Council Reform Workplan

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Principles

A large and diverse Council is important, in order to ensure the Union’s highest democratic body is sufficiently representative.  
However, much of the business addressed at Council does not cross between interest groups and, as such, could be better addressed at one of Council’s sub-committees (which are composed of representatives with the relevant knowledge & experience).

Bringing together the entire Council for items of business which are irrelevant to the roles of most of its ex-officio members is an inefficient method to produce Policy.  
This approach also wastes the time of a large number of valuable volunteers – time which could be spent pursuing the mandates to which they were elected.

Council has insufficient business to require monthly meetings, particularly if much of its day-to-day policy-making can be devolved to the sub-committees.

Plan

* Reduce the mandated frequency of Council meetings to termly (Bye-Law change required).
* Give Council’s sub-committees (Education & Representation Board, Community & Welfare Board, Clubs Societies & Projects Board) Policy-making powers in their respective areas (possible Bye-Law change required).
* Create a new sub-committee. This sub-committee would:
  + Be elected from Council
  + Oversee Policy-making by the other sub-committees, with the ability to put such Policy on hold pending a full Council meeting
  + Make Policy on behalf of Council in areas where none of the other sub-committees are appropriate
  + Meet at least monthly, to take reports from the Officer Trustees
  + Meetings of this sub-committee would be open to any member of Council (beyond its membership) interested in attending
* Policy being considered by any of these sub-committees would be circulated in advance to all Council members, so that they may attend and speak at the relevant meetings (though only the membership of the sub-committee would vote).
* Each sub-committee would prepare a report on their activity for the termly Council meeting, for Council to scrutinise and approve.

As a follow-on, this plan would also include provisions to lead into reviewing how Council & the sub-committees operate under the new structures, and their memberships.

Workplan

7th June: Request Council to recommend this plan to the Trustee Board and next year’s Council.

8th – 23rd June: Gather feedback from outgoing and incoming Council members, and make improvements to the plan accordingly.

23rd June 2016: Take this plan to the Trustee Board.

23rd June – September: Inspect a selection of past Council papers for how they would be addressed in the new system; amend the plan if any flaws are found.  
Prepare a coherent, updated set of standing orders for all the sub-committees.  
Prepare a Council paper proposing the standing orders and any relevant Bye-Law changes.

October: Put the paper and standing orders to the first meeting of the new Council.