Sheffield City Council

Governance Committee Report

Report of:	**The Director of Legal & Governance**

Date:	**09 March 2022**
Subject:	**Committee System Structure**
Author of Report:	**Gillian Duckworth, Director of Legal & Governance, Monitoring Officer**

Summary: This report is an important milestone in the cross-party Governance Committee's work to design Sheffield City Council's new committee system of governance, for agreement by Full Council. The accumulated evidence compiled by the Committee over a number of months supports this proposal, which aims to prioritise pace, openness and clarity of decision-making while ensuring that the voice of the public is heard throughout Sheffield's democratic arena.

The Monitoring Officer has begun a detailed redraft of the necessary parts of the constitution based on the Committee's previous decisions and the recommendations in this paper, once referred on to Council, would allow work to continue at the pace necessary to bring a draft constitution and associated additional commentary to Full Council on 23 March as an additional appendix to this report.

It must be emphasised that this iterative approach to design – in which members are shaping the design as it emerges with input from residents, stakeholders, partners, councillors and officers – has been critical both to achieve the necessary pace and to ensure that the design has been Councillor-led throughout, with the voice of residents at its heart.

Recommendations:

That the following be recommended to Council:

1. *That the various elements of a committee system of governance set out in this report and its appendices, be agreed for implementation from the May 2022 AGM in line with the legally binding referendum of 6 May 2021 and subsequent resolution of Full Council on 19 May 2021;*

2. *That the Governance Committee be instructed to conduct a review of the new governance system, commencing six months after implementation*

(November 2022) with a view to recommending improvements to Full Council for May 2023. This review will:

a. *Use the previously agreed 'strategic aims' and 'design principles' found at Appendix 2 as its success criteria*
b. *Actively seek and use feedback from residents, stakeholders, partners, councillors and officers to inform its assessment against those criteria, in line with the new ways of working expected of all decision-makers within the new system*
c. *Take account of any changes to the local and national context*

Background Papers: N/A

Category of Report: OPEN

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial Implications	
YES – Cleared by: Liz Gough	
Legal Implications	
YES – Cleared by: Sarah Bennett	
Equality of Opportunity Implications	
YES – Cleared by: Adele Robinson	
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 Cabinet Portfolio Member	
Councillor Julie Grocutt, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Community Engagement and Governance	
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?	
NO	
Press release	
NO	

COMMITTEE SYSTEM STRUCTURE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Governance Committee was appointed by Sheffield City Council to lead the work which will take the Council from a 'Leader and Cabinet' model of Governance to a 'Committee' model. Building on previous decisions of the Committee and the evidence and experience gathered during the engagement and inquiry phases, this report proposes all the key aspects of how the Council's new Committee system should work at the point when it is launched in May 2022, so that final drafting of a revised constitution can be completed before that date. It must be emphasised that this iterative approach to design – in which members are shaping the design as it emerges with input from residents, stakeholders, partners, councillors and officers – has been critical both to achieve the necessary pace and to ensure that the design has been Councillor-led throughout, with the voice of residents at its heart.

1.2 This report is an important milestone in the cross-party Governance Committee's work to design Sheffield City Council's future governance arrangements under a committee system, for agreement by Full Council. The accumulated evidence compiled by the Committee over a number of months supports this proposal, which aims to prioritise pace, openness and clarity of decision-making while ensuring that the voice of the public is heard throughout Sheffield's democratic arena.

1.3 This once-in-a-generation opportunity to shape a new governance system does not end with this report, or the AGM in May 2022 or 2023. Members have been clear that this is a voyage of discovery and, particularly with reference to the development of improved public participation and engagement mechanisms, this is expected to continue to develop over the coming months and years.

1.4 This report is for referral on to an extraordinary meeting of Full Council on the 23rd March 2022 for formal agreement, at which point it will be accompanied by key segments of a redrafted constitution and associated additional commentary. The outcomes of the Governance Committee debate today will steer the ongoing work on that revised constitution and design of the operating frameworks and procedures required to deliver a successful transition at May 2022.

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3.0   **BACKGROUND**

3.1   On 6th May 2021, a Sheffield City Council Governance Referendum was held to determine whether the Council should be run by a leader who is an elected councillor chosen by a vote of the other elected councillors (which is how it is run now), or alternatively, by one or more committees made up of elected councillors. One result of this referendum was a binding resolution by Sheffield City Council on 19 May 2021 that it will, with effect from the start of the 2022/23 Municipal Year, cease to operate executive arrangements and start to operate a committee system of governance.

3.2   On 16 June 2021 Sheffield City Council resolved to establish a Governance Committee as a politically proportionate body with the delegated authority to guide the transition to a committee system of governance and to set the parameters for stakeholder engagement during the design process.

3.3   It has not been lost on the Committee that this cross-party initiative was in effect an early pilot of the Council's new way of working, and it has been incumbent on the members of this committee, Chaired by Cllr Julie Grocutt (Labour) and Deputy Chaired by Cllr Penny Baker (Liberal Democrat), to conduct this exercise as an exemplar of the spirit of openness, collaboration and listening which the referendum appeared to demand of its reshaped City Council. Members of all three Groups represented on the Committee have shown great willingness to partake in open and forthright

debate in private and in public, seeking and often finding consensus through deliberation and a willingness to listen to other perspectives.

