S H E F F I E L D   C I T Y   C O U N C I L

Governance Committee

Meeting held 30 November 2021

PRESENT: Councillors Julie Grocutt (Chair), Penny Baker (Deputy Chair), Sue Alston, Dawn Dale, Peter Garbutt, Christine Gilligan, Mary Lea, Mike Levery, Mohammed Mahroof and Sioned-Mair Richards

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1   An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mark Jones.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1   No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the press and public.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1   There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1   **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2021 be approved as a correct record.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1   The Committee received the following question from a member of the public in attendance at the meeting.

Nigel Slack

The date for the submissions to the Transition Inquiry was very tight, understandably. However, can the Committee confirm the evidence sessions on the 7 and 8 December 2021, will not be the last opportunity for public to input on the design and development of the new Committee Framework or the finer grain detail still awaiting development?

In response to the public question, the Chair (Councillor Julie Grocutt) explained the importance of public engagement and mentioned that Involve intended to consult with members of the public in the upcoming months, on how they could engage with the Council on the design of the new system. The Chair mentioned that engagement with stakeholders and the wider public would be a key part to success of transitioning to a Committee System.

6.   REVIEW OF DRAFT DESIGN PRINCIPLES

6.1   The Committee considered a report concerning a Review of the Design Principles for a committee system. The Assistant Director (Governance), Alexander Polak, explained that the purpose of the report was to give the Committee detail on the feedback received from the public, at engagement events that had taken place over the previous months. Appendix 1 of the report summarised feedback from members of the public in regard to the draft design principles.

6.2   The Assistant Director (Governance) informed the Committee that Appendix 2 in the report, gave the Committee options on amendments to the draft design principles. A simplified version of the draft design principles had also been produced and provided for Members to consider using either alongside, or in place of the original draft design principles.

6.3   The Committee agreed to use the simplified version of the draft design principles going forward. It was mentioned the original version would remain and serve a purpose for anyone who wished to refer to them, for additional detail.

6.4   Members of the Committee suggested amending the simplified draft design principles. Proposed amendments were as follows-

6.5   To remove 'cutting edge' from Principle E and replace it with 'forward looking' as this would reflect how the Council needed to continuously look ahead and be prepared for change. This amendment was agreed by the Committee.

6.6   To add 'be open' into Principle 18. It was mentioned this would reflect that the Council intended to be open and transparent as much as possible with the public. This amendment was agreed by the Committee.

6.7   To group together the principles that related to each other. This amendment was agreed by the Committee

6.8   To remove 'valuing them all equally' from Principle 5 and replace it with 'taking all views into consideration when decision-making'. It was mentioned that 'valuing them all equally' could lead to a future complaint, if someone felt they were not valued equally throughout the process of transitioning to a Committee System. This amendment was not agreed by the Committee.

6.9   To add 'all' to Principle 5. It was mentioned that it needed to be clear, that the Council intended to seek out and listen to all voices in the city, especially seldom heard groups. This amendment was agreed by the Committee.

6.10   The Chair thanked the Committee for their suggested amendments and all the members of the public who provided suggestions to the draft design principles.

6.11   **RESOLVED:** That (1) the feedback from members of the public and stakeholders (Appendix 1) be noted;

(2) That the simplified draft design principles be used going forward and be amended in light of this feedback, as per Appendix 2 subject to any alterations agreed as detailed at paragraphs 6.4 to 6.9 above; and

(3) That these design principles, as amended, continue to be used for the purpose of guiding the design, and future review, of Sheffield's modern committee governance model, subject to any further review in the course of ongoing public engagement.

7.   TRANSITION TO A COMMITTEE SYSTEM INQUIRY SESSION 1

7.1   The Committee received a report of the Director of Legal and Governance concerning the inquiry process. The Assistant Director (Governance) explained the multiple purposes of the report.

7.2   The Assistant Director (Governance) advised it would be beneficial for Members of the Committee to give their views on the Governance Framework, taking into consideration the key design questions set out in the report.

7.3   Members were also asked if they had an immediate steer on how they wished to shape the Governance Model, in reflection of the information provided in the report.

7.4   It was also mentioned that it would be useful for the Committee to provide an insight on any key lines of inquiry to be asked at the Inquiry sessions, to make sure the Committee get the most out of that inquiry process.

7.5   The Assistant Director (Governance) stated that additional attendees had been invited to Inquiry Sessions 2 and 3 that were not listed in the report.

7.6   Members of the Committee discussed the points stated above. The main points to note were, as follows:-

7.7   To talk to other local authorities about:

- Schemes of Delegation.
- Roles/Responsibilities of Officers.
- Urgent decision-making processes.
- Holding to account function.

