

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES GROUP

8 JULY 2010

REPORT OF HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Report prepared by Claire Hayes and Janet Barnes

1. BECOMING A COUNCILLOR EVENT

1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To consider the available options to expand and develop the Becoming A Councillor event.

1.2 Recommendation of the Head of Democratic Services

1.2.1 That the Group consider holding a further Becoming A Councillor event on 30 September 2010.

1.2.2 That the Group consider the format of these events with regard to venue and parish councils (see 1.3.3 and 1.3.5 below).

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 A review of the Becoming A Councillor event held in February was undertaken and the following points were raised:-

- The main political parties need to select candidates by December and therefore February is too late
- other venues for the holding of this event should be identified
- the marketing of the event should be improved
- the inclusion of Parish Councils who have vacancies should be considered

The below sub-headings deal with the above points in order.

1.3.2 Timing of Event

It is recommended that the event be held in September to give political parties an opportunity to engage with members of the public interested in becoming a Councillor before they are required to select

potential candidates. The need for an event in February could be assessed in October.

1.3.3 Venue

During the review, it was commented that the Town Hall was not the most appropriate venue in which to hold this event and perhaps consideration could be given to a stand in The Mall Chequers and, possibly, other venues throughout the Borough.

The options available are to continue at the Town Hall, as at present, or that the event be held in The Terrace on the 1st floor of the Gateway, with a stand in the Mall Chequers, outside Boots/Superdrug, to market the event (with appropriate signage). It is also recommended that the event be held on a Thursday evening as this will capture local business people and shoppers alike. The event would be a drop-in session which could be between the existing hours of 4pm and 8pm or a more focused event between the hours of 5pm and 7pm.

1.3.4 Marketing

Officers are liaising with the Head of Communications in order to devise a marketing strategy for these events which will encompass use of the website, email, partners (e.g. LSP), the press and all other communication tools available to us.

1.3.5 Parish Councils

It has been suggested that the Council approach the Kent Association for Local Councils ("KALC") to give all parishes the option to participate in these events as they may require potential candidates for any vacancies.

Involving the Parish Councils at these events will help to improve partnership working between the Borough and Parishes and, in turn, will help with the marketing of the events as we could utilise Parish notice boards and Parish Newsletters to advertise the events.

1.3.6 Member Development and New Member Induction

The new Member Development Programme and New Member Induction, is currently taking place and will be reviewed in due course.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

- 1.4.1 It was suggested that multiple events be held in locations across the whole Borough, but this is not recommended as there will be a substantial cost for the hiring of the venues, officer time, refreshments

etc. which is not economically viable at this time and would incur costs over and above the budgeted amount for these events.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 There is no impact on corporate objectives.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 There are no risks associated with this report.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

- 1. Financial
- 2. Staffing
- 3. Legal
- 4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment
- 5. Environmental/Sustainable Development
- 6. Community Safety
- 7. Human Rights Act
- 8. Procurement
- 9. Asset Management

X

1.7.2 The potential costs of holding these events as recommended will be kept within the existing budget limits.

1.8 Relevant Documents

1.8.1 Appendices

None

1.8.2 Background Documents

None

IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?

Yes

No

If yes, when did it first appear in the Forward Plan?

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This is a Key Decision because:

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Wards/Parishes affected:

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