

# **Report to Constitution and Members Services Standing Panel**

**Date of meeting: 3 July 2006**

**Subject: Review of Civic Ceremonial - Scoping**

**Officer contact for further information: I Willett (01992 564243)**

**Democratic Services Officer: Zoe Folley (01992 564532)**



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## **Recommendations:**

**(1) To consider the order for considering the elements of this review; and**

**(2) To consider scoping each element of the review to ensure that the Panel has all the information it needs.**

Report:

1. (Head of Research and Democratic Services). A copy of the review proposal for civic and ceremonial which was agreed at the last meeting is attached. The elements of this review can be grouped under the following headings.

(a) Budget and Resources – civic ceremonial budget, staffing, the civic car budget, catering and civic events;

(b) Promotion of the Chairman of the Council's Role – arrangements for entertaining external bodies, hospitality and media;

(c) Chairman's Chain of Office and Other Civic Regalia - Custody;

(d) Chairman/Vice Chairman's Allowances.

2. One political group has raised the current policy for recognising long serving members of the Council on retirement from the authority or when they are not re-elected. If members wish to look at this matter, now is the opportunity to review it.

Notes on Sequence of Reviews

3. On 1(a)(Resources) there may be budget issues which the Panel may need to include in the budget bidding process which starts from September onwards. The same could apply to 1(d)(Chairman's Allowance) and 2 (Awards) if the Panel wish to make changes. Item (b) does not itself involve the budget, unless members see a need to increase the level of activity radically. Otherwise 1(c) ought to be in place by the start of the next Council year. Item (c) (Custody of Regalia) is a concern about arrangements which comes from officers where it is important that the expectations of the Council's insurer's are met. No budget implications are seen at this stage although there could be significant changes in working arrangements for the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

4. The new item on awards to Councillors may result in a budget bid if policy is to change but otherwise would need to be in place by the start of the new Council year.

## Considerations - Information Needed

5. Some suggestions are set out below:

(a) Budget/Resources (1(a) - (d) and 2)

- budget documents (more than one year?)
- staffing statement
- evidence of budgets in “family group” and Essex Districts (including the Chairman’s allowances?)
- evidence from past Chairmen of Council
- use of civic transport in other Districts

(b) Promotion of Civic Role (1(b))

- policy of other Councils
- current practices of EFDC
- feedback from “customers” and other District Councillors

(c) Chain and Regalia (1(c))

- statement of insurance requirements
- policy of other Councils
- Internal Audit advice

(d) Awards (2)

- Present policy

## Resourcing the Review

6. The scope of this review is wide ranging and the Panel should bear in mind that officer time is not limitless. The Panel should therefore focus on the information they need as a priority. Panel members may like to think about any role for themselves in assembling data.