- Memberships/Requirements of Councillors.
- Vice/Co-chairs.
- Political proportionality of Chairs.
- Appointing Chairs/Vice Chairs of Committees.

- How to avoid pre-determined scrutiny/decisions.
- call-ins.

- Views on how many themed Committees there should be.
- How often would the Committees meet.
- How the Over-Arching Committee should operate.
- How Full Council should operate.

- How the Whip system would influence what happens.

- At what point should the Council consult with the public on new policies.

- To understand the relationship between Local Area Committees and Themed Committees.

7.8 **RESOLVED:** That (1) progress in the five weeks since the committee's last meeting be noted;

(2) That the volume of evidence so far gathered by the Council over the past few years and months, summarised in this report and its appendices, be given full consideration with a view to informing the Committee's views on the Council's future governance model;

(3) That members identify any key gaps in the evidence available which could be addressed within the remainder of this inquiry process; and

(4) That the questions and early options presented throughout the paper are considered with a view to whether the committee can provide any degree of steer in order to progress the inquiry towards recommendations to Council by the end of December.

8.   DATE OF NEXT MEETING

8.1   The next meeting was scheduled to be held on 7 December 2021.

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Governance Committee

Meeting held 7 December 2021

PRESENT: Councillors Julie Grocutt (Chair), Penny Baker (Deputy Chair), Sue Alston, Peter Garbutt, Christine Gilligan, Mary Lea and Mike Levery

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1.   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1   Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sioned-Mair Richards, Dawn Dale, Mark Jones and Mohammed Mahroof.

2.   EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1   No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the press and public.

3.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1   There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

4.   PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

4.1   There were no public question or petitions received.

5.   TRANSITION TO A COMMITTEE SYSTEM INQUIRY SESSION 2

5.1   The Committee received verbal submissions from a range of witnesses in order to review information which would help the Committee make decisions when developing the new Committee System.

Royal Borough of Kingston Council

5.2   The Corporate Head of Democratic & Electoral Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer at Royal Borough of Kingston Council, Gary Marson, attended the meeting virtually and gave a verbal submission to the Committee.

5.3   Key points from Gary Marson's verbal submission were-

- Royal Borough of Kingston Council had;
- 48 Elected Members who represented 16 wards.
- 3 Strategic Committees (Place, People and Corporate & Resources) that met on a cycle of 5 times a year.
- A Local Area Committee (Neighbourhood) structure that sat beneath the 3 Strategic Committees.
- Appointed up to 4 Co-Chairs of each Committee.
- 39 seats for Elected Members across all Strategic Committees.

- Allowed for members of the public to present questions/petitions at any Strategic Committee.

- Cabinet Members had transitioned to Portfolio Holders.

- Portfolio Holders acted as the lead spokesperson for their service area.

- Portfolio Holders were the main point of contact for officers for policy steer.

- Consultation between the Relevant Director and Portfolio Holder was required to take urgent decisions.

- All decision-making by Elected Members was made in Committees.

- There was no scrutiny function although they do retain the ability to call-in decisions.

- Either 9 Elected Members, or 2,500 residents had to give notice to call-in a decision of a Strategic Committee.

- There was a 10 working-day stand still after each Committee where a call-in can be received.

- If a call-in was submitted, a call-in panel would be convened. The leader of the opposition would chair the call-in panel.

- Responsibility for Finance and Assets were within the same Committee. This Committee would also meet at the end of a cycle of meetings, therefore being able to sign off any key decisions.

- A Scheme of Delegation to Officers meant that Officers were able to take decisions on anything that was not reserved for Committee. Royal Borough of Kingston had concentrated on only itemising matters for Committee that they considered sufficiently important.

- Avoided looking at policy matters within Full Council.

- Suggested there was Leader's meetings each month to prepare for upcoming meetings.

5.4 Members of Committee asked questions and the following responses were provided by Mr Marson as follows:-

5.5 He confirmed the portfolio holders, and the Chairs of Strategic

Committees are the same people. Strategic Committees also had multiple Co-Chairs.

5.6   He believed that having 13 Elected Members on a Committee did not cause for bad discussion or debate.

5.7   It was mentioned that Royal Borough of Kingston Council had 4 Local Area Committees. These Committees had the power to take decisions that fell solely within their individual geographical area. This meant a Local Area Committee could find itself taking decisions on a substantial asset, although they tended to mainly determine planning applications or traffic and highway matters.

