

DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE

7 JULY 2016

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes

OPTIONS FOR COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2016-2017

Final Decision-Maker	Democracy Committee
Lead Head of Service	Head of Finance & Resources
Lead Officer and Report Author	Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Resources
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. To include in the work plan all issues meeting the criteria set out in paragraph 3.3 and 3.4 of the report;
2. To include one issue from the proposals under the criteria set out in 3.5 that may be as suggested by the Chairman or as proposed by another member of the Committee;
3. To consider and review the work plan at each meeting of the Committee.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

The Committee is responsible for the effectiveness of the democratic procedures of the Council and its remit supports the effective decision making process of the Council and other Committees.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Democracy Committee	7 July 2016

OPTIONS FOR COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2016-2017

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report has been produced at the request of the Chairman of Democracy Committee in order to commence a debate and make a decision at this meeting.
 - 1.2 The report offers the Committee an opportunity to consider options for a work plan for 2016-2017. As this is the first meeting of the municipal year it is the ideal occasion to consider the options.
 - 1.3 Setting the priority areas for the work of the Committee will provide officers and members with the opportunity to focus on delivering the objectives set by the committee.
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The production of a work plan should be a task completed by all relevant committee members and lead officers combined. The process should set objectives for the Committee to achieve within the remit as set down by the Constitution.
- 2.2 A work plan cannot be definitive as objectives, priorities and the needs of the Council can and will vary during the course of a municipal year.
- 2.3 As such, proposals for the work plan can be expected from any members of the Committee. However agenda setting for the Committee is a role of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee. They would have a direct influence over when and how the objectives set out in a work plan would be considered and brought to the Committee.
- 2.4 The work of the Committee can be divided into three separate elements:
 - 1) Ongoing work brought forward from the last municipal year;
 - 2) Work of a repetitive nature that is the expected normal activity of the Committee; and
 - 3) Additional reviews and areas of interest to the Committee or specific members.
- 2.5 Consideration of any proposals to add to the work programme must therefore be matched to a series of criteria that will help members of the committee to prioritise ideas. These are:
 - 1) The remit of the Committee as set by Council when agreeing the constitution (given at Appendix A);
 - 2) The commitment made previously by the Committee to complete a review or make a decision;
 - 3) The resources available to investigate, review and report on any other issues;

- 2.6 While recognising that the members of the committee may wish to bring forward ideas and objectives of their own the Chairman has provided a short list of options that are considered in the following section.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 Available options include any proposals brought to the meeting by members of the Committee and the work programme must be open to routine review and amendment throughout the year.
- 3.2 Detailed below are ideas put forward by the Chairman to commence debate and discussion.
- 3.3 Ongoing work brought forward from the last municipal year. There is no choice with this group of issues as they must be completed by the committee:

Outside Body Review:

Next report to the Committee in September. To involve members who are on OBs for their opinions of the effectiveness of OBs and Committee Chairs on links with Committees

- 3.4 Work of a repetitive nature that is the expected normal activity of the Committee. These are normal day to day activities of the committee and as issues arise or are referred to the Committee they will be added to the work plan and considered as soon as possible:

Meeting Start times:

Currently 10am on a Thursday every other month – could these be changed to an evening?
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Review of the Constitution:

This would be similar to the one undertaken last year – with a report coming to the Committee around Christmas.

Election of all Chairs at the beginning of the municipal year, not just Service Committees

This would form part of any review of the Constitution.

References from other committees:
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Planning Committee has referred an issue relating to the training of Planning Referrals Committee members.
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Licensing Committee has referred an issue relating to the development of Licensing Policies.
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- 3.5 Additional reviews and areas of interest to the Committee or specific members. This group would include reviews of a type similar to scrutiny reviews as completed under the previous governance structure of the Council. At the time of changing the Governance structure it was made clear

to members that limited resources exist to complete such reviews and it would be impossible to resource more than two reviews across all committees in any one year. The officer recommendation is therefore to select a maximum of one review, either from this list or proposed at the meeting and complete this issue during the current municipal year. If no review is selected, this would free up capacity for other committees to carry out the maximum of two reviews.

Review of the Committee System
This was reviewed as part of last year's constitution review. While minor changes to the structure could be considered, the Council cannot change its Governance structure for another four years. Accordingly, it would be inappropriate to devote resources to a review when any recommendations would not be capable of implementation in the near term.
Four Yearly Elections
This matter has been reviewed twice before. On both occasions it was triggered by a motion at Council which was referred to Democracy Committee. Given the issues around resources this option should only be followed up if a clear majority at Council is willing to consider the proposal
Boundary Review in the Borough
Boundary reviews are triggered by population levels and are the responsibility of the Boundary's Commission for England & Wales. The Committee can engage in any necessary boundary review but it cannot carry out a review.
Cost/benefit analysis of the Mayoralty
A review was completed in 2015/16 by the Committee. Although there was a difference in emphasis the review concluded that the Mayoralty gave value for money and recommended minor changes which were adopted by Council.
Cost/benefit analysis of the courier run
This is a minor issue at an operational level and would, due to the implications for the budget, be a recommendation by this Committee to Policy & Resources Committee. The matter should be considered as part of the Council's work on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and should be raised through that route.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The proposals set out in paragraph 3.3 and 3.4 are normal activities of the Committee and they will be included in a work plan. Any further issues of this type will be picked up the Democratic services Officer and added to the Work Plan as identified.
- 4.2 The proposals set out in paragraph 3.5 and any proposals raised at the meeting of a similar type require additional support from the Democratic Services Team and as such it was agreed that the number of such reviews by committees would be limited to resources available. At this time the service can resource a maximum of two such reviews. It is recommended that a maximum of one review be selected from the list.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

5.1 The creation of a work plan does not require consultation.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 The work plan will be used as a basis for future agenda setting meetings and will be reported for noting at each Committee meeting.

7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The Committee is responsible for the effectiveness of the democratic procedures of the Council and its remit supports the effective decision making process of the Council and other Committees.	Head of Finance & Resources
Risk Management	<p>The committee must ensure that it is able to complete the work that is expected by its remit and must act to support the priorities in the strategic plan. Both of these are as agreed by Council and are expected of all committees.</p> <p>The Committee can if resources and time are available review any area of the Council's activity that is within its remit.</p>	Head of Finance & Resources
Financial	Resources within the Democratic Services Team are limited and it is only possible to resource a maximum one specific review each year for this committee.	Head of Finance & Resources

Staffing		[Head of Service]
Legal		[Legal Team]
Equality Impact Needs Assessment		[Policy & Information Manager]
Environmental/Sustainable Development		[Head of Service or Manager]
Community Safety		[Head of Service or Manager]
Human Rights Act		[Head of Service or Manager]
Procurement		[Head of Service & Section 151 Officer]
Asset Management		[Head of Service & Manager]

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: Functions of Democracy Committee (Constitution agreed May 2016)

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS