



Report of the Chief Democratic Services Officer

Member Management Committee

Date: 16 December 2009

Subject: The Council Diary

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

1. The aim of this report is update Members on the proposals regarding the Council Diary and the results of the second questionnaire recently circulated to Members regarding plans to changes its format.
2. Members are asked to note the report and agree the recommendations contained therein.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is inform Members of the Member Management Committee of the responses to a second questionnaire which was recently circulated amongst Councillors regarding plans to redesign the Council Diary.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 At the meeting of the Member Management Committee on the 2nd of July 2009, it was decided that the Member Development Working Group should investigate ways to improve the content of the Council Diary and also look at speeding up its production.

2.2 The Member Development Working Group therefore met with the Head of Governance Services, the officer in charge of producing the diary, and discussed ways to reduce the time it takes to print the diary and other potential improvements.

2.3 Following these discussions it was agreed that a questionnaire would be sent to all Members asking them how useful they found the diary and also requesting their views on the proposals to move to a Handbook for Members.

2.4 The questionnaire also consulted Members on the plan to discontinue the pocket diary and also the proposal to dispense with the pre-populated calendar section and just offer a blank, off-the-shelf version.

2.5 Only 17 Members completed the survey and the results were reported to the Member Development Working Group. Their discussions became the basis of the report discussed at the meeting of the Member Management Committee on the 13th of October 2009.

2.6 At this meeting it was decided that, in order to ensure all Members had been duly consulted about the proposals, a second questionnaire be circulated and that the Group Offices be asked to assist in the collecting of returns. It was felt that this would hopefully lead to a higher rate of response.

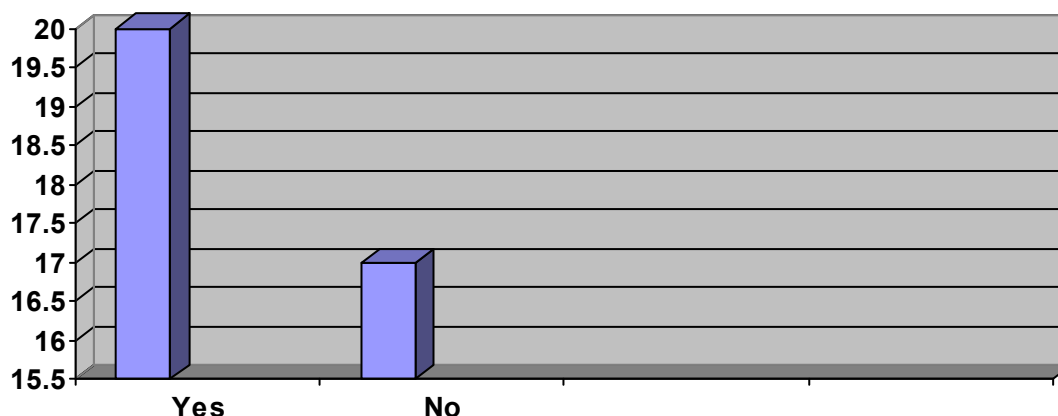
3.0 Questionnaire Results

3.1 The second question garnered 37 responses, over twice the number received in reply to the first questionnaire. The second questionnaire was much shorter with only two questions posed.

3.2 The first asked Members if they agreed with the plan to cease production the pocket sized version of the diary. Of the 37 Members who responded, 20 were in favour of discontinuing the pocket diary while 17 felt it should be retained.

Question 1 - The Member Development Working Group are planning to dispense with the pocket diary and only produce the filo-fax version in the future.

Do you agree with this proposal?



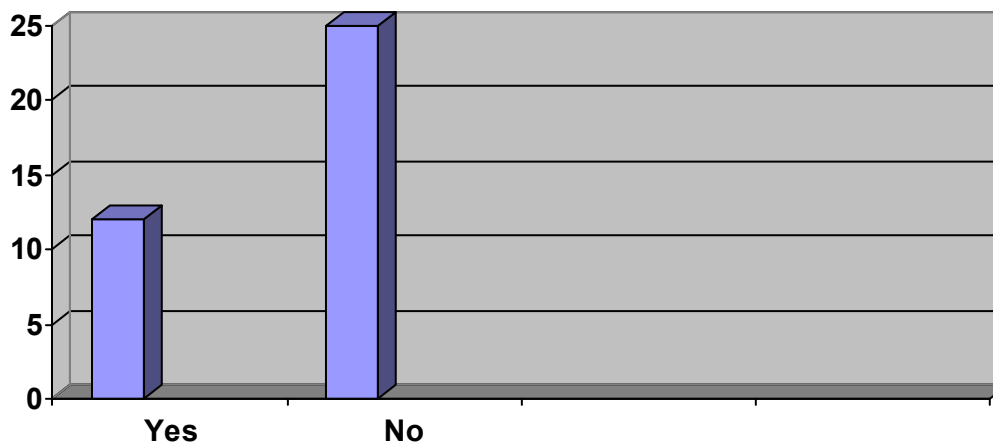
3.3 The second question asked Members if they wished to receive a blank calendar section which they could manually fill-in with just the dates that were important to them or if they or if they wanted the current pre-populated version to remain.

3.4 The reason for this proposal was that giving Members a blank, off the shelf calendar section would reduce the amount of time taken to produce the diary.

3.5 Of the 37 Members who responded to the survey, only twelve Members were in favour of a blank calendar section. The remaining 25 felt that the pre-populated version should be retained.

Question 2 - The Member Development Working Group are also planning to replace the current calendar section with a blank one that does not have the dates and times of meetings already printed on it. This new blank version would be available in a number of different styles such day to a page, week to view etc.

Do you agree with this proposal?



4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

- 4.1** Councillors must have access to up to date and pertinent information regarding the authority, its' meetings and its' Councillors. The diary remains the best way to circulate this information in a useful format for Members.
- 4.2** Its transformation in to a Handbook for Members with a greater array of useful information should make it an even more indispensable resource in the future.

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

- 5.1** There are no legal implications and the spending on the new format diary will be met within the existing resource allocated.

6.0 Conclusions

The results of the second questionnaire have not been discussed by the Member Development Working Group, however the low response suggests that few members wish to retain the pocket diary and that it could be discontinued.

The results also show that the plan to offer an off the shelf, blank calendar section is not acceptable to the majority of Members and therefore the current pre-populated version must remain, with the resulting delays in production.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1** The Member Management Committee is asked to;
- Endorse the report and agree to discontinuing the production of the pocket diary while still producing a calendar section which has been pre-populated with the dates of all Council Meetings.