5.8   It was stated that Royal Borough of Kingston Council had 9 portfolio holders in total. The Leader of the Council was 1 of the 9 portfolio holders. Gary Marson also confirmed the Royal Borough of Kingston did not have any sub-committees.

5.9   Each service area had a portfolio holder, in which Senior Managers were encouraged to keep portfolio holders up to date on any matters in their area. It was added that the delegation to Officers was extensive therefore very limited matters are reserved for Committee.

Hartlepool Borough Council

5.10   Councillor Cameron Stockell, Deputy Leader at Hartlepool Borough Council attended the meeting virtually and gave a verbal submission to the Committee.

5.11   Key points from Councillor Cameron Stockell's verbal submission were-

- Hartlepool Borough Council had previously worked under a Committee System some time ago, although it had since changed to an Executive Model with an elected Mayor. It was now back under a Committee System and had been operating that way since 2012.

- Hartlepool Borough Council had 5 Themed Policy Committees. These were-
  - Finance & Policy
  - Neighbourhood Services
  - Children's Services
  - Adult and Community Services
  - Economic Growth & Regeneration Services

5.12   Members of Committee asked questions and the following responses were provided by Councillor Cameron Stockell:-

5.13   Hartlepool Borough Council do not have any Local Area Committees.

The Council used to have a North and South Community Postal Forum where members of the public were invited to attend, to raise issues on their local area although these meetings were poorly attended.

5.14   The Committee were informed that Hartlepool Borough Council do not have any portfolio holders. The Chairs of the Committees communicated with Directors on policy matters. It was added that Chairs of Committees couldn't make decisions although they tended to steer on policy matters where possible, all decisions on policy had to be referred to Committee.

5.15   It was stated that Hartlepool Borough Council did not have a separate Scrutiny Committee. It was believed the scrutiny would form part of formal discussion and debate before making a decision. It was added that statutory scrutiny would be carried out by the Audit & Governance Committee.

5.16   Key decisions could be taken by a Committee if it was financially significant (result in income, expenditure or savings of £100,000 or greater) or if the decision would affect 2 or more wards.

5.17   Councillor Cameron Stockell confirmed that Licensing was the only Committee to have a sub-committee.

5.18   Hartlepool Borough Council require at least half of the Elected Members to sign for a call-in.

5.19   The Committee were informed that Full Council at Hartlepool Borough met once every 2 months. Policy Committees met once a month although the Chair had discretion to re-schedule a meeting, if there was not any urgent items of business.

5.20   Annual Full Council had a function that allowed Elected Members to vote for nominated Chairs/Vice Chairs of Committees. This meant that Chairs/Vice Chairs did not have to be politically proportionate.

5.21   Councillor Cameron Stockell believed that having 7 Elected Members on a Committee did not cause for bad discussion or debate.

5.22   Councillor Cameron Stockell referred to Hartlepool Borough's constitution in that *The Managing Director (or in his/her absence the Director of Resources and Development), in consultation with the Leader (or in his absence the Deputy Leader), Chair of the relevant Committee (or in his absence Vice Chair), the Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer, may take a decision normally reserved to Full Council or a Committee where:*

a) Failure to take the decision promptly would, or would be likely to, harm the interests of the Authority and/or the public.
b) The decision is of such urgency that it cannot be delayed to be

considered at a meeting of Full Council or the relevant Committee with delegated authority.

Sheffield for Democracy

5.23   Vicky Seddon from Sheffield for Democracy attended the meeting and gave a verbal submission to the Committee. A written submission was also circulated to the Committee, prior to the meeting.

5.24   Key points from Vicky Seddon's verbal submission were-

- It was understood how difficult it had been for Local Authorities in regard to the reduction of money and resource. Therefore, it was mentioned that Sheffield City Council had to get the balance right between resources for decision making and the resources for service delivery.

- Vicky Seddon encouraged Sheffield Councillors to sign a pledge which had previously been circulated. The intention of the pledge is for;
  - Greater independence for local Councils
  - More financial autonomy Local Councils
  - An independent inquiry into the role of local government and the relationship with Whitehall.

- The Council needed to define the relationship between Themed Committees and Local Area Committees, which would not affect the ability for decisions to be made in the communities.

- The Committee was asked to look to how often Local Area Committees meet.

- The Committee was asked to look at how often local elections were held. It was added that frequent elections could have affected the culture of Councillors and their ways of working together.

5.25   The Committee had no questions following the verbal submission.

Brighton & Hove Council

5.26   Councillor Phelim Mac Cafferty, Leader at Brighton & Hove Council attended the meeting virtually and gave a verbal submission to the Committee.