3.4   The recommendations in this report are therefore to be recommended to Full Council with authority, not just insofar as the committee had delegated power and has conducted a well-evidenced process informed by public participation and involvement, but also insofar as Members trust the process of deliberation and negotiation by which this politically proportionate committee has produced recommendations designed to be palatable to this Council's unique political makeup.

3.5   Since its initial meetings on 20th September 2021 and 27 October 2021 the Governance Committee has been planning and conducting a whole committee inquiry into its future governance arrangements, and then using the learning from this to build a design for an effective committee system that is right for Sheffield. This followed on from, and somewhat mirrored in form, the exercise undertaken by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in 2019 when it looked at what could be achieved through changing the Council's decision-making model.

3.6   Over three sessions on 30th November, 7th December and 8th December the committee used a 'select committee' approach to gather evidence from a range of witnesses, including contributions from citizens through a range of public engagement events.

3.7   As agreed by Governance Committee members, the inquiry included:

   a) Collation of opinion, ideas and feedback gathered through council-led engagement with stakeholders, the public, members and council officers
   b) Desktop research including review of relevant material received in the 2019 Scrutiny exercise and since, including the Big City Conversation
   c) Research into comparator authorities' experiences and recognised best practice
   d) Lessons learnt from the first few months of the active experimentation taking place within the Council's democratic arena via the Transitional Committees, Local Area Committees, Co-Chairing pilot and other Members' experiences of decision-making during the 2021/22 transitional year
   e) Updated written or verbal submissions from a range of other contributors including an open invite to the witnesses from the 2019 Scrutiny exercise to update their submissions with any new or changed information. This included e.g. representatives from the business community, officers, academics, local campaign groups etc
   f) Verbal and written submissions from Councillors and Officers from other authorities which have moved to operate a Committee System in the modern era

3.8 The main output from that inquiry is this report which, once recommended to Full Council, should represent the Committee's synthesis of all of the information gathered and their application of this knowledge to the design of a system for Sheffield.

However, along the way various other important outputs were created, all of which have informed the Committee's recommendations:

- A summary of findings from the Big City Conversation and the Scrutiny Management Committee's investigation in 2019
- Case studies of other authorities which operate a committee system
- Relevant findings from basic mathematical analysis of various options
- Collated feedback from a number of public engagement events conducted across Sheffield and online with the support of the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny including specific proposals by local group It's Our City.
- A summary of the written and verbal evidence presented by witnesses on 7th and 8th of December, including representatives from the business community, officers, academics, local campaign groups, national politicians and Sheffield City Councillors
- A report of the research carried out by Cllrs Dawn Dale and Cllr Zahira Naz into the potential use and benefits of Co-chairing or job-sharing Chair roles.

3.9 In the course of its work, the Governance Committee has agreed:

- Draft design principles for use when weighing up options before May 2022 and when measuring the degree of success after May 2022 (see Appendix 2)
- A draft governance framework for use publicly to support conversations with stakeholders, the public, councillors and officers about the future model of the Council's governance (this provided a structure to the whole inquiry)
- An approach to stakeholder engagement about these principles and about the various aspects of the governance framework, throughout this period
- A plan for a several-stage process with simultaneous design and engagement informing each other as they proceeded
- A plan to shape that stakeholder engagement activity into two main stages:
  - o Proportionate, topic-by-topic engagement with internal and external stakeholders on technical questions as they arose, including an open public invitation for participants to contribute via a stakeholder group made up of interested parties;
  - o A city-wide, facilitated, representative, discursive engagement exercise, allowing more citizens' input to be more impactfully

applied to the emerging model, and to shaping future ways of working within it.

- It was agreed on 25 January 2022, following a round-table event with stakeholders for the purpose of planning this stage of engagement (chaired by our partner Involve) that this should take place after implementation in order to test and improve the initial implementation. The initial design at May will be informed by information already gleaned through previous public engagement activity and with reference to best practice.
- That design of the new committee governance model should take place via a whole-committee inquiry as above
- A number of specific aspects of the future structure were agreed on 25 January 2021 and 22 February 2022, each time describing an increasingly detailed outline of a new governance system, leading up to this report.

3.10   The above decisions were made with reference to proposed structure diagrams found in those reports. All of these have been superseded by an updated diagram reflecting the committee's amendments, provided at Appendix 1.

3.11   Members noted at their January meeting both that an extraordinary meeting of Council was required on 23 March and that there would be a need for Council to suspend or adjust aspects of its standing orders for that meeting in order to effectively handle this business. Such a suspension was agreed at the meeting of Full Council on 2 March 2021, as follows:

> "For the purposes of the Special Meeting of the Council scheduled to take place on 23 March 2022, and in relation to the item of business to approve new governance arrangements, each political Group may propose one amended set of governance arrangements and for the avoidance of doubt this also applies to the political party holding one seat on the Council. Voting in parts on these amendments shall not be permitted."

