

Urgency Committee

Meeting to be held on 8 November 2012

Electoral Division affected: None

Membership of the Scrutiny Committee

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

The Committee is asked to consider the impact upon the County Council of the distribution by County Councillor K Ellard of an unauthorised and unpublished version of the Scrutiny Committee's Arts Development Funding Joint Task Group report.

Recommendation

The Urgency Committee is asked, on behalf of the County Council, to consider whether County Councillor K Ellard should continue to be a member of the County Council's Scrutiny Committee.

Background and Advice

The Scrutiny Committee on 6 July 2012 received the report of the Arts Development Funding Joint Task Group established by the Committee in September 2011.

The Task Group was established to examine the state of arts in pan Lancashire following changes to national strategy and funding decisions taken by Arts Council England. The Task Group included representatives from Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Lancaster City and Preston City Councils.

The Committee approved the Task Group Report entitled "Towards A Stronger Sense of Place" and its recommendations with some amendments.

The final approved report of the Task Group, as amended by the Committee, was then referred to the appropriate Cabinet Member, County Councillor Mike Calvert to formally respond on the recommendations of the Task Group as is required by statute.

The report was also issued by the County Council to all witnesses and partners involved in the Task Group's work and their views were requested. The report issued was published by the County Council in the normally recognised format for Scrutiny Task Group Reports for consistency within existing resources available.

The response of the Cabinet Member to the Task Group's recommendations is to be considered by the Scrutiny Committee on the 9th November, together with responses received from a number of organisations involved.

In recent weeks the Chairman of the Task Group, County Councillor Kevin Ellard, has issued to those organisations and individuals who had been provided with the Task Group Report, an unauthorised version of the report. The unauthorised version is a draft of the report with some expensive design work which, if published by the County Council, would have cost approximately £3,000. County Councillor Ellard had worked on this design with officers but it was decided that in view of the cost of publication and the inclusion of an unauthorised forward by the Chair of the Task Group, that the Task Group Report would instead be published in the standard format. County Councillor Ellard had asked for an A4 copy of this version but had been told on numerous occasions that he could not have a copy and that the 'unauthorised' version should not be published.

County Council Ellard's letter enclosing the unauthorised version points to the official version being incomplete and does not include his 'context setting introduction'.

Organisations who have received both versions of the document have contacted the County Council expressing their confusion. The County Council have issued clarification to all those organisations to respond to the 'official' version only.

The Committee is requested to consider this matter and determine what action to take.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

It is considered that the actions of County Councillor Ellard as reported have put at risk the reputation of the County Council.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
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Nil

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A'