

Subject:	Constitutional Changes
Date of Meeting:	21 May 2015
Report of:	Monitoring Officer
Contact Officer: Name:	Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis Tel: 29-1515
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Ward(s) affected:	All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 3, Access to Information Procedure Rule 5 and Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) were that the proposals for the new committee and changes to the names of others could not be concluded until they had been considered by the Leaders Group which did not meet until the day of publication of the agenda.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

1.1 This report proposes some constitutional changes for Council approval, including the creation of a new committee, the Neighbourhoods, Communities and Equalities Committee, and the discontinuation of the Community Safety Forum.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the proposal to create a Neighbourhoods, Communities and Equalities Committee, with a membership of 10, be approved together with the terms of reference set out in Appendix 1 and the arrangements for invitees referred to in paragraph 3.2;
- 2.2 That the proposal to discontinue the Community Safety Forum be approved.
- 2.3 That the Children & Young People Committee be renamed as Children, Young People and Skills Committee and the Housing Committee be renamed as the Housing and New Homes Committee
- 2.4 That the Chief Executive be authorised to take all steps necessary or incidental to the implementation of the changes agreed by Council and that the Monitoring Officer be authorised to amend and re-publish the Council's constitution to reflect the changes referred to in 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3.
- 2.5 That the above changes come into force with immediate effect.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1. The current arrangements do not provide a committee with specific focus on communities, neighbourhoods, equalities, fairness and active citizenship. These are dealt with on an ad-hoc basis by the relevant committees. Although some of the corporate responsibility for these functions sits with the Policy & Resources Committee, given its workload and the range of issues it deals with, it is not possible to provide a sufficient level of sustained, focused engagement with input from the community. It is therefore proposed to create a new committee, called the Neighbourhoods, Communities and Equalities Committee. The remit of this Committee will be the overall responsibility for leadership and co-ordination of the Council's approach towards the matters listed above.
- 3.2. The Community Safety Forum was set up many years ago and, although it has served a useful purpose in bringing together various agencies and communities, it is not, in its current form, the best or most effective arrangement. It is therefore proposed to discontinue the Forum and transfer its functions to the new Committee. The new Committee will have 10 Councillors and it will have the power to invite community representatives and others as it considers appropriate as invitees. They will be able to speak, at the Chair's discretion, but not vote at the meeting of the Committee.

The New Committee:

- 3.3 The Committee will consider options and develop proposals for neighbourhood arrangements and will monitor the operation of any neighbourhood based delivery of services that has been agreed by the Policy & Resources Committee.
- 3.4 The work of the Committee will complement the work done through the Safe in the City Partnership and the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (in its capacity as the Crime and Disorder Committee.) The Committee will ensure that any duplication is avoided where possible.
- 3.5 The Committee will have a role in developing, overseeing and making decisions and recommendations to the Policy & Resources Committee regarding increasing active citizenship and community resilience as well as making decisions in relation to the community and voluntary sector.
- 3.6 The Committee will co-ordinate the Council's policies and actions with the view to reducing and eliminating street homelessness and will have a role in discharging the Council's functions regarding equalities and inclusion, including implementing equalities related scrutiny or other recommendations.

Children, Young People and Skills Committee & Housing and New Homes Committee:

- 3.7 Given the importance of supporting young people in developing skills and the need to secure sufficient supply of new housing to deal with demand, it is proposed that the Children & Young People Committee be renamed as Children, Young People and Skills Committee and the Housing Committee be renamed as the Housing and New Homes Committee.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1. The Council could decide not to create a new committee with the proposed terms of reference and, in relation to community safety, the Council could decide to retain the Community Safety Forum. However, that would mean a lost opportunity and an inability to give issues around community safety, equalities and neighbourhood the focused attention they deserve. It would also mean issues being dealt with on an ad-hoc basis without the systematic leadership that the proposals would provide.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The proposals have been discussed and agreed in principle by the Leaders Group. Relevant Officers have been consulted and their views taken into account.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Given the benefit that comes from having a dedicated committee looking at neighbourhoods, equalities, street homelessness and community safety, it is recommended that the Council establishes a Neighbourhood Committee with the remit set out in the Appendix and that it discontinues the Community Safety Forum.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 Both the new Neighbourhoods, Communities & Equalities Committee and the existing Community Safety Forum are served by 10 councillor Members; however the Committee would meet more frequently. There are also likely to be additional costs as the Committee would be meeting across the city and may also be web cast. However, the proposed allocations of Chairs & Deputies and various double-ups should mean that the costs of the extra allowances are covered, and it is anticipated that the other associated costs such as printing and venue hire would be met within existing budgets. It is also understood that the proposed changes could lead to extra demands on staff time, which would have to be managed within existing resources.

