
SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP FOR FOURTH OPTION AUTHORITIES

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' views on whether to support a proposal requesting that the Local Government Association set up a Special Interest Group (SIG) for Fourth Option Authorities, and if so, to nominate a member to be the Council's representative on that Group.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 In April, the Council considered an approach from Selby District Council asking whether this Council would be interested in participating in a Fourth Option Lobby Group (min 199/04). The Council responded positively to that request and suggested that any such group should be formed under the auspices of the Local Government Association (LGA), rather than outside it.

3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Selby District Council have now written to this Council reporting that most of the Authorities contacted have responded in a similar fashion in favour of establishing a Fourth Option Group within the parameters of the LGA. There are already a number of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) within the LGA, including Groups for County Councils, Unitary Authorities, New Towns, etc. A full list of Special Interest Groups is attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.2 Selby District Council outline that a programme for establishing a Special Interest Group might run as follows:
- By December 2004 at least ten (although it is hoped that more) Councils might express an interest in forming a SIG for Fourth Options Authorities
 - By January 2005, a written proposal for the SIG is agreed among those interested and sent to the LGA.
 - The LGA Executive approves the proposal in the Spring 2005
 - An event to be hosted by Corby Borough Council in Spring/Summer 2005 to launch the new Fourth Option SIG

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- 3.3 Selby District Council advise that the Wear Valley District Council has agreed to act as lead authority in developing a Fourth Option SIG proposal for consideration by the LGA and coordinating work on this.
- 3.4 In the first instance, it should not be necessary for the SIG to raise its own subscription, as basic administrative support should be provided by the LGA. However, it is necessary for the proposal to form a SIG to be approved by the LGA Executive. For this, a written proposal will be required. Once formed, the SIG could establish a programme of events and might raise funds, if necessary, to support that programme.
- 3.5 This Council now has to determine whether it wishes to formally support this proposal to progress the establishment of a SIG within the LGA and if so, who its Member representative should be on such a body if and when it is formed.

4 OFFICER COMMENTS

- 4.1 It is considered that there would be merit in joining a Fourth Option Group inside the LGA, especially if it proved to be as effective as TACFIG, in which we were a lead Member. Clearly, whilst Rochford on its own has a limited impact on the Government/local Government agenda, a cluster of similarly sized and structured authorities with a common set of issues is likely to have a better chance of influencing the agenda. At the same time, sharing experiences with similar sized and structured authorities would in itself be a useful learning tool.
- 4.2 In terms of Member representation, it is considered that in the first instance the most appropriate member representative would be the Leader of the Council or his nominated Deputy.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Whilst no financial resources are required at this stage, it may be that if such a body is established, some form of contribution might be required.
- 5.2 The key resource in the short term would be member and officer time.

6 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RECOMMENDS to Full Council**
- (1) That this Council supports the proposal to set up a Fourth Option Special Interest Group within the Local Government Association and writes to Wear Valley District Council, requesting that they prepare a written proposal for consideration

and subsequent submission to the Local Government Association

- (2) That, subject to (1) above, the Leader of the Council be nominated to act as the Council's representative on the Fourth Option Special Interest Group, if and when such a body is formed.

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Background Papers:

The Local Government Association on this

Letter and attachments from Selby District Council dated 19th March 2004

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