5.27   Key points from Councillor Phelim Mac Cafferty's verbal submission were-

- Brighton & Hove City Council had previously operated under a Cabinet system, although it now operated under a Committee

System.

- Brighton & Hove City Council had 6 Policy Committees. These were-
- Policy & Resources
- Children, Young People & Skills
- Environment, Transport & Sustainability
- Housing
- Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture
- Health and Wellbeing Board

- An advantage of the Committee System was the spread of votes in Committees were reflected by public.

- The responsibility of decision-making was split across all 54 Councillors. Different views were captured in the discussions at Committee.

- It was mentioned the decision-making processes could take more time, although it was believed the decision would stand the test of time, as it had been made across all parties.

- The Committee System required a lot of administrative assistance and planning.

- Councillor Phelim Mac Cafferty agreed to circulate a document to the Committee which highlighted some key points to adopt, when transition to a Committee System. Some points were mentioned below-
- Protocol for no overall control
- Pre-meets were attended by opposition spokesperson
- All Members were able to table a letter to the Committee
- A Committee work plan had been published monthly
- Effective Member development
- Ward budgets
- Effective Community engagement

5.28   Members of Committee asked questions and the following responses were provided by Councillor Phelim Mac Cafferty:-

5.29   It was confirmed that Brighton & Hove City Council held local elections once every 4 years.

5.30   Brighton & Hove City Council meetings were highly attended by members of the public. It was added that Public Questions/Petitions were permitted at all Committee meetings along with Full Council.

5.31   The Committee were advised that Brighton & Hove City Council had 6 portfolio holders, one for each Policy Committee, that would act as Committee Chairs. They also had mixed male and female Co-Chairs

for 4 of the Policy Committees. At present, all the portfolio holders represented the one political party.

5.32 Councillor Phelim Mac Cafferty believed that having 10 Elected Members on each Policy Committee, did not cause for bad discussion.

5.33 Brighton & Hove City Council had Urgency Sub-Committees and Special Committees which could be formed if an urgent decision was required. The membership of an Urgency Sub-Committee was 1 representative of each political party within that particular Committee. The membership of a Special Committee was the entirety of the Committee.

5.34 Councillor Phelim Mac Cafferty explained that Policy Committees would meet depending on their workloads. Committees with less controversial matters would meet on average 5 times per year, whereas more extensive Committees would meet up to 8 times per year.

5.35 It was mentioned that Brighton & Hove City Council had 32 working groups and consultative bodies which engaged with members of the public. The Greater Brighton Economic Board also brought together key partners to drive local economy forward. Brighton also had Housing Panels where they would hear from housing tenants.

5.36 The Committee were informed there was no formal call-in function within Brighton & Hove City Council's committee system. It was mentioned that decision-making was scrutinised during the time of the decision being made through discussions and debates at Committee meetings.

Professor of Local Politics at De Montfort University

5.37 Colin Copus, Emeritus Professor of Local Politics at De Montfort University attended the meeting virtually and gave a verbal submission to the Committee. A written submission was also circulated to the Committee, prior to the meeting.

5.38 Key points from Colin Copus's verbal submission were-

- New Committees needed to be deliberative and not just a place where decisions were made.

- Committees should also be a place where Councillors can get information and support they require from Officers before making a decision.

- Sheffield City Council should avoid Committees becoming inward looking.

- Local Area Committees could take responsibility of their own budget.

- When the Council developed the new committee system, full member engagement should be considered. Regular reports should be relayed back to Members, so they had a sight of how their input had been considered.

- The Council was encouraged to consider how political party group system would operate including the Whip system.

5.39 Members of Committee asked questions and the following responses were provided by Colin Copus:-

5.40 He recommended that Sheffield City Council retain the ability to call-in and scrutinise decisions. It was mentioned that this could be done through a separate Strategic Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The Council should also retain the ability to call in external witnesses for evidence.

5.41 The Committee were asked to implement single item agendas if they decided to go forward with a separate Strategic Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

5.42 Colin Copus believed that Elected Members made decisions too early. It was mentioned that decisions were made when Members are being briefed by Officers. Therefore, Colin Copus encouraged Members to consider all the information presented to them at Committee meetings, before making a decision.

5.43 The Committee were advised that Sheffield City Council should engage with the public on policies, at the earliest possible time. Colin Copus added that this could be done through online surveys, polls or citizen panels. It was added that the public should have more than one opportunity to impact on policies.

