



Party Leaders' Forum

Friday, 4th November, 2011

MEETING OF THE PARTY LEADERS' FORUM

Members present: Councillor Jim McVeigh
Alderman Robin Newton
Councillor Tim Attwood
Councillor Máire Hendron
Alderman Jim Rodgers
Alderman Hugh Smyth

In attendance: Councillor Jonathan Huish, Peer Member

The Role of the Forum

Following discussion in respect of the role of the Party Leaders' Forum, Members agreed that it would act as the front end sounding board of any policy development or decision making process and would, where necessary, establish the process for engaging Members and Parties around policy matters. The Forum also agreed the need to have appropriate arrangements in place to ensure that the discussions at the Party Leaders' Forum were fed into Party discussions and that this would best be facilitated during Party Briefings which had been scheduled to take place on specific days each month.

The Forum agreed that the initial work programme would include the Investment Package, the Diversity Strategy, the review of the Constitution and governance arrangements, together with emerging items from the corporate planning programme. In addition, Members agreed that the Chief Executive should attend the formal element of the Forum meetings, together with other officers as necessary.

Members also discussed the importance of the Forum working effectively and agreed that the January meeting of the Party Leaders' Forum should take the form of an away day.

Investment Package

Members discussed the Investment Package and agreed that the development of the Masterplan, Corporate Plan and the Place Shaping Package would continue through the existing process and that all projects would be required to have properly costed business plans. The Members requested that this work be undertaken to allow information to be presented for discussion at the Party Leaders' Forum meetings in December and January when the projects would be examined in reference to affordability limits and the rate options.

The Forum agreed that it would be necessary to have a range of stakeholder engagement events which would culminate in a launch conference to be hosted jointly by the Party Leaders, was agreed by the Forum.

The Members of the Forum also discussed the importance of engaging effectively with the Assembly Executive and agreed to the establishment of a 'Strategy of Engagement' which would involve a corporate approach.

Diversity Policy

The Members discussed a number of issues which would be, or continue to be, considered by the Council in the coming months, such as, Historic Centenaries, the use of Council facilities, flags, memorabilia, Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations, language policy and street naming. The Members agreed that the Party Leaders Forum should meet with the Historic Centenaries Working Group over 6-8 weeks up to March, 2012 to draw up a draft Diversity Policy for consideration by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Furthermore, the Forum was of the opinion that a framework should be agreed to assist with how the discussion of these matters should be taken forward and whether some form of external facilitation would be beneficial.

Next Meetings

Members agreed that future meetings of the Forum would be scheduled to take place on the first Friday of every month at 12.30pm