



SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL Report to Council

Report of: Director of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Date: 16th June 2021

Subject: Transition to a Committee System of Governance

Author of Report: Gillian Duckworth, Director of Legal & Governance

Summary:

To report to the Council the steps necessary for the establishment of a programme to enable the Council to transition to a Committee system of Governance from May 2022, including the establishment and operation of a Governance Committee of Full Council to oversee the transition and the establishment and operation of the Transitional Committees to pilot methods of working.

Recommendations:

That this Council:

- (a) Notes the proposals for the operation of Transitional Committees as set out in this report and approves their establishment in respect of the four theme areas;
- (b) Agrees to (i) establish a Governance Committee as a politically proportionate member steering group to guide the transition to a committee system of governance and to set the parameters for stakeholder engagement, as described in the report and (ii) receive a report at the next Council meeting outlining the revised political proportionality framework, and allocations of seats to political groups on individual committees, resulting from the establishment of the Governance Committee;
- (c) Requests the Director of Legal and Governance to amend Part 3 of the Constitution (Responsibility for Functions) by updating the Transitional Committee Terms of Reference to reflect their areas of responsibility, adding Terms of Reference for the Governance Committee once agreed by the Committee and to make any minor consequential amendments that may be necessary.

Background Papers:

Report to Annual Council Meeting 19th May 2021: Sheffield City Council Governance Referendum

Category of Report: OPEN

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial implications
YES – Cleared by Paul Schofield
Legal implications
YES – Cleared by Andrea Simpson
Equality of Opportunity implications
NO
Tackling Health Inequalities implications
NO
Human Rights implications
NO
Environmental and Sustainability implications
NO
Economic impact
NO
Community Safety implications
NO
Human Resources implications
NO
Property implications
NO
Area(s) affected
None
Relevant Scrutiny Committee if decision called in
N/A
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?
Yes
Press release
NO

TRANSITION TO A COMMITTEE SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its Annual Meeting on 19th May 2021 Full Council ratified the outcome of the Governance Referendum, for a change to a committee system of governance from the start of the 2022/23 Municipal Year, Full Council also requested the Director of Legal and Governance, in consultation with the Leaders of the political groups on the Council, to take all steps necessary to develop and implement the change, and to recommend the necessary changes to the Constitution, etc, reporting back to Full Council as and when necessary, such as to recommend the number and the functions of the new committees, their terms of reference, etc. agreed and steps towards implementation of governance referendum result.
- 1.2 At its meeting Full Council also approved changes to be made to the Council's governance structure for the Municipal Year 2021/22, by establishing four Transitional Committees on a politically proportionate basis and including representation from Executive Members, to undertake policy development work to support the activities of the Co-operative Executive.
- 1.3 This report outlines the steps necessary for the establishment of a programme to enable the Council to transition to a Committee system of Governance from May 2022, including the establishment and operation of a Governance Committee of Full Council to oversee the transition and the establishment and operation of the Transitional Committees to pilot methods of working.

2. ESTABLISHMENT OF A GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE TO GUIDE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMITTEE SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE

- 2.1 The steps necessary to develop and implement the change in governance arrangements were set out in the report to Full Council in May. A programme of work will be set out to deliver the required procedural and technical work which will require a Member steering committee to guide the transition and to set the parameters for stakeholder engagement.
- 2.2 It is proposed that the Council establishes a Governance Committee, to be chaired by the Deputy Leader, Councillor Julie Grocutt, who will lead this piece of work, and with the Shadow Deputy leader, Councillor Penny Baker, as Vice Chair. The Committee will be made up of the Chairs of the Transitional Committees and Councillor Mary Lea as part of her co-ordinating role for Local Area Committee implementation. This membership constitutes a politically proportionate Committee which will be tasked with oversight of the transitional work and will approve the recommendations to be made to Full Council. This will replace the role provisionally agreed for the Overview and management Scrutiny Committee reported to an earlier meeting of Full Council.
- 2.3 The Committee will be outward facing. The Council will not be working in isolation on this project but will seek input from outside the organisation, ensuring citizens are engaged and are provided with opportunities to help shape this programme of work. The Council will also be engaging the

professional support of agencies such as the Local Government Association, the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and Monitoring Officers from other local authorities which have recently transitioned or are about to transition to a Committee system. This will ensure the Council is supported through this period and learns from best practice to ensure that the system implemented in Sheffield responds to the needs of our City.

- 2.4 Stakeholder engagement will be considered in more detail by the Governance Committee once established.

3. TRANSITIONAL COMMITTEES

- 3.1 Four Transitional Committees will be established, to meet from September 2021, based on four theme areas; which will each relate to a number of Executive member portfolios as follows:

Transition Committee 1: Our Council

- Leader
- Deputy Leader - Community Engagement and Governance
- Finance and Resources

Transition Committee 2: Communities and Neighbourhoods

- Sustainable Neighbourhoods, Wellbeing, Parks and Leisure
- Housing, Roads and Waste Management

Transition Committee 3: Climate Change, Economy and Development

- Climate Change, Environment and Transport
- Inclusive Economy, Jobs and Skills
- City Futures: Development, Culture and Regeneration

Transition Committee 4: Education, Health and Care

- Education, Children and Families
- Health and Social Care

- 3.2 Membership of each Committee will include the Executive Members whose responsibilities are covered by the theme areas, but the Committees will be chaired by non-executive Members.
- 3.3 The purpose of Transitional Committees is to help the Council begin to work within a system where all parties' views are taken into consideration when making decisions or setting policy for the Council. The Committees will undertake policy development work to support the activities of the Co-operative Executive and provide cross-party engagement prior to decision making so that a broad view and range of ideas can be considered.
- 3.4 The Committees will be outward facing. They may implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options; conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy and possible options for the purpose of advising the Executive on the delivery of corporate priorities; and liaise with other organisations operating in the area to ensure that policy recommendations are thus enhanced to reflect the interests of local people.
- 3.5 They will also provide a link between Local Area Committees (LACs) and the Co-operative Executive, receiving and reviewing reports and recommendations on matters that do not fall within the delegated powers of the LAC and considering the outcome of consultation carried out by LACs

on matters under consideration by the Transitional Committee.

- 3.6 Although Transitional Committees will not formally meet until September, preparatory work for their operation will be undertaken before then. The intention is to set a work programme for each Committee and work will begin shortly with the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the committees to agree how this should be done.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It is proposed to introduce an appropriate Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairs and Vice chairs of the Transitional Committees. The Council's Independent Remuneration Panel will be asked to make recommendations for consideration by full Council in due course.
- 4.2 Based on existing arrangements, recognising that two scrutiny committee chairs have not been appointed and those committees are likely to be replaced in part by the new Transitional Committees, it is estimated that the net additional cost will be in the order of £20k to £30k for the 2021-22 financial year. There is no financial provision for this sum, so it will have to be met from contingency reserves or savings elsewhere which will occur during the year.
- 4.3 This is a substantial programme of work which will require adequate resources to deal with the complexity of the task and tight timescale. Officers are working up a detailed, costed project plan with options to deliver the new Committee system which will be presented to Members for approval.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Transitional Committees will be established as advisory committees to the executive, and the Governance Committee as an advisory committee to the authority, under section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972. The Committees will operate in accordance with their Terms of Reference and Council Procedure Rules as set out in the Council's Constitution.

6. EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct equalities implications from this report. The Committees will have regard to Equality of Opportunity implications in their work.