5.44 Colin Copus encouraged the Council to investigate the roles of Co-Chairs rather than how many there should be. The Council should consider what they wanted to achieve by having Co-Chairs before deciding whether it would be beneficial to have them. This would then lead to how many there should be and whether they are politically proportionate.

5.45 The Committee were advised that the Council needed to be satisfied with what powers were delegated to officers.

Member of Parliament

5.46 Clive Betts, MP attended the meeting virtually and gave a verbal submission to the Committee.

5.47   Key points from Clive Betts' verbal submission were-

- It was stated that if the Council did not have an effective Committee System implemented, then it could look like most decisions have been made by Officers.

- Delegate routine decisions to Sub-Committees.

- Needed to be a good relationship between Chairs and Lead Officers.

- Needed to be a structure in place that allowed Local Area Committees to take positive decisions out in the communities.

- The Committee was encouraged to consider how urgent decisions would be taken.

5.48   Members of Committee asked questions and the following responses were provided by Mr Betts: -

5.49   He advised the Committee that cross party Co-Chairs should be considered, due to the current working relations within Sheffield City Council.

5.50   It was suggested that a Scrutiny function remained, although the process should scrutinise public bodies, along with Council decisions, and hold them to account.

5.51   Consideration should be taken on how much budget was delegated to Local Area Committees. They should then be held accountable for the decisions made in the communities. It was mentioned that regular update reports on budgetary spend could be beneficial for the Committee to see at each meeting.

5.52   In response to a question about whether devolution of power to Local Area Committees might be prevented by a desire to avoid handing power to bodies where the political majority may not be the same as the Council's administration, and the associated risk of a 'postcode lottery' of services, Mr Betts drew comparisons with Central Government giving power to Local Government, saying that as long as you draw a clear framework around the delegated authority this was indeed in the spirit of meaningful devolution.

Cheshire East Council

5.53   Councillor Sam Corcoran, Leader at Cheshire East Council attended the meeting virtually and gave a verbal submission to the Committee.

5.54   Key points from Councillor Sam Corcoran's verbal submission were-

- Cheshire East Council had transitioned to a Committee System in May 2021.

- A link was provided to the Committee, which highlighted first impressions of how the system is working at Cheshire East Council.

- Officer time had increased since the introduction of the Committee System.

- They had a joint administration. The aim was to have as many Elected Members as possible at the heart of decision-making.

- Cheshire East Council used pre-meetings to discuss an upcoming agenda which led to clear and thorough deliberations in Committees.

5.55   Members of Committee asked questions and the following responses were provided by Councillor Sam Corcoran:-

5.56   Councillor Sam Corcoran explained that Cheshire East Council had a separate Statutory Scrutiny Committee, the main purpose of which was to scrutinise adults and health issues. It was explained that scrutiny was carried out by all parties in the Committee meetings themselves before making a decision.

5.57   It was stated the majority of the Cabinet Members at Cheshire East Council transitioned to Chairs of Committees. This was the main reason why relationships between lead Officers and Chairs were retained.

5.58   Councillor Sam Corcoran believed having Co-Chairs could potentially damage the relationship between the lead officers and Chairs. Work loads for Officers could also increase if the Co-Chairs needed to be briefed separately. Cheshire East Council had Vice/Chairs of Committees who were briefed at the same time as the Chair, the Chairs and Vice chairs of committees tended to be from different political parties.

5.59   The Committee were advised that it is an important role for Whips to make sure that Councillors are adequately informed to make decisions.

5.60   Since the transition to a Committee System, members of the public at Cheshire East Council were now instructed to ask questions that relate sorely to items of business on an agenda, for a particular meeting. Whereas, the Cabinet System had allowed public to ask questions at a Cabinet meeting on anything that related to the Council. This had reduced the amount of public attending Committee meetings at Cheshire East Council.

5.61   The Committee were advised there needed to be an administrative majority on Committees, therefore they would need to consider that when determining the size of each Committee.

5.62   Cheshire East Council had 7 Policy Committees, one being a Finance Committee, with 13 Elected Members on each Committee. The intention was to have one seat for each Elected Member on every Committee. Cheshire East Council did not have any Local Area Committees.

5.63   The Committee were informed that delegation to Officers had increased since the transition to a Committee System. It was mentioned that this had raised some concerns from Elected Members as they initially thought they would have more authority over decision making. What tended to happen at Cheshire East Council was the Elected Members would set the policies, for the Officers to deliver.

Member of House of Lords, Lord David Blunkett

5.64   Lord Blunkett, MP attended the meeting virtually and gave a verbal submission to the Committee.

5.65   Key points from Lord Blunkett's verbal submission were-

- Recommended an Over-Arching Committee and Scrutiny Function be implemented into the new system.

