

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

8th December 2016



Report of: Anna Klonowski, Interim Strategic Director, Business Change

Title: Democratic Engagement Select Committee Draft Terms of Reference

Ward: Citywide

Officer Presenting Report: Andrea Dell, Service Manager, Democratic Engagement

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Recommendation

1. That Members consider and comment on the attached draft Terms of Reference (see appendix A), which set out the proposed remit of the Democratic Engagement Select Committee.
2. That the final version of the Terms of Reference be agreed so that the Select Committee can be established in early 2017.
3. That Members confirm that updates from the Select Committee will be provided to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in due course.

Context

- The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) have agreed to look at ways to improve public engagement in democracy as set out in the work programme adopted on 9th September 2016. This will be a significant work stream for OSMB focussed on increasing voter turnout at the 2020 election, as well as public engagement generally with the City Council's democratic processes.
- The suggestion that OSMB look at ways to improve public engagement has come from a number of sources including Scrutiny Members, the Mayor, a referral from the Audit Committee, the Party Group Leaders and the public.
- It is recommended that all interested parties, including the public and relevant external organisations, be kept updated on progress around this work stream and be invited to participate.
- At OSMB on 3rd November 16, Members confirmed the approach and requested that draft Terms of Reference be prepared for consideration at the 8th December 16 meeting.

Public Sector Equality Duties

The Select Committee will aim to specifically address the requirement of the Public Sector Equality Act to 'encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.'

It is suggested that the Select Committee be used as a vehicle to test new ways of engaging with the public. The following are suggestions, requiring further development, for the Committee to consider:

- One example is to pilot the use of an interactive digital timeline to publish all activity relating to the Select Committee including meeting papers, webcasts, evidence gathering and other means of engagement.
- It is recommended that a media engagement strategy be prepared.
- Consideration should be given to trying different locations for meetings and/or holding them adjacent to existing events.
- Members themselves should be encouraged to use their communication networks to promote the Select Committee and its aims and objectives.

Financial Implications

Proposals will have to be fully costed and this information should inform the Select Committee as to what they wish to put forward as recommendations to the Mayor.

Legal and Resource Implications:

Throughout the life of the Select Committee Legal Services will need to review relevant recommendations. For example:

- Any recommendations requiring changes to the Constitution will require sign-off by legal services.
- All elections related activity must adhere to the legal requirements set out by the Electoral Commission and will require assessment by the appropriate statutory officer.
- Health and Safety advice must be sought if recommendations relate to public and member interaction across the city (e.g. lone working etc.).

The Select Committee will be resourced from within Democratic Engagement Services, primarily the Scrutiny team who are resourced to deliver the work programme of which this is a key component.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Democratic Select Committee Draft Terms of Reference

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985:

N/A