


18. REPORT BY THE MAYOR



Further to the report "Adoption of Schedule of Ordinary Council Meetings and Seminars" which is item 9 on the agenda I have been working on the recommendations from our recent seminar on this topic. I will focus on the review of our way of operating to date and then make what I think would be some way forward.

Our current working patterns:

Portfolio Groups:

Councillors seemed very happy with the way Portfolio Groups are working. We saw an example of how they can work with the follow-up with the Art Gallery paradigm report on Tuesday. I think that the key change we should make to Portfolio Groups is that the Group should submit a work programme for the whole Council to approve each six months. That way we can influence the work programme and also there is a greater degree of accountability to the whole Council. I guess this would also be seen as being a more collaborative culture.

Another recommendation is that there should be a review by each Portfolio Group each six months of what they have achieved during that period and what follow up there has been to their deliberations.

Seminars:

These have also been successful. There was some expression of concern about just how the seminar timetable is arrived at. To make a better link between the Portfolio Groups and the seminar timetable there needs to be a mechanism to prompt reporting to the Council as a whole as soon as is possible. To promote this I would recommend that we form a small working group made up of Carole Evans, Graham Condon and myself to take the workplan from each of the Portfolio Groups and to convert this into a seminar timetable. This process would be co-ordinated by Peter Mitchell and his team. The recommendations from this working group would then be made to the Council as a whole for approval.

Council Meetings:

We are split about 50:50 on whether or not we have meeting weekly or fortnightly. If we look at the areas where we have responsibility for matters as a Council as a whole, for Economic Development and Employment and Regulatory matters, then we have not functioned in these areas as well as I would like. We must also put aside more time for monitoring and strategic development.

I would recommend that we continue with a weekly Council meeting. On the first week of the month the meeting would consider normal matters which are to be put in front of the Council. On the alternate Thursday we would consider Economic Development and Employment, Regulatory, matters of a Strategic manner or monitoring. This would give us the opportunity to put in place a plan for the year for each of these matters. If there is not a topic on any of these for their allotted week then another seminar could be slotted in. By having the second week more flexible we could allow ourselves a bit of flexibility for when we get pressured during the LTCCP season.