- Suggested 5-7 Policy Committees.

- He stressed the importance of linking the Local Area Committees appropriately into the policy making process, and the need for the main committees to have a subcommittee empowered to monitor performance.

5.66   Members of Committee asked questions and the following responses were provided by Lord Blunkett:-

5.67   Lord Blunkett suggested the administration of Sheffield City Council thought how they would call-in decisions if they were not the ruling party/coalition. It was added that this could be a useful exercise on how to implement an effective call-in function into the new system.

5.68   It was suggested that sub-committees beneath Policy Committees could act as Scrutiny Committees, to scrutinise how policies had been implemented across the City.

5.69   The Chair thanked all the attendees for attending the inquiry session and for sharing their views on a new committee system.

6.   DATE OF NEXT MEETING

6.1   It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 8 December 2021.

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Governance Committee

Meeting held 8 December 2021

PRESENT: Councillors Penny Baker (Deputy Chair), Sue Alston, Dawn Dale, Peter Garbutt, Christine Gilligan, Mary Lea, Mike Levery and Mohammed Mahroof

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1.   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1   Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Julie Grocutt, Mark Jones and Sioned Mair-Richards.

2.   EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1   No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the press and public.

3.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1   There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

4.   PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

4.1   There were no public question or petitions received.

5.   TRANSITION TO A COMMITTEE SYSTEM INQUIRY SESSION 3

5.1   The Committee received verbal submissions from a range of witnesses in order to review any information which would help the Committee make decisions when developing the new Committee System.

It's Our City

5.2   Ruth Hubbard from It's Our City attended the meeting virtually and gave a verbal submission to the Committee. A written submission was also circulated to the Committee, prior to the meeting.

5.3   Key points to note from Ruth Hubbard's verbal submission were-

- Sheffield City Council had not been clear enough about the purpose for the governance transition therefore was advised to tell the story of Sheffield's governance journey.

- The relationship with the Local Area Committees needed to be clearer.

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- It's Our City believed Sheffield's purpose and outcomes should;
  - Build the legitimacy of the Council.
  - Make better decisions.
  - Be more democratic.
  - Improve relationships with Stakeholders and Public.

- Encouraged the Council to deliver strong external communication on the proposed direction of Governance arrangements.

- Sheffield City Council should consider implementing politically proportionate Chairs of Committees.

- The Council should also consider having Co-Chairs of Committees.

- It was mentioned that use of the simplified Governance Principles, which were agreed at a previous Committee, could lead to potential risks.

- The Council should implement a cost-neutral Committee System.

- It was mentioned that phrases such as; 'Scrutiny', 'Call-In' 'Overarching' all referred to the old system. The Council should consider changing the language of functions like these to reflect a new modern Committee System.

- Sheffield City Council needed to engage with Stakeholders more. It was advised that Elected Members along with key stakeholders with interest/investment in this process, could be invited to form part of a Governance Watch Group.

5.4   A Members of Committee asked a question and the following response were provided by Ruth Hubbard:-

5.5   She believed there was elements within Overview and Scrutiny that formed part of good decision-making although the Council were encouraged to move on from replicating functions that existed in the old system. It was mentioned that functions such as Policy Development and Holding to Account should be retained effectively in the new system.

Dr Karen Ford

5.6   Dr Karen Ford attended the meeting and gave a verbal submission to the Committee. A written submission was also circulated to the Committee, prior to the meeting.

5.7   Key points to note from Dr Karen Ford's verbal submission were-

- It was mentioned that Committees being politically proportionate could be problematic.

- Members being different ages, ethnicities and from different geographical areas should be considered when forming the Committee memberships.

- Asked the Council to consider how Independent Members were elected to Committees.

- Asked the Council to ensure an Overarching Committee doesn't function like a Cabinet.

- Sheffield City Council could explore having a joint leadership role, which could improve cross party relationships and ways of working.

- The Lord Mayor position should remain, and that Member should act as an ambassador for the city.

- The new Committee System should be more transparent which would lead to better public engagement.

- The role of scrutiny needed to be clearer for the public.

5.8   Members of Committee asked questions and the following responses were provided by Dr Ford:-

5.9   She explained there needed to be criteria for appointing Members to a Committee which would reflect how the public voted in the local elections.

5.10   Dr Karen Ford believed that public engagement would improve if proportion representation was implemented in the new system. She thought members of the public would feel their vote meant something.

An Active Citizen

5.11   Nigel Slack attended the meeting and gave a verbal submission to the Committee. A written submission was also circulated to the Committee, prior to the meeting.

