

Fit for the Future a u3a wide consultation on governance

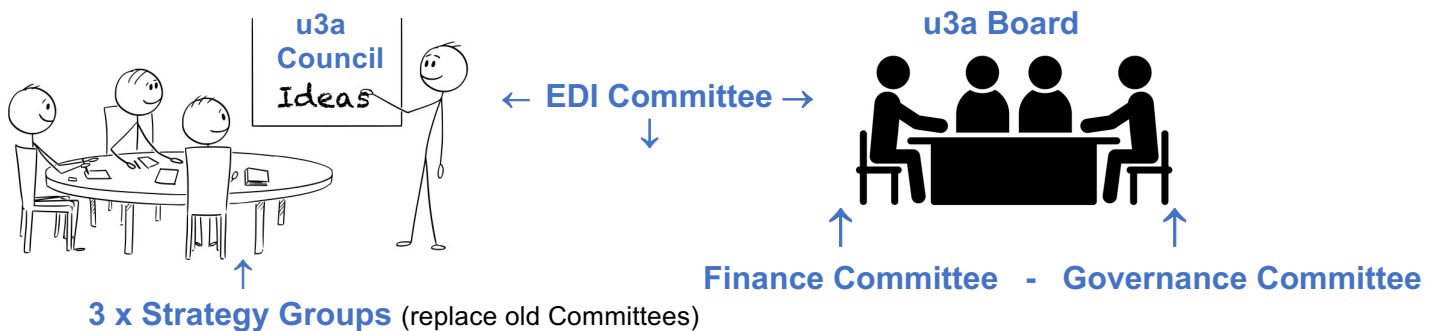
Extensive details have been mailed to all u3as since the end of January and are also available on the website at www.u3a.org.uk/fitforthefuture This is a very short version outlining the main points about which many members have asked questions. It is important to remember these are drafts – the Board will decide on 19th June whether to propose the change and u3as will be able to vote at the AGM on 16th October. If proposed, the resolution will require a 75% majority of the votes cast in order to be approved. Please remember to register when requested to do so.



For u3as there will be no change to their independent operation or committee and trustees' responsibilities or charity status. However, u3as will have more opportunity to influence the development of the u3a movement with enhanced representation and two-way communication.

Why make changes? The present structure is out of date and the way in which trustees are elected does not ensure the Board has the necessary skills and experience for today's charity requirements. Trustees also have a huge workload resulting in a shortage of volunteers for the job.

A possible solution: Disband the present Board of 18 members and reform it with a maximum of 10 u3a members, experienced in oversight and compliance, who are elected nationally (rather than regionally as at present). Their suitability might be identified by a Nominations Committee.



Form a u3a Council which would have powers delegated by the Board and would be composed of u3a members elected by and representing the regions and nations, together with some ex-officio members such as Strategy Group chairs and Network Link. The two bodies would liaise closely, with the chair of the Council being an ex-officio member of the Board (without a vote) and a Board member, probably the vice-chair, attending Council meetings.

Responsibilities: The Board would continue to have a legal responsibility to act on behalf of the Trust; to provide oversight of the Trust's performance; to ensure compliance with charity and corporate law; to ensure financial integrity and to approve the final annual budget and strategy. **The Council** would give u3as a much greater voice than at present; it would have the time to identify and discuss the needs of u3as; to consider u3a-wide priorities; develop and participate in u3a impact assessments and encourage participation in initiatives. It would contribute to the overall budget and strategy of the Trust and oversee and co-ordinate the work of the Strategy Groups. Representatives would act as spokespersons for the u3a movement in their region; be key contacts to liaise with other organizations and be a conduit for strengthened two-way communication with the u3as and networks in their region or nation.

Will this change cost more money? The Board will be much smaller and conduct most of its meetings on line, as will almost all other committees and any working groups etc. The Council will meet in person but probably only twice a year and its other meetings will be on line. It is therefore anticipated that there will be very little, if any, increase in costs.



Consultation is open until the end of April but please send any comments or suggestions in as soon as possible, either to your Regional / National Trustee or email them to:

governance@u3a.org.uk