WHY HAS THIS REPORT COME TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE?

This report provides copies and an analysis and overview of the annual reports received by Council Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies during 2019/20.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee are recommended to:

(a) Consider and note the Outside Bodies annual review reports received and any recommendations to Full Council on the detail provided; and
(b) Identify any changes to the reporting process and feedback forms that could assist Members in their role and forward any subsequent recommendations to Full Council.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Outside Bodies Representation List is reviewed and agreed annually by Full Council and identifies both Member Champions and Members on Outside Bodies. This report relates to representation for the 2019/20 year.

1.2 Members formally allocated to outside body representation are expected to provide an annual feedback report. Each year these reports are considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to acknowledge where and how Members have been active in their Outside Bodies.
Members use existing mechanisms, mainly linked officers, to feed any actions or issues into the council.

1.3 Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies have a responsibility to report actions, issues and risks to ensure required activity is undertaken by the Council. Any necessary concerns will then be addressed and any appropriate mitigating action taken. A standard summary feedback form template is in place for Member representatives to use following a meeting that can then be circulated to the relevant officers and Members for follow up information, communication and action.

2.0 FEEDBACK RECEIVED

2.1 The responses from outside body Member representatives are attached at Appendix A and responses from Member Champions are attached at Appendix B. The feedback received includes 25 Member representatives, 48% of Outside Bodies on the list, and 6 Member Champions, 54% of Member Champions on the list. As was evidenced in last year’s responses, Members have been active in their Outside Bodies during the past year. They continue to work with officers and use existing mechanisms, including circulating notes and minutes of meetings attended to feed issues into the Council.

2.2 As highlighted last year several Outside Bodies publish their papers online and are therefore available to Members and Staff to access e.g. Copeland Community Fund.

2.3 A number of key partnerships are reported on through the Portfolio reports to Full Council and using the quarterly performance management and reporting framework.

2.4 Six Member Champions have reported on their annual activities: Health and Wellbeing, Antis-Social Behaviour, SME, Older Persons, Young People, Heritage and Homelessness. This annual reporting is not obligatory and those received are attached at Appendix B.
2.5 Champions also use opportunities throughout the year to report through standard communications mechanisms on issues and activities. Some Champions take the opportunity to meet with staff and key partners regularly and others are active Members of projects, such as the Children’s Charter. All six reports highlight the value of the champion role to the Council and delivery of our priorities in this area.

2.6 The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly affected the frequency of meetings of Outside Bodies since March 2020 and this must be taken into account when viewing the responses from Members.

3.0 CONCLUSIONS

3.1 The purpose of the annual review report is to ensure Members are able at least once a year to reflect and report on their activity highlighting any issues. It is also a mechanism for Members to be held to account; if Copeland Borough Council is not represented on Outside Bodies that they have Members allocated to it disenfranchises Copeland residents.

3.2 In summary, the annual reporting for 2019/20 has been 52%, more than 2018/19 at 40%, but less than the nearly 60% in 2017/18 and significantly less than the 80% response from the previous year.

3.3 This report is provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration and comment. Any comment and/or recommendations for improvement will be taken to the next meeting of Full Council.

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Outside Bodies Feedback Forms received
Appendix B – Member Champion Feedback Forms received
Appendix C – Agreed Outside Bodies List 2019/20