3.12   This follows the precedent established for special meetings of the Council at which the budget is agreed for the financial year ahead. This is because the decision shares some similar factors and risks:

- The aspects of the governance system (and constitutional changes) to be described by the report to Full Council on 23 March are designed to hang together as a coherent whole, following months of work by a committee of this Council.
- Changes to one part of the system cannot necessarily be made without adjusting various other aspects, if the whole is to remain functional.

- Changes to the Council's governance arrangements (including its constitution) should only be made in light of legal advice and within the oversight of the Council's Monitoring Officer.
- Given the technical nature of the subject matter, it is important that amendments can be worked up with the support of professional officers so that what comes forward, if agreed as an amendment, would describe an internally consistent and lawful system.

3.13   Finally, the Governance Committee has been clear from the outset that agreement of a new system for May 2023 would only be the beginning of the change process. At the Committee's first meeting, the Leader of the Council expressed this view, acknowledging that while the system as initially designed would be unlikely to be perfect in all respects, the key thing would be for the council to adapt and correct issues quickly. The experience of other councils which have transitioned to a committee system tells us that the bedding in period will last for multiple years during which time the degree of change is likely to depend on the outcome of elections as well as the changing needs of the city. The Governance Committee has heard anecdotally how challenging it can be to run a committee system in a council which does not have a single political Group with a majority. While the 'transition to committees programme' is not expected to continue on beyond the summer of 2022, this process of ongoing review and revision will need to become part of 'business as usual' for the council.

4.0   **PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

4.1   This report describes and recommends a committee structure and ways of working to be implemented in May 2022 based on the evidence and feedback received by the Governance Committee and that Committee's understanding of best practice.

5.0   **WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACHIEVE?**

5.1   The new Committee system of Governance is designed to complement the strategic functions of the Council to allow efficient and effective decision making for our city, maximising transparency and openly demonstrating public accountability. It is intended to meet the Council's strategic aims and design principles as agreed by the Governance Committee following public engagement in November 2021 (see Appendix 2) and its success will be reviewed against these principles.

5.2   The system relies on forward planning of decisions to ensure resources can be prioritised to achieve the ambitions of corporate plans at any given time. A Strategy & Resources committee will ensure the workplans of all the Policy committees create a whole picture to achieve that ambition.

5.3   The policy committees will be given the flexibility to involve citizens in their decision making in whichever of a variety of ways best suits the

circumstances, and there should be a reasonable expectation that they will do so where possible and appropriate. Within their terms of reference are specific requirements to take into consideration equalities and climate impacts when devising policy, evaluating service delivery and taking decisions.

5.4   Transparency is a key design principle requiring the publication of committee workplans and delegated decisions.

6.0   **THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK – RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1   The proposals in this report are necessarily partial. They describe a governance system and ways of working which will primarily be codified by the constitution. This report does not set out the draft text or specific wording of any part of the constitution. In drafting the detailed constitution for Council's final approval it should be assumed that suitable failsafes, exceptions and cross-references between processes will be included so as to achieve the spirit of the recommendations in an internally consistent manner. By the time this report is received by Full Council on 23 March it will be accompanied by draft parts of a revised constitution and associated additional commentary as necessary, in line with the recommendations of the report.

6.2   **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNICATIONS**

6.2.1   A critical ambition for the new governance system is for citizens, communities and partners to be more effectively engaged, involved and listened to within the decision-making process. Decisions, and the processes used to reach decisions, should be easy for anybody to find and understand so that decision-makers are publicly accountable to everyone and the voice of residents is at the heart of decisions. This objective should be considered fundamental to every single part of this framework.

6.2.2   The Governance Committee has agreed a range of design principles which put more detail on this objective, and has received a series of reports on the topic of public engagement and participation including most recently on 25 January 2022. A detailed account of the feedback given to the Committee from the series of public engagement events run by the Transition To Committees Project Team on behalf of the Committee can be found in Appendix Six and Appendix Seven to item 7 of the 30 November 2021 meeting of the Committee. For the sake of brevity this report does not attempt to replicate the depth or breadth of this discussion.

6.2.3   Importantly, this is an area in which work is ongoing and so the recommendations in this report are known to be subject to ongoing development, but they do provide a sufficient starting point for the commencement of the new system in May 2022. In response to the views of citizens, community organisations and stakeholders in 2021, the Governance Committee asked a strategic partner called Involve to work with SCC officers to review what the Council has already heard from

Sheffielders about what we need to do to put the voice of residents at the heart of decision-making. Involve are reviewing existing practice from SCC and partners in the city, looking for examples or what has worked well and where we need to improve. Involve are also having conversations with stakeholders, VCF organisations and SCC officers to produce an independent assessment of our strengths and weaknesses. This continues to be work in progress but key messages for our future ways of working include:

