in Swadlincote	<b>Sustainable growth and opportunity / Lifestyle choices / Value for money</b> (Community involvement)	Civic Heads, Voluntary Sector, Businesses
March/April	Civic Dinner	<b>Sustainable growth and opportunity / Lifestyle choices</b> (Community involvement)	Civic Heads, Parish Councils, Businesses

#### Efficiency Savings

- 4.9 For a number of years, the Council, through the office of the Chairman, has hosted an annual buffet reception for the South Derbyshire Council for Voluntary Services to recognise the tremendous work done by volunteers in the community (**Lifestyle choices / Value for money**). However, from 2010 the Council has ceased to hold the reception, instead replacing it with a certificate presentation at Full Council meetings to organisations nominated by South Derbyshire CVS (**Lifestyle choices / Value for money**).
- 4.10 Given the current economic climate and the need to reduce costs, all the civic events hosted by the Council have been reviewed. Due to operational reasons, it has been necessary to replace the visit to Toyota and Calke Abbey with a visit to Nestle and Rosliston Forestry Centre with the level of refreshments being amended (**Sustainable growth and opportunity / Value for money**). The hospitality given at the Switching of the Christmas Lights has been reduced, resulting in further savings (**Sustainable growth and opportunity / Lifestyle choices / Value for money**).

#### Chairman's Charity

- 4.11 For many years the Chairman of the Council has, if he or she wished, nominated a charity or charities to raise money for during his/her year of office. However, under Best Value it was recognised that raising money for charity was not a Council objective and would need to be undertaken by the Chairman with much less officer support. From 2003 it was agreed to hold two charity events during each municipal year which would be organised through the Civic Office. One would be the Annual Charity Golf Competition and the other event would be chosen by the Chairman. Additional events have been organised by some Chairmen with limited involvement from the civic support staff.
- 4.12 Seven years on, the question needs to be addressed as to whether the Council's resources and officer time should be used for raising money for charity. Often, their expensive time is not factored in when measuring the amounts raised by the event (**Value for money**). The Council's support of local good causes could be continued through grant aid and by the Chairman attending and promoting their events (**Lifestyle choices/Value for money**).

#### Future Arrangements

- 4.13 Members of the National Association of Civic Officers (NACO) have debated the quality v quantity issue of engagements at length and have devised a system that is now widely in use throughout the country. As has been previously mentioned, civic

heads need to be encouraged and guided, to create and attend engagements that contribute to their personal objectives, given that they should, in turn, have been aligned to the corporate aims. These are quality engagements. However, other events have become traditional ‘annuals’ and may need to be dropped in the pursuit of excellence and value for money. Examples of quality engagements are likely to include:-

- Celebrating cultural diversity
- Promotion of voter registration campaigns
- Improving electoral turnout
- Promotion of recycling sites
- Anti-poverty initiatives
- Tourism promotion
- Promoting e-service delivery
- Improving public transport
- Opening cycle paths

Traditional ‘annuals’ may include charity events, Civic Dinners, Civic Services.

4.14 The NACO debates identified dozens of typical engagements and refined them into seven main categories, as follows:-

- Social – entertaining work colleagues, ward party members etc
- Community – attending events such as local amateur theatre, sports clubs, church groups etc
- Promoting – council/partnership initiatives, inward investment etc
- Civic Hosting – receptions, buffets in connection with community and promoting
- Charities – fundraising events
- Civic Circuit – visiting other authorities for civic dinners, church services etc
- Council/Statutory/Traditional – Charing Council meetings, attending Remembrance Day

4.15 Twinning is not included as a specific category as each twinning event will fit somewhere into one of the seven categories. With broad categories identified and agreed, the debate then moved onto assessing how engagements that fitted into them would be likely to contribute to corporate aims and be a “quality engagement”.

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|---------------------------------|-----|
| • Promoting                     | 5   |
| • Community                     | 5   |
| • Civic Hosting                 | 3   |
| • Council/Statutory/Traditional | 3   |
| • Charities                     | 2   |
| • Social                        | 1.5 |
| • Civic Circuit                 | 1   |

4.16 As previously mentioned, it is desirable that the Chairman of the Council should attend the majority of his/her engagements within the District in order to promote the area (**Sustainable growth and opportunity, Value for money**). NACO’s recommendation is that 90% of the Chairman’s engagements should be carried out in his/her own District.

### Reducing Administrative Costs

- 4.17 Having reviewed day to day administrative procedures, the Civic Office is looking to reduce the amount of paper used by issuing and replying to correspondence by e-mail where possible. This will reduce the amount of paper and postage used (**Value for money**).

### **5.0 Financial Implications**

- 5.1 Various costs will be reduced, as outlined in the report.

### **6.0 Corporate Implications**

- 6.1 The Chairman of the Council will be assisted in promoting the Council's vision and core values, as outlined in the report.

### **7.0 Community Implications**

- 7.1 The Chairman of the Council plays a vital role in promoting the authority throughout the community in a figurehead role as the first citizen of the District.

### **8.0 Background Papers**

None