



Belfast District Council (Shadow)

Report to	Shadow Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Meeting Dates in April, 2015
Date:	20th March, 2015
Reporting Officer:	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (Ext 6314)

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	It is a matter for each of the Council's new Standing Committees to set the dates and times of their monthly meetings and this issue will be placed on the agenda for each Committee at their first meetings in April.
1.2	However, it is necessary for a date to be agreed in advance for the first meetings of each Committee and the Shadow Strategic Policy & Resources Committee is requested to agree those dates.

2	Key Issues
2.1	Appendix 1 attached to the report sets out suggested dates for the meetings of the 5 Standing Committees in April, together with suggested dates for the Budget and Transformation Panel and the Good Relations Partnership. Members will note that the meetings are scheduled to take place largely in the weeks commencing 13th and 20th April. That is to take account of the Easter holiday earlier in the month and to allow time for the reports for the first meetings of the new Committees to be prepared.
2.2	Members will recall that in February it was agreed to establish 4 Area-based Working Groups and regular dates and times will need to be established for those in due course. The work previously undertaken by the former 5 Area-Based Working Groups will need to be reconfigured to take account of the changes in moving to a 4 Group model, which incorporates the new areas transferring into the new Belfast City Council form 1st April.

2.3	Similarly, Members will be aware that for a few years now we have held monthly briefings for the political parties on the Council where issues of importance can be discussed with individual parties before formal reports are submitted to the decision-making process. It is suggested that, in moving forward into the new Council and in order to take account of the call on Members' time and the stated desire to focus on strategic outcomes for the City, a review should be undertaken into the operation of the Party Briefing arrangements to make sure that they maximise their effectiveness.
2.4	In order for this to take place and, again, to allow the new Council to establish itself in the first month of its existence, it is suggested that no Area-Based Working Group meetings or Party Briefings are held during the month of April unless specific issues arise that necessitate.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	None.

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	There are not any equality or good relations considerations associated with the report.

5	Call In
5.1	This decision is subject to call-in.

6	Recommendations
6.1	<p>The Committee is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the dates of the Standing Committees and Working Groups for the month of April as set out in Appendix 1; and 2. Agree that no Area-Based Working Group meetings or Party Briefings will be held during the month of April unless specific issues arise that necessitate.

7	Decision Tracking
Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager April, 2015	

8	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 – Meeting Schedule for April, 2015.	