- **Purpose** – have a clear purpose for engaging Sheffielders. Be honest about the rationale for engagement, and what influence Sheffielders can expect to have on the outcome
- **Who engages** – actively support Sheffield's diverse communities to engage, particularly those who are underrepresented, underserved or who are facing disadvantages; and engage with the VCS prior to commencing engagement activities to better understand the context, what is needed and to reach underrepresented groups
- **How** – match the approach(es) to your audiences, using a diversity of methods and don't just focus on information extraction (ie. Co-design, co-creation etc)
- **Embed engagement in all we do** – with clear, shared principles, creative approaches and at all levels in the city (neighbourhood and city level)
- **Ensure there is demonstrable impact** – involving people before decisions are made and evidence how participation has impacted on a decision
- **Support and resource** – support under-resourced and 11ccessible11d) communities to take part and contribute to decisions and invest in training and development (Members, officers).
- **Foster collaboration** – develop a culture where Sheffielders, public services and community organisations collaborate on local issues

6.2.4   Citizens, stakeholders and community organisations have made clear that there needs to be a step change in SCC's approach to citizen involvement and participation which requires co-design and commitment to a longer term vision if SCC is to be genuinely in and of its communities. Building on the initial review work above and at Appendix 3, Involve is co-ordinating co-design workshops over spring 2022 with community organisations, stakeholders and SCC to build a mutually agreed engagement framework. This will form the basis for whole-system change across the organisation and become the basis for further training and development to ensure that SCC officers and Members have the skills and expertise to maximise citizen involvement in policy development and decisions.

6.2.5   On the specific matter of public questions to Full Council or Policy Committee there is the following consideration. With the effective replacement of each individual Cabinet member by one or more full committees, it becomes arguably more appropriate for a questioner to appear before the relevant committee, who are all decision-makers on the

specific subject matter at hand, than to speak to the whole of Council in order to reach a single Cabinet Member (Co-Operative Executive Member). To this end a mechanism is proposed to support members of the public to reach the most appropriate and impactful audience for their question or petition.

6.2.6

Recommendations:
1. Continue to work with the public, stakeholders and community groups to develop our approach to public participation and engagement over the coming months ahead of May 2022.
2. Create the framework, co-designed with communities in Sheffield, to transform our longer-term approach to involvement and empowerment
3. Development and agreement of a medium to long term, public participation and engagement strategy
4. Continue to develop Local Area Committees' role as key conduits with local places and their communities, encouraging both local engagement on strategic matters and strategic escalation or amplification of local issues of concern.
5. Public Question / petition opportunities at all new Policy Committees.
6. Petition scheme to be formalised into the constitution and reviewed to advise petitioners as to the appropriate decision-making body in the first instance. In some but not all cases this will continue to be Full Council – in others it will be a Committee but the decision remains with the petitioner. Where the appropriate threshold is met, petitioners will be entitled to a debate at Full Council as per the current petition scheme (see 'Full Council).
7. Improved signposting to a single inbox for people wishing to ask questions or present petitions to members, with a triage system to advise people as to whether their topic is on the work programme for any Policy Committee and if so providing an option to put them on the appropriate agenda or if not the option to attend another policy committee or full council.
8. Review use and application of digital engagement tools in line with our developing involvement ambitions
9. Improved provision of information online about democratic processes at Sheffield City Council and how to learn more or get involved, including to make it easier to access to information about councillors both online and in other places
10. Commitment to involvement of the public and stakeholders in the Governance Committee's six-month review of the new committee system (see 'ongoing reviews of governance')
11. Where facilities for electronic voting / electronic recording of votes are available (ie Council Chamber), this system will be used and the vote will be recorded and published online to create a public, partial voting record for each Councillor (see 'Full Council')). When or where electronic facilities are not available, the existing rules relating to recorded votes apply (individual votes are recorded in specific limited circumstances). While the technology and

associated costs of wider application of such a system are explored, initial implementation of the system is to be piloted at Full Council only. The ambition is to extend this to Policy Committees.

12. A toolkit to be developed for each committee to use when considering its 'menu of options' for ensuring the voice of the public has been central to their policy development work. Building on the developing advice from communities and Involve, committees should make sure they have a clear purpose for engagement; actively support diverse communities to engage; match methods to the audience and use a range of methods; build on what's worked and existing intelligence (SCC and elsewhere); and be very clear to participants on the impact that engagement will have.

The list below builds on the experiences of Scrutiny Committees and latterly the Transitional Committees and will continue to develop, (including through the ongoing work with Involve). The toolkit could include (but would not be limited to):

   a. Public calls for evidence
   b. Issue-focused workshops with attendees from multiple backgrounds (sometimes known as 'hackathons') led by committees
   c. Creative use of online engagement channels
   d. Working with VCF networks (eg including the Sheffield Equality Partnership) to seek views of communities
   e. Co-design events on specific challenges or to support policy development
   f. Citizens assembly style activities
   g. Stakeholder reference groups (standing or one-off)
   h. Committee / small group visits to services
   i. Formal and informal discussion groups
   j. Facilitated communities of interest around each committee (eg a mailing list of self-identified stakeholders and interested parties with regular information about forthcoming decisions and requests for contributions or volunteers for temporary co-option)
   k. Facility for medium-term or issue-by-issue co-option from outside the Council onto Committees or Task and Finish Groups. Co-optees of this sort at Policy Committees would be non-voting.