Finance Officer Consulted: Peter Francis Date: 20 May 2015

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 The Community Safety Forum is not a statutory body and therefore the option is open to the Council to remove this Forum from its Constitution. The Council does have certain statutory functions in relation to community safety. Many of these statutory functions are performed by the Safe in the City Partnership and the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (in its capacity as the Crime and Disorder Committee). Other functions in relation to community safety that the Council are required to undertake or wish to undertake will be able to be delivered by the new Committee.

- 7.3 In relation to neighbourhood and community development, active citizenship and community resilience and the Fairness Commission, the Committee will develop proposals and make recommendations to the Policy and Resources Committee.
- 7.4 In relation to street homelessness, the Committee will work in conjunction with the Policy and Resources Committee, the Housing & New Homes Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Lawyer Consulted: Sarita Arthur-Crow

Date: 19 May 2015

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 The removal of the Community Safety Forum should not have equalities implications as it is intended that the new Committee will fulfil any functions that the Council is required to undertake in relation to community safety (in conjunction with Safe in the City Partnership and the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee).
- 7.4 The intention with the new Committee is to have a positive impact on equalities.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 None identified

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.5 None identified

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Draft terms of reference for the Neighbourhoods, Communities and Equalities Committee (Appendix 1).

NEIGHBOURHOODS, COMMUNITIES AND EQUALITIES COMMITTEE

Explanatory Note

This committee has overall responsibility for co-ordinating the Councils approach regarding communities and neighbourhoods, third sector, community safety and resilience, equalities and inclusion. It discharges these functions by either making decisions itself or, as necessary, making recommendations to the most appropriate body. Some of its terms of reference overlap with other committees. Where this is the case, the relevant committees have concurrent delegations. It consists of 10 Members, but it may invite representatives from communities, LATs and others to attend as invitees with speaking rights.

Delegated functions

To discharge the Council's functions relating to community safety, neighbourhoods and community development, third sector, street homelessness, equalities and fairness, including, but not limited to the following.

1. Community safety

To discharge the Council's functions regarding community safety, crime and disorder and associated matters in particular where these require member-level engagement and consultation with the community.

NOTE: The committee will work in conjunction with the Safe in the City Partnership and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (in its capacity as a Crime and Disorder Committee) and the work of the three bodies will be co-ordinated to ensure that they complement each other and avoiding duplication where possible.

2. Neighbourhood and community development

- a) To consider options and develop proposals for neighbourhood arrangements, including capacity building, use of assets and devolving powers and services to neighbourhoods and making recommendations to the Policy & Resources Committee.
- b) To monitor and review the operation of any neighbourhood based delivery of services and make recommendations as necessary.

3. Active Citizenship and Community Resilience

- a) To develop, oversee and make decisions regarding the proposals to increase active citizenship and make recommendations to Policy and Resources Committee.
- b) To develop, oversee and make decisions regarding the proposals to improve community resilience and make recommendations to Policy and Resources Committee.

4. Community and voluntary sector

To develop, oversee and make decisions regarding the implementation of the Council's Communities and Third Sector Policy, investment in and support to the community and voluntary sector.

5. Street homelessness

To coordinate the Council's policies and actions with the view to reducing and eliminating street homelessness and, in conjunction with the Policy & Resources and Housing and New Homes Committee and the Health & Wellbeing Board, to ensure that appropriate action is taken.

6. Equalities

- a) To discharge the Council's functions regarding equalities and inclusion.
- b) Implementation of equalities related scrutiny or other recommendations, including Trans Scrutiny Report.

7. Fairness

- a) To develop proposals for a Fairness Commission and make recommendations to the Policy & Resources Committee.
- b) To consider proposals or recommendations submitted by the Fairness Commission and advise the Council or Policy & Resources Committee on implementation.
- c) To monitor implementation of recommendations of the Fairness Commission.
- d) Working with other committees and partners to promote fairness in the delivery of services.