

Report of the City Solicitor

Report to South (Inner) Area Committee

Date: 19th March 2014

Subject: Dates, Times and Venues of Community Committee Meetings 2014/15

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Are specific electoral Wards affected? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Beeston & Holbeck; City & Hunslet; and Middleton Park | | |
| Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the decision eligible for Call-In? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number: | | |

Summary of main issues

1. In line with previous practice, Area Committees have agreed their meeting schedule for the forthcoming municipal year at the last ordinary meeting of the current municipal year, in order to enable the agreed schedule to appear within the Council's diary.
2. The purpose of the report is to request Members to give consideration to agreeing the dates and times of their new Community Committee meetings for the 2014/2015 municipal year which commences in June 2014, whilst also considering whether any revisions to the current meeting and venue arrangements should be explored.
3. Given the principles set out in the report to Executive Board on 18th December 2013 which were agreed for the purposes of consultation, and noting that Executive Board is scheduled to confirm arrangements for the new Community Committees in May, this report seeks to schedule 4 ordinary committee meetings as a minimum for 2014/2015, this being in order to ensure that the dates appear within the Council's diary. Individual Community Committees may add further dates as they consider appropriate and as business needs of the committee require. A meeting in May 2015 to elect a Chair for the next municipal year will also be scheduled with Members' approval, once Group nomination arrangements have been confirmed. Members are also asked to note that the schedule does not set out the community engagement events which are to be a key feature of the new area arrangements, as these will need to be locally determined.
4. In acknowledging that Executive Board is not scheduled to confirm arrangements for the new Community Committees until May, should there be any changes to the

arrangements which impact upon the proposed meeting schedule, then such matters will be brought to the Committee's attention at the earliest opportunity.

5. In addition to confirming the 2014/2015 schedule, the report also seeks to agree an 'Election of Chair' meeting in June 2014 during the limited window available leading up to the Annual Meeting of Council on 9th June 2014, in order to determine the Chair of the Committee for 2014/2015.

Recommendations

6. Members are requested to consider the options detailed within the report and to agree the Committee's meeting schedule for the 2014/15 municipal year, in order that they may be included within the Council diary for the same period.
7. Members are requested to give consideration as to whether they wish to continue with the Committee's current meeting and venue arrangements or whether they would like to request any amendments to such arrangements.
8. Members are requested to consider and agree the proposed date for the meeting in June 2014, which is primarily scheduled to elect a Chair for the 2014/2015 municipal year.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Area Committee's formal approval of a meeting schedule for the 2014/2015 municipal year and also to agree a date for the Election of Chair Committee meeting prior to the Annual Council Meeting in June 2014.
- 1.2 In addition, Members are requested to give consideration as to whether they wish to continue with the Committee's current meeting and venue arrangements or whether they would like to request any amendments to such arrangements.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Currently, the Area Committee Procedure Rules state that each Committee will agree its schedule of meetings for the forthcoming year, either at the last meeting in the current municipal year or at its first meeting in the new municipal year. In order to appear in the Council diary for 2014/15, the dates and times of the Community Committee meetings need to be approved at the earliest opportunity.

3 Main issues

3.1 Meeting Schedule

- 3.2 The following provisional dates have been agreed in consultation with the Area Leader and their team. As referenced earlier, this report seeks to schedule 4 ordinary committee meetings as a minimum for 2014/2015 in order to ensure that the dates appear within the Council's diary. Individual Community Committees may add further dates as they consider appropriate and as business needs of the committees require. A meeting in May 2015 to elect a Chair for the next municipal year will also be scheduled with Members' approval, once Group nomination arrangements have been confirmed. The proposed schedule is presented for agreement in line with the principles outlined in the report to Executive Board in December 2013, with the acknowledgement that the Executive Board is not scheduled to confirm arrangements for the new 'Community Committees' until May. Should there be any change in the arrangements for Community Committees which affect the proposed schedule of meetings, then such matters will be brought to the Committee's attention at the earliest opportunity.

- 3.4 The proposed meeting schedule for 2014/15 is as follows:-

- **6.00pm, Wednesday 9th July 2014;**
- **6.00pm, Wednesday 8th October 2014;**
- **6.00pm, Wednesday 21st January 2015;**
- **6.00pm, Wednesday 11th March 2015.**

- **The proposed date for the meeting to elect a Chair for the 2014/2015 municipal year is: 6.00pm, Wednesday, 4th June 2014**

3.5 Meeting Days, Times and Venues

3.5.1 Currently the Committee meets on a Wednesday at 6.00pm and the above suggested dates reflect this pattern.

3.5.2 Meeting on set days and times has the advantage of certainty and regularity, which assists people to plan their schedules. The downside might be that it could serve to exclude certain people i.e. members of the public, for instance, who have other regular commitments on that particular day or who might prefer either a morning or afternoon meeting or a meeting immediately after normal work hours. Therefore, the Committee may wish to give consideration to meeting start times and venue arrangements which would maximise the accessibility of the meetings for the community.

3.6 Corporate Considerations

3.7 Consultation and Engagement

3.7.1 In compiling the proposed schedule of meeting dates and times, the current Area Committee Chair, the Area Leader and colleagues within Area Support have been consulted.

3.7.2 The submission of this report to the Area Committee forms part of the consultation process as it seeks the views of Elected Members with respect to the Community Committee meeting schedule and venue arrangements.

3.7.3 Consultation upon the revised arrangements for Community Committees continues in order to ensure that such committees are responsive to the needs of the local communities. The proposed arrangements for Community Committees are scheduled to be submitted to Executive Board in May 2014 for approval.

3.8 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

3.8.1 There are no specific implications relating to equality and diversity or cohesion and integration arising from this report, however, in considering the matters detailed, Members may wish to give consideration to ensuring that the Community Committee meeting arrangements are accessible to all groups within the community.

3.9 Council policies and City Priorities

3.9.1 A Community Committee meeting schedule which facilitates a widely accessible but robust decision making forum is in line with the Council's Policies and City Priorities.

3.10 Resources and value for money

- 3.10.1 There are no resource implications directly arising from the submission of this report to the Area Committee.

3.11 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 3.11.1 In line with Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rule 5.1.2, the power to Call In decisions does not extend to decisions taken by Area Committees.

3.12 Risk Management

- 3.12.1 There are no risks directly arising from the submission of this report to the Area Committee, however, not determining an agreed meeting schedule at this meeting may result in the dates not featuring within the 2014/15 Council diary.

4 Conclusions

- 4.1 The Area Committee Procedure Rules currently stipulate that each Committee will agree its schedule of meetings for the forthcoming year, either at the last meeting in the current municipal year or at its first meeting in the new municipal year. In order to enable the Committee's meeting schedule to feature within the Council diary for 2014/15, Members are requested to agree the arrangements for the same period at today's meeting. However, it is noted that Executive Board is not scheduled to consider the final proposals regarding Community Committee arrangements until May. Should there be any changes which impact upon the proposed meetings schedule, then such matters would be brought to the Committee's attention at the earliest opportunity.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 Members are requested to consider the options detailed within the report and to agree the Committee's meeting schedule for the 2014/15 municipal year, in order that they may be included within the Council diary for the same period.
- 5.2 Members are requested to give consideration as to whether they wish to continue with the Committee's current meeting and venue arrangements or whether they would like to request any amendments to such arrangements.
- 5.3 Members are requested to consider and agree the proposed date for the meeting in June 2014 which is primarily scheduled to elect a Chair for the 2014/2015 municipal year.

6 Background documents¹

- 6.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.