13. Chairs of Policy Committees to act as the primary spokesperson on behalf of the Council for the subject area of the Committees they chair (see 'Leadership'). Group spokespersons on each committee may be expected to comment on behalf of their Groups but not the committee as a whole.

14. An expectation that reports will clearly indicate the degree and character of public engagement and participation which has been undertaken on the issue.

6.3   FULL COUNCIL

6.3.1   Full Council is made up of all of the City Councillors elected by the people of Sheffield. Unless otherwise specified or highlighted for review in this or a subsequent paper its current mode of operation will continue. Full Council agrees the constitution (ie how the council operates) and decides who can make which decisions (which committees or individual officers). They steer the overall direction of the Council by setting a budget and policy framework. They appoint a Leader and agree the number and distribution of seats on committees within the rules of political proportionality.

6.3.2   A fundamental principle of the Committee System of governance is that day-to-day Member-level decision-making is delegated to committees, each made up of a minority of the members of the Council who come to act as informed experts on their particular subject areas, relative to other members. When sitting on these committees, Councillors are acting in their strategic capacity as Sheffield City Councillors, not just as local Ward Members. Full Council is an important arena for public political discourse and for the most strategic of decisions but it is not an effective or efficient mechanism for taking most of the Council's decisions day-to-day. It is therefore important to have mechanisms which carefully deal with the balance, and delegation, of authority between Full Council and its Committees.

6.3.3   It is important that, in the execution of day-to-day policy-making, only one body of the council at a time has the authority to take any particular decision. Otherwise strange or legally difficult things could happen, such as two committees taking incompatible decisions about the same matter, or a committee racing to take a decision on something before Full Council can. For this reason, when Council delegates its authority to committees, the constitution will make it clear that it has forfeited the ability to make decisions about those matters except when it specifically resolves to rescind a committee's authority on a particular matter, such as when a committee refers an issue from its own work programme to council (note S&R can refer an issue from any committee). It is likely that some council items in future will recommend both rescinding authority for something and a decision on that matter in the same report, so this process need not introduce any delay. Motions to Council may also propose rescinding authority for any decision which is on a committee's forward work programme.

6.3.4   It is also very important that formal decisions are only made based on proper and full consideration of the facts of a matter including, for example, financial, legal and equalities implications as well as any alternative options. The current system whereby the Monitoring Officer reviews motions to Council to ensure that they are not unlawful or unconstitutional will continue to operate, in order to ensure that motions take account of both a) whether Council has authority for the matter and b) whether a full report is available to inform any substantive decision.

6.3.5   While it will always remain an option for Full Council to rescind authority for any particular matter from a committee back to itself, the frequency with

which this is done should be monitored and considered in future reviews of the effectiveness of the system.

6.3.6	Recommendations:
	15. Eight Full Council meetings per year – six plus a budget council and an AGM. No 'scrutiny council'.
	16. Agreement of the Council's medium- or long-term Corporate Plans and associated annual plans to be reserved to Full Council as a key part of the Council's Policy Framework – these will in effect set out the delivery objectives for each committee during the periods concerned.
	17. By agreeing the terms of reference of the various Policy Committees and any sub-committees, Full Council defines the policy boundaries within which each committee has authority to take decisions on behalf of the Authority in pursuit of their objectives as per the Corporate Plans.
	18. By agreeing its annual budget Full Council defines the budgetary envelope within which each committee has authority to take decisions on behalf of the Authority in pursuit of their objectives as per the Corporate Plans.
	19. Council Procedure rules to be updated, including the following:
	   a. 'Questions to Cabinet Members' to become 'Questions to Chairs' of any committee (or to councillor nominees on outside bodies / joint cttees, including the Mayoral Combined Authority).
	   b. No exclusively 'to note' items.
	   c. Clearer voting practices. This also applies to Committees. Where a consensus has been reached voting may proceed by common assent (such as the Chair asking "are we all agreed" and receiving no dissent). Where there is not a consensus (and no electronic system available), the Chair will request a show of hands and clearly narrate For/Against/Abstentions. In any case the Chair will clearly announce the outcome ("that is carried/lost").
	   d. As described above (see 'Public Engagement') the procedural facility for electronic voting / electronic recording of votes is to be made in the constitution in order to support the ambition for this to be extended to Policy Committees as well as Full Council.
	20. The practice of 'voting in parts' is to be discouraged in favour of a more transparent mechanism
	21. Petition scheme to be formalised into the constitution and reviewed to advise petitioners as to the appropriate decision-making body in the first instance. In some but not all cases this will continue to be Full Council – in others it will be a Committee but the decisions remain with the petitioner. Where the appropriate threshold is met, petitioners will be entitled to a debate at Full Council as per the current petition scheme (see 'Public Engagement')
	22. Public Questions rules to be reviewed to advise questioners about the appropriate decision-making body in the first instance (see

'Public Engagement' and 'policy Committees'). In some but not all cases this will continue to be Full Council – in others it will be a Committee but the decision remains with the questioner. Current expectations of advance notice will be maintained.

