

**Resources and Equality  
Scrutiny Panel**  
16 March 2023

<b>Report title</b>	<b>Review of Council and Staff Subscriptions to other bodies – Governance Directorate</b>	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Paula Brookfield Governance and Equalities	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All	
<b>Accountable Director</b>	David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer	
<b>Originating service</b>	Governance Directorate	
<b>Accountable employee</b>	Jin Takhar Tel Email	Head of EDI +44 1902 554650 Jin.takhar@wolverhampton.gov.uk.
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>		

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**Recommendation for decision:**

The Resources and Equality Scrutiny Panel is recommended to:

1. Note the Governance subscriptions that fall within the remit of the Resources and Equalities Panel.
2. Note the total costs associated to subscriptions for the period 21/22 and 22/23 that fall within the Governance Directorate.
3. Review the proposed revisions following a careful consideration of the Governance directorate subscriptions as indicated in appendix one.
4. Advise on any recommended changes to the Council's approved subscriptions.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Resources and Equality Panel with a list of subscriptions to other bodies currently paid on behalf of the Council and its officers. This is following a request that this matter be added to the agenda of the Panel as part of its work on scrutiny on the expenditure within its remit.
- 1.2 This report provides details of all annual subscriptions that fall within the Governance Directorate.
- 1.3 Officers had already been instructed by the Cabinet to carry out a review of subscriptions within each directorate and this is taking place as part of the efficiency savings built into the budget for 2023/24.
- 1.4 Ultimately authority for expenditure within set budgets is with the relevant Cabinet member with oversight provided by scrutiny. It is anticipated that each scrutiny panel will have a similar report taken to them as part of the budget monitoring process. As part of this process this report also includes potential proposals to reduce the annual costs associated to subscriptions following a detailed review.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The Council has a number of subscriptions in place with outside bodies. Subscriptions are paid for via the Subscriptions Budget within the Revenue Budget. Some of these subscriptions are made on behalf of the Council as a corporate body.
- 2.2 A number of these subscriptions are important to the effective functioning of the authority including for example the membership of the Local Government Association and indeed the legal knowledge and databases that provides access to the latest law for the Council's lawyers.

## **3.0 Current Position**

- 3.1 A full list of current subscriptions is attached in Appendix 1 for the panel's consideration. It provides a breakdown of Governance Directorate by service area covering:
  - Business Continuity and Emergency Planning
  - Equality
  - Governance Services (Councillors/ Mayoral services and Electoral Registration)
  - Health and Safety
  - Human Resources
  - Legal Services
  - Organisational Development

#### **4.0 Impact on City of Wolverhampton Council**

- 4.1 The subscriptions in place benefit the Council and its officers in several ways, including:
- National and local representation.
  - Membership of professional bodies.
  - Magazine subscriptions offering up to date information on relevant issues.
  - Access to professional advice, support, and information.

#### **5.0 Financial Implications**

- 5.1 The Governance Directorates 2021/22 approved subscriptions budget totalled £278,100.
- 5.2 For 2022/23 the approved subscriptions budget totals £244,740.
- 5.3 A detailed profile of outturn spend for 2021/22 and spend to quarter 3 of 2022/23 are contained within Appendix 1.  
[LD/09032023/O]

#### **6.0 Legal Implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct legal implications associated with the report.  
[DP/08032022/A]

#### **7.0 Equalities Implications**

- 7.1 The Council under the Equality Act 2010 has a legal duty to ensure that the authority eliminates unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity & foster good relations. This is known as the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 7.2 Maintaining its membership with key professional bodies will help the Council to seek professional advice and information as well as work towards meeting its legal obligations.

#### **8.0 Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1: **Governance Subscriptions**