5.12   Key points to note from Nigel Slack's verbal submission were-

- Sheffield City Council needed to put aside party politics if they wished for a successful transition to a Committee System.

- Believed there was no place for the Whip System in the new

model.

- Members should represent the whole City in Policy Committees and not be allowed to not sit on at least one Committee as this is their responsibility.

- Public engagement within the new system needed to be improved. The engagement that had taken place throughout the transition had proven to be invaluable. Mr Slack hoped the work that Involve aim to carry out in 2022 would achieve this.

- It was suggested that urgent decisions should be dealt with remotely if a physical meeting would have caused a delay in an urgent decision been made.

- Recommended the Council hold all-out elections every 4 years to minimise the amount of disruption each year along with reducing election costs.

5.13   Following Mr Slacks verbal submission, the Committee had no further questions.

National Expert in Local Governance and Decision Making

5.14   John Cade from INGOLOV attended the meeting virtually and gave a verbal submission to the Committee.

5.15   Key points to note from John Cade's verbal submission were-

- The number of agenda items should be balanced effectively to allow sufficient discussion time in Committees.

- Important to have a good Chair managing the meeting.

- Important to have effective system of pre-meetings with the Chair and Lead Officers

- Recommended there was an Overarching Committee which did not function like a Cabinet but dealt with citywide socio-economic matters along with key strategic and budgetary decisions.

- Believed Councillors would prefer to spend time in wards therefore the number of Committees/Sub-Committees should be considered.

5.16   Members of Committee asked questions and the following responses were provided by Mr Cade:-

5.17   He believed that Chairs of Committees should also be in effect the

'Portfolio Holders' for that area if indeed there were a need for such a term in this system. This would ensure that people had a clear path to someone with understanding of that area.

5.18 John Cade had seen Councils operate where the Chairs of Committees are from the majority political party. Alternatively, he had seen Councils where the Chairs were politically proportionate. John Cade stated the important thing was to ensure the Chair could command the confidence and support of that Committee.

5.19 He believed Co-Chairs would be a positive change.

5.20 It was suggested that the total number of Policy Committees remained within single figures.

5.21 John Cade referred to Birmingham City Council, where they had Neighbourhood Committees which would frequently update a particular Policy Committee on local issues.

5.22 It was advised that their system had an arrangement which allowed the Council to reflect on the Committee System's effectiveness. It was suggested this could be done 6-8 months after the implementation of the system.

5.23 It was stated the Strategy and Resources Committee should not be a Cabinet under another name as this would be a betrayal of what the Council agreed to move away from through the referendum. Although, there needed to be an Overarching Committee which dealt with key strategic and budgetary decisions instead of these been taken to different Committees. It was suggested the Overarching Committees membership is the Chairs of each Policy Committee and consider a geographical spread of area Members to input on local issues, and that this would not necessarily constitute a 'cabinet by another name'.

5.24 John Cade had witnesses other Councils use Urgency Committees for urgent decision making. Although, it was advised that urgent decisions be delegated to an Officer in consultation with the relevant Committee Chair.

5.25 John Cade hoped that each Councillor would want to have a seat on at least one Policy Committee although was reluctant to make it a requirement. This was because he thought Councillors may wish to spend more time in wards, dealing with local issues.

An Academic, University of Sheffield

5.26 Matthew Wood from University of Sheffield attended the meeting virtually and gave a verbal submission to the Committee. A written submission was also circulated to the Committee, prior to the meeting.

5.27   Key points to note from Matthew Wood's verbal submission were-

- Stated that his research showed that when designing a new governance system, an Inclusive approach to political decision making can help achieve accountability.

- The Council should be more open and transparent through evidence-based decision making.

- Citizens had lost trust in Sheffield City Council. It was now up to the Council to earn that trust back, this could be done through innovative public hearings where Committees show they are collaborating with other organisations within the City.

- Committees should consider diverse forms of evidence.

5.28   Following Matthew Wood's verbal submission, the Committee had no further questions and thanked him for his submission.

Chief Executive, Sheffield City Council

5.29   Kate Joseph, Chief Executive at Sheffield City Council, attended the meeting and gave a verbal submission to the Committee.

5.30   Key points to note from Kate Joseph's verbal submission were-

- Officers would provide professional opinions and options. Although, the Council were committed to implement how Members decided the new system should operate.

- Pleased that the transition to a committee system process had been so open.

- There was a clear desire for the Council to;
- Be more connected to communities.
- Be confident and outward looking.
- Support excellent delivery of public services.