23. The current time limit to be carried over for the proportion of a public Council meeting used for petitions / questions from the public.

24. To ensure clarity in decision making it is recommended that the constitution restricts the ability of Council to take decisions on matters that it has allocated to a committee or delegated to an officer. However, in order to provide for circumstances in which it would be more appropriate for a decision that is due to be taken as part of a committee's work programme to be taken by Full Council, it is also recommended that Full Council be able to rescind authority for a particular decision from a committee before going on to make that decision. This might be of its own volition; or upon the request of the committee in question or the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (see 'Scrutiny')

25. Legally, all decisions must be made after consideration of all relevant information and must not be made on the basis of irrelevant information. In order that the Council is able to demonstrate that it has complied with these requirements, provisions currently within the constitution regarding decisions of the Executive (for example, that decisions must be on the basis of written reports) will need to apply going forward to decisions made by Full Council or its committees.

26. Committees (with the exception of Strategy and Resources Committee) may not refer to Full Council a matter which is properly within the remit of another Committee.

6.4   LEADERSHIP – KEY COUNCILLORS' ROLES

6.4.1   While no longer able to take individual decisions after May 2022, the Leader of the Council remains critical to the direction and operation of the Council. They are the primary spokesperson for the Council and its administration, as well as being an advocate for the city and representing the Council in regional and national networks and with Central Government. They are likely to have a busier role to play in ensuring the coordination of the administration Group or Groups for the delivery of a Corporate Plan across multiple committees, where previously it required primarily the co-ordination of Executive Members.

6.4.2   The Lord Mayor's role remains substantially the same in the new system. They are the ceremonial 'First Citizen' representing the Council as a civic body in formal and informal public settings and promoting local causes. However, because they chair Full Council (and have a casting vote there if votes are tied) their role will be important with regard to managing that business which does come to Full Council including any substantive issues which Council reserves to itself from time to time which might previously have been taken by Cabinet (Co-Operative Executive).

6.4.3 Policy Committee Chairs are not simply an equivalent to a Cabinet (Co-operative Executive) Member. While they will be a key point of contact and spokesperson for their Committee, and effectively the voice of the Administration on the subject matter of their committee, they cannot take or presume decisions on behalf of the committee. Where Cabinet or Co-operative Executive members were previously nominated to represent the Council on relevant regional or partnership bodies, it is likely but not necessary that Full Council will in future nominate the relevant Policy Committee Chair. They will be expected to maintain strong functional relationships with key officers across the council as well as other strategic contacts inside and outside the council. They will play a key role in reviewing and updating a draft work programme for the consideration of the committee at each meeting and exercising their discretion as to how the business of the committee will be conducted.

6.4.4 Due to the need to know the likely political composition of the Strategy and Resources Committee in order to calculate overall proportionality on this and other committees, combined with the recommendation that this committee includes in its membership the Chairs of the other Policy Committees and the Finance Sub-Committee, there is a benefit to the Chairs of the Policy Committees being agreed alongside the political proportionality item at the AGM.

6.4.5 Building on the [research carried out by Cllrs Dawn Dale and Cllr Zahira Naz into the potential use and benefits of Co-chairing or job-sharing Chair roles](), the terms 'job-share Chair' and 'Co-Chair' are used in the recommendations below.

- 'Job share Chair' means an arrangement in which two individuals each share the duties of Chair but each undertake to do less than the normal amount of work by sharing the job. This may make the role accessible to individuals who otherwise may not be able to give up enough time to be Chair in their own right

- 'Co-Chair' means an arrangement in which two individuals share the duties of Chair but there is an expectation that both will be as busy as a 'normal' Chair. This may allow the council to boost the amount of leadership capacity across its committees and provide specific areas of focus for individual lead members within a single committee.

6.4.6 Recommendations:
27. A role (and role profile') for the Leader in the constitution, to include:
a. Primary spokesperson for the Council and its administration,
b. Advocate for the city on a local, regional and national stage
c. Representative of the Council in regional and national networks and with Central Government
d. Chairing the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee
e. a personal role with regard to:
i. Core City status and associated meetings/bodies

