

16. COMMUNITY ADVOCATE'S UPDATE

1. LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE, JULY 2003, REMITS

The Conference organisers are looking for possible remits.

2. PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

At the request of the Annual Plan Working Party Subcommittee, the Community Relations Manager reviewed the Councillor remuneration and Community Board cost centres to quantify the savings arising from the revised Committee structure approved by the Council in December 2002. As the draft budget had been prepared prior to December 2002 it reflected the cost of the previous Committee structure.

As a result of this work, savings of \$249,283 and \$31,811 respectively were identified in these two cost centres. In order to reduce costs further the Subcommittee has requested staff to report on the possibility of placing a cap on the number of elected member meetings. Staff were also requested to obtain information on the number of personal elected member mailouts.

The Subcommittee also suggests that the co-operation of Community Boards be enlisted in identifying further savings and Boards be asked to explore opportunities for streamlining their current meeting arrangements, with the outcome being reported back to the Strategy and Finance Committee by June.

It is planned to have a meeting with all Community Board members on Wednesday 9 April 2003, probably commencing at 5.00 pm at the Civic Offices. The meeting will be addressed by the City Manager who wishes to discuss matters related to the Electoral Review and Community Board structures and costs.

Recommendation: That all members of the Community Board be encouraged to attend this meeting.

3. COMMUNITY BOARD PLANNING STATEMENTS – KEY ISSUES

At the request of the Community Relations Manager, the Annual Plan Subcommittee reviewed the process for identifying the Community Boards' key issues in respect of the draft Annual Plan. The 2003/04 process was as follows:

- 1 The Community Boards prepared planning statements identifying key issues, project substitutions and proposals.
- 2 The key issues were sorted having regard to Standing Committee terms of reference and were placed before the respective Standing Committees during the September 2002 round of meetings.
- 3 The statements were then referred to the relevant business units for the inclusion of Unit comments prior to be submitted to the Annual Plan Subcommittee for consideration.

As each year staff seek to refine and improve the Annual Plan process, the Community Relations Manager sought feedback from the Committee as to whether the process adopted this year for identifying the Community Board key issues added value or whether a better approach would be to ask Community Boards to identify the five to ten key issues facing their community. The Subcommittee considered that this approach would be more helpful as it would provide a more strategic focus.

Recommendation: That next year the Community Boards be asked to identify (and prioritise) the key issues facing their community, with the aim being to focus on five to ten key issues.