

6 July 2004

Revisit of Scrutiny of Political Group Offices

LGA Response

Political Group Offices

1. The Executive notes that the revisit of the report on the work of the political group offices focuses principally on the relationships between the political group support officers and mainstream LGA staff in policy development. It is accepted that the original proposal of the Panel for timetabled meetings between PGSOs and policy staff – and SMB – has not been entirely successful. The integration of the work of the political group offices and other LGA staff is essentially a cultural issue, which is not easily amenable to structural solutions, and greater efforts will be undertaken to ensure that both policy staff and PGSOs are aware of the benefits of closer working. However, the LGA would also agree with the Panel that meetings should be continued at individual team level where discussions on policy issues can be valuable.
2. The LGA agrees with the Panel that the introduction of the single business plan ought to provide a framework and opportunity for policy staff and PGSOs to make use of such meetings to improve their dialogue on policy issues.
3. The LGA supports the proposal that the fortnightly meetings between PGSOs and the Director for Central Services should be used as an opportunity to discuss those elements of the business plan of particular interest to the Groups. This proposal has already been implemented and meetings have begun to include sessions with policy staff to discuss their work.
4. The political group staff members have been involved in the development of the LGA's major investment in LG Connect, including their information – retrieval and data-basing needs.
5. The LGA is grateful to the Panel for their revisit and would wish itself to keep the arrangements under review and look at them again in 9 – 12 months time to assess their impact.