> ii. The Mayoral Combined Authority
>
> f. A key role chairing various informal Member/officer forums
>
> 28. A role profile for Policy Committee Chairs in the constitution, to include:
>
>> g. Primary officer point of contact with regard to the committee's ongoing business, formulation of a draft work programme for the committee's consideration, and for advice about engagement with the committee
>>
>> h. Primary spokesperson for the committee they chair (see 'Public Engagement and Comms')
>>
>> i. In the case of the Chair of the Children's Services Policy Committee, to be the Statutory Lead Member for Children's Services
>>
>> j. To convene and chair regular pre-agenda and pre-meeting briefings with all the Group Spokespersons from their committee
>
> 29. The Annual Meeting of the Council will agree the appointment of members to committees and the appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs, unless the Council decides in any instance not to do so, in which case the chair is appointed at the first meeting of the relevant committee. Should a vacancy arise in the intervening time between AGMs, the Committee will determine its new Chair as per current practice.
>
> 30. The facility for Councillors to either job-share a Chair role or to co-chair a committee, with clarity about expectations and allowances including:
>
>> a. there should not be both a job share and co-chair on any one committee.
>>
>> b. That the role of vice chair on a committee, where the chairs' role is divided as above, needs to be clarified, or the committee may decide there's no need for a job share role.
>>
>> c. A maximum of 2 co-chairs in any given committee.
>>
>> d. Where a Committee has co-chairs or two Cllrs job-sharing the Chair role then Full Council shall determine which of the co-chairs or job-sharing Chairs will sit on the Strategy and Resources Committee. If Council determines that it shall be both, then this may not be to the detriment of the political proportionality of the committee and only one may be a voting member of the committee at any one time (see 'Policy Committees')
>>
>> e. There should be a full review of this arrangement as part of the ongoing review process after an such role has occurred for the first time.

6.5 INDIVIDUAL COUNCILLORS

6.5.1 In the course of the Governance Committee's inquiry, various interrelated risks were raised relating to the possibility of the new committee system increasing members' workload, leaving them less time for other things (such as other aspects of their role or their own private lives). If allowed to

transpire in this way, it could have a negative impact on eg parents', carers' and full-time employees' ability to stand as a Councillor. As well as mitigating this as far as possible in the design of the committee structure, the importance of effective member support, training and development has been emphasised by the Committee. Furthermore, technology and improved channels for information and questions between councillors and officers could enable members to operate more efficiently.

6.5.2

> Recommendations:
> 31. Launch of modern.gov app to support digital ways of working
> 32. Member-led refresh of Member Development Strategy and annual Member Development and Induction Plan
>   a. To include enhanced training on eg finance, audit, safeguarding responsibilities for the wider group of members involved in decisions of this sort
>   b. To include specific training on working effectively within a committee system, including content on 'how to disagree effectively' or the art of effective negotiation and compromise within committee settings
> 33. Independent Remuneration Panel to consider the strength of the Scheme of Allowance's support for parents, carers and people in full time work as part of the review of the scheme
> 34. Ongoing consideration of options for use of hybrid and remote meeting options, subject to the legislative context
> 35. Implementation of improved Member newsletter
> 36. Implementation of improved arrangements for members' casework support
> 37. Creation of job-share option for Chairing roles (see 'Leadership – Key Councillors' Roles)

6.6 <u>POLICY COMMITTEES</u>

6.6.1 The new decision-making committees organised by themes will be called Policy Committees. They are set up by Full Council which can change their number and the division of delegated decision-making authority between them. They can only make decisions on issues which sit inside their own allocated part of the budget and policy framework (their Terms of Reference plus any specific delegations), as agreed by Full Council. Like any standard committee of the Council, their membership is politically proportionate to the size of each political Group on Full Council.

6.6.2 The Strategy and Resources Policy Committee is a special kind of Policy Committee dealt with separately below. Any issue which is wider than any one of the Policy Committee's remits (budget or policy) goes instead to Strategy and Resources. S&R may opt to either take the decision itself or to dictate which individual Policy Committee will take the lead for the issue by ensuring it gets the necessary one-off delegation to do so. (See, Strategy and Resources Policy Committee).

6.6.3   A paper received by the Governance Committee at its 25 January meeting dealt with this aspect of the framework in detail. In summary the Governance Committee endorsed the idea that there was a benefit to aligning Policy Committees to the corporate functions of the Council, particularly when the budgets are also aligned in accordance with the council's functional structure in this way. By aligning to functions, the system allows sufficient flexibility for political priorities to be overlaid into work plans as they change over time. The Chief Executive presented seven functional areas expected in the future organisation and these have informed the titles of the seven committees. The number of Policy Committees suggested for Sheffield makes it an outlier in terms of scale, being larger than most other committee-led authorities, and evidence was presented to show that other councils had been advised to have fewer committees. However, compared to the majority of other councils which are operating committee systems this Council is significantly larger and operating in a more complex environment as a Core City. In addition this Council has 84 Councillors, meaning that it has more capacity amongst its political leadership than most smaller councils, many of which will have around half or two thirds that number. The contention was that any risks to efficacy associated with having a number of committees which is above average were outweighed by the risks of attempting to handle too much scale and complexity through any one committee if there were fewer. It was considered that good forward planning coupled with investment in support to the Committees and member development will have more of an impact on the efficiency of the system than limiting the numbers of committees.

6.6.4   During its inquiry the committee explored the matter of what size its Policy Committees should be in order to find a balance between efficiency and inclusivity. Of significant concern was the risk that the new system created too much of a time burden on Councillors at the Town Hall, interfering with their effectiveness at a local level or making it harder for people to be councillors who are also parents, carers, or in full time work. The proposal below for a bracket of between 8-11 arose from a consideration of the options during the inquiry process.