- Important for the new system to allow effective iteration and learning, especially with the Council's challenging budgetary situation.

- Important to have teams around each Committee, so that Members felt they had adequate support. This was also important to ensure there was clear alignment with the corporate plan and budget. They should be resourced to succeed but this did not mean a blank cheque.

- Needed to make sure the Local Area Committees had clear

sight into the wider Committee System and inform Themed Committees.

- Hard to imagine how a Committee System would operate without an Overarching Committee. This would be different to a Cabinet as it would be politically proportionate, and everything would be open.

- Needed to be a single Committee that coordinated and took ownership of the budget. This could be done within the Overarching Committee.

- Delegations to Officers may increase therefore it was important that Officers have meaningful communication with Members so that Members and the public have confidence in Officer delegations.

- Needed to pay some attention to learning and development. There was already a Member Development Induction Programme ongoing although training needed to be rolled out to Members and Officers at all levels, so the Council is capable to work effectively under the new Committee System.

- In the 1-year plan, the Council had committed to a corporate 3–5-year plan.

5.31   Members of Committee asked questions and the following responses were provided by Kate Josephs: -

5.32   She believed it would be effective for each Policy Committee to have ownership of their specific budget for that area of work whilst the Overarching Committee had an overall view.

5.33   It was stated the Committee shouldn't be restrained in recommending something they felt needed to be implemented in the new system. Officers would then be able to provide potential costs of those recommendations.

5.34   Kate Joseph explained that if the Council chose to hold elections all-out every 4 years instead of the current arrangement, then it would be implemented, although this was something the Council needed to consider separately.

5.35   In was stated that it is the Officers duty to present well evidenced recommendations to Committees without favour, to allow for good discussions and considerations by Members.

5.36   The Chair thanked all the attendees for attending the inquiry session and for sharing their views on a new Committee System.

6.   CO-CHAIR PILOT REPORT

6.1   The Committee received a report of the Director of Legal and Governance which outlined different Councillors' experiences of Co-Chairing Committees.

6.2   A Member of the Committee asked a question and the following response were provided-

6.3   The Assistant Director (Governance) explained that the purpose of the report was for the Committee to consider whether implementing Co-Chairs into the new system should occur across all Committees, or if the option would be more flexible and decided on a committee-by-committee basis. The Director of Legal and Governance highlighted the difference between Co-Chairing and job sharing. Each Elected Member would have a full job if they were to Co-Chair a Committee. Alternatively, if there was an Elected Member job share, the Director of Legal and Governance believed both Members would be put forward together to Co-Chair a Committee doing part of the role each.

6.4   Concerns were raised around the continuity and consistency of Co-Chairs. It was mentioned that Members may wish to carry out tasks differently therefore there needed to be clear division of workload to not complicate the role.

6.5   Members of the Committee discussed the potential for having more than two Co-Chairs. Also, whether a Member could step into the Chair/Co-Chair role, if a current Chair was away from work for some time.

6.6   **RESOLVED:** That the Committee agreed to (1) Build the opportunity for job shares into the Committee's plans when it recommends a governance structure to Council;

(2) Ensure that any job sharing arrangement is supported by a job-share protocol in or with the constitution, potentially modelled on Brighton and Hove's; and

(3) Evaluate the effectiveness of any job shared roles within the first 12 months, alongside the evaluation of the effectiveness of the new governance model as a whole, and adjust the council's approach accordingly.

7.   TRANSITIONAL COMMITTEES LESSONS LEARNT

7.1   The Committee received a report of the Director of Legal and Governance which set out the initial learning to date from Transitional Committees, which began meeting formally in October 2021.

7.2   The Committee were asked to make comments on the progress of

Transitional Committees to date. The Committee should also use the information to inform the development of the Committee System model.

7.3   A Member of the Committee asked a question and the following response were provided-

7.4   The Head of Policy and Partnerships informed the Committee there needed to be a focus on what each Committee is responsible for, and this should be considered when deciding the total number of Policy Committees and how often they meet within the new system.

7.5   A Transitional Committee Chair informed the Committee that they were pleased with how their Transitional Committee had been operating so far. It was mentioned that 3 specific areas of work had been targeted which was appropriate to the limited time the Transitional Committees had to operate.

7.6   The Head of Policy and Partnerships thanked Members, along with Officers who had been part of the Transitional Committees functionality.

7.7   **RESOLVED:** That the Committee notes the learning from the Transitional Committees and uses it to inform the development of the Committee system model.

8.   DATE OF NEXT MEETING

8.1   It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 22 December 2021.

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