

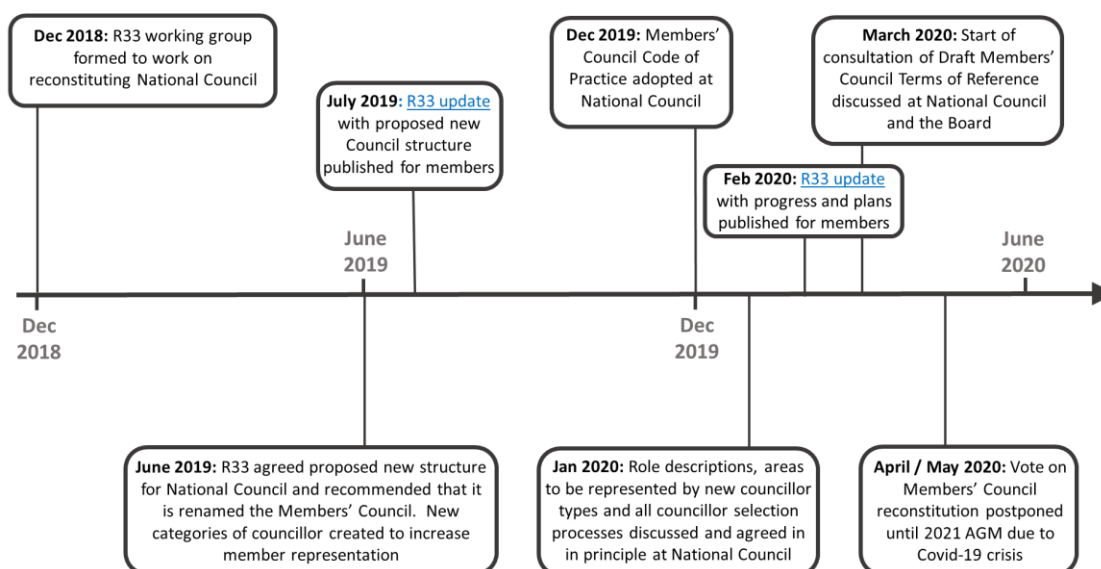
Reconstitution of the National Council Working Group R33 - Update June 2020

Since work began in December 2019, there has been huge progress towards restructuring and redefining National Council into a new “Members’ Council”. If the proposed new Council is voted in by members at the BMC’s 2021 AGM, it will succeed in:

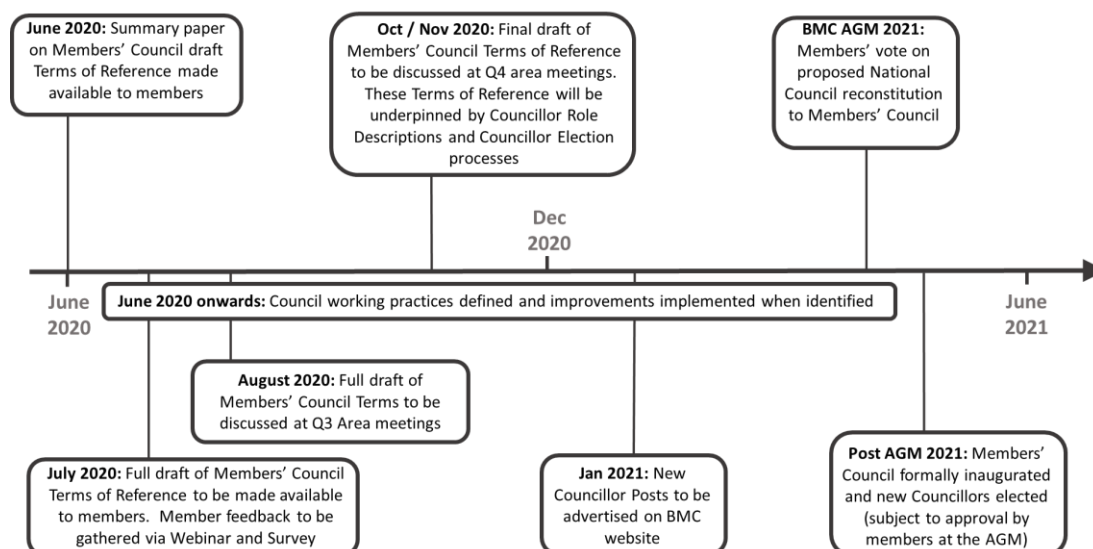
- Making Council more representative of members’ interest, with the introduction of Nationally Elected Councillors (NECs) for national issues
- Embracing constituencies which currently don’t have a voice, such as the 28% of members who are also members of Mountain Training
- Strengthening the link between specialist committees and Council, with the introduction of votes for key committees and greater interaction across the Council’s annual calendar
- Making Council a more effective body, with newly defined procedures and working practices
- Holding the Board to account in a more dynamic and interactive way than at present, for example through the creation of a co-ordinated annual meeting cycle

All plans for the new Council have now been revised to reflect the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Key target dates, together with progress to date, are shown in the diagrams below:

Reconstitution of National Council to the Members’ Council: Timeline of achievements to June 2020



Reconstitution of National Council to the Members’ Council: Plan of action from June 2020 to the 2021 AGM



Read on for full details of the work so far and the future plans for restructuring National Council.

Background

Recommendation 33 of the, "*BMC Independent Organisational Review Amended Recommendations Report (March 2018)*", stated that, "*National Council (NC) should be restructured and become the Members' Assembly and its role redefined*".

The R33 working group (The Group) was formed at the end of 2018 with the sole aim of setting the groundwork for the new Council. The background behind the Group's inception, together with its composition and progress can be found in the Group's previous updates:

- [July 2019 Update](#)
- [February 2020 Update](#)

Impact of Covid-19 on the Group's outputs and plans

In June 2019, the group published the proposed new structure for NC and recommended that it should be renamed the Members' Council (MC). The original plan was for the new MC to be approved via an ordinary resolution at the June 2020 AGM (provided members voted in favour of adopting the new Council). Unfortunately, this has now been delayed to the 2021 AGM due to the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic. R33 has amended its plans and continues to make progress.

Since lockdown began in March 2020 the Group has met regularly to ensure that the Members' Council will be delivered. The Group's aim is that, for the first time ever, there will be a clear set of processes, procedures and best practice guides to ensure that the new Council functions as effectively as possible. This will be a fantastic achievement and a great starting point for the New Council to begin its work in 2021, if it is approved by members. Progress since March is as follows:

1. **MC Terms of Reference (ToR):** A summary paper of the MC ToR is available with this paper, with the aim of giving members an insight into the direction and content. The full draft MC ToR will be published for all members in early July 2020, inviting comments ahead of a Governance webinar in late July 2020, and possibly a members' survey. This draft will be discussed at Q3 area meetings. After consideration of the feedback, a final draft will be published for members to coincide with the Q4 area meetings. At the 2021 AGM, members will be asked to vote on whether to accept an ordinary resolution to adopt the new MC ToR.
2. **Councillor role descriptions and Councillor election processes:** Final versions of both documents will be available for information to members for the Q4 2020 Area meetings.
3. **Nationally Elected Councillors (NECs) and Constituency Councillors for Club Members and Members of Mountain Training:** The Group is committed to elections for new councillors at the 2021 AGM, and fully expects to go with the decisions made in 2020 to elect one NEC to represent hillwalkers and another to focus on membership engagement. However, the Group also recognises the need to review the decision in 2021 to confirm it remains valid. Whilst the need to for the Council to represent members in strategically important areas such as hillwalking remains, other points may need to be re-considered, such as:
 - 1) The original decision to stagger the appointment of four NECs over two AGMs. All four could now be appointed in 2021.
 - 2) How much progress has been made on improving membership engagement during 2020, which may necessitate a review of the proposed NEC for this area.
4. **Deputy President's role:** Work is underway to finalise this process for the 2021 AGM.

What the Group is working on in the meantime

Before the Covid-19 pandemic struck, the original plan was that once MC was inaugurated in June 2020, there would be a six-month period of consolidation to review how well the new Council was functioning. This obviously cannot happen as MC will not now be inaugurated until after the AGM 2021 (again, provided members vote in favour of the ordinary resolution).

However, in the course of its work the Group has identified various operational issues and working practices which would substantially improve the Council's effectiveness, irrespective of whether NC has been reconstituted to MC. The Group aims to implement these improvements, with discussion and approval from NC, as and when they are identified. Improvements identified include:

1. Ways to make large meetings more effective: This has already begun with the introduction of the "Directed Agenda" to Council meetings from September 2019 onwards i.e. an agenda that includes more action / decision-based items rather than just topic-based discussions.
2. Increasing member engagement through greater use of digital technologies and social media. Meeting software has been used to great effect for virtual meetings both with members and within council and has received positive results.
3. Review of MC annual meeting timetable and communications cycle between Board, MC, Specialist Committees, Partners and members, either direct or via constituency. The Group is liaising with Chris Stone, the Council Nominated Director responsible for membership engagement, who is leading on this work and has already produced a communication cycle.
4. Development of the process of induction and training for Councillors.
5. Creation of a set of IT requirements for Council, in consultation with BMC Office, to ensure that Councillors have the tools they need to work and interact with each other and all parts of the BMC effectively.
6. Knowledge, skills and interests audit of existing Councillors, so that Councillors can make best use of their time on Council and to encourage collaborative working between councillors.
7. Production of a Council Operations Manual: This exists in outline and will be completed as all training and other documents are produced.

Implementing these improvements before the 2021 AGM means that more effective working practices will be embedded in MC from day one.

Helen Wilson, Chair R33 Working Group, 11 June 2020