6.6.5   The evidence and feedback received by the Governance Committee in its inquiry suggested that allowing committees to establish multiple sub-committees can result in a lack of control of the agenda and of the time Members are spending in formal meetings. Sheffield's own experience of a committee system pre-2000 included periods of time with hugely impractical numbers of committees and sub-committees in existence. Therefore measures are presented which are designed to ensure that sub-committees are always purposeful and used sparingly.

6.6.6   The frequency of Policy Committee meetings has a very direct impact on the scale of bureaucracy and workload of both members and officers, but must be sufficient meetings to allow for informed and efficient transaction of business. Therefore the proposal is for Strategy and Resources Policy Committee to be scheduled on alternate months to themed Policy

Committees and Full Council meetings, with each committee meeting approximately 6 times per year.

6.6.7   The schedule of committee meetings for the whole year is going to be an incredibly complicated affair. Experience tells us that Members have strong views about the timing of meetings and this has been explored several times over the past few years, including piloting different start times for Full Council meetings. Clashes between scheduled committees can be a source of significant frustration for councillors. For this reason it is important that a whole, best-fit calendar of committee meetings is agreed at each AGM if not before. Committees may then give consideration to their own individual meeting schedules within this at their first meetings, in line with common practice, and request changes to their own schedule as long as these remain compatible with the overall whole.

6.6.8   Each Policy Committee's work programme, and their standing item to consider the same, will be key to the way that committee members manage future agendas and prioritise issues. The work programming item will be of a standard format and is expected to include sections showing the current forward plan of business for future agendas, new issues arising, referrals from other committees (including LACs), and any petitions which have either not met the threshold for a full debate or which have been referred to the committee from Full Council. This is likely to be the space for other potential sources of items, such as any other public engagement activity, to be reported too. Overall the item becomes both a plan and a menu of issues which members could decide whether (and when) to schedule. Before each meeting the Chair will have worked with officers to shape it, and the committee will be able to debate this, suggest extra items which should get airtime, suggest how to prioritise their public engagement or policy development time for each item, and so on. The group spokespersons will have seen and discussed the draft work programme before it comes to committee each meeting, in their pre-agenda and pre-meeting sessions.

6.6.9   Recommendations:
38. Seven themed Policy Committees which will be closely aligned to the functions of the Council;
39. A Strategy & Resources Policy Committee including all Policy Committee Chairs and the Finance Sub-Committee Chair within its membership (where a Committee has co-chairs or two Cllrs job-sharing the Chair role then Full Council shall determine which of the co-chairs or job-sharing Chairs will sit on the Strategy and Resources Committee. If Council determines that it shall be both, then this may not be to the detriment of the political proportionality of the committee and only one may be a voting member of the committee at any one time), with cross-cutting responsibility for the policy and budgetary framework, chaired by the Leader of the Council (see, 'Leadership')
40. A programme of six meetings of each Policy Committee per year

41. Provision for Full Council but not individual Committees to agree the addition of standing sub-committees to this structure. When sub-committees are agreed they will be time limited or at minimum will be reviewed annually at the AGM.
42. Limits on the number and frequency of Task and Finish Groups carrying out detailed pre-decision scrutiny (policy development) on behalf of Policy Committees – under usual circumstances the limit will be one Task and Finish Group at a time per Policy Committee – "one in, one out". (Note that this does not apply to one-off briefings etc);
43. Full Council to agree the size of Policy Committees at its AGM, based on best fit to proportionality. With the exception of Strategy and Resources Policy Committee, this must be within the parameters of a committee size of between 8 and 11 members.
44. A standing Finance Sub-Committee, reporting to the Strategy & Resources Committee (Chair and membership not constrained to being from the parent committee).
45. An annual exercise for Strategy and Resources Committee to develop an annual work plan with reference to the Corporate Plan and in consultation with all the other Policy Committees.
    a. This process to also be a work programming exercise.
    b. Each committee to keep its work programme under review at each meeting via a standing 'work programme' item on each meeting's agenda. Space within this item to consider, amongst other potential sources of issues for the committee to consider, references from other committees such as eg LACs.
    c. Strategy and Resources Committee to keep under consideration the combined Policy Committee Work Programme to ensure corporate objectives are being achieved.
46. Guillotine clause to constrain the length of all Policy Committee meetings (2 hrs + 30 mins)
    a. An annual schedule of all council and committee meetings to be developed by democratic services in consultation with Group Leaders, for the approval of Full Council at its AGM. Committees will consider their own meeting schedule at their first meeting after the AGM and may request alterations within the constraints of the overall schedule.
47. Extraordinary meetings to need consent of the Monitoring Officer
48. Each Committee's Terms of Reference will state that each cttee will be responsible for regular monitoring of business intelligence data including performance, financial information etc within their remit. Furthermore each committee's Terms of Reference will include responsibility for considering climate and equality, diversity and Inclusion implications when devising policy, evaluating service delivery and taking decisions
49. Each Group on a committee to nominate a 'spokesperson' for their Group on that committee.

50. A mandated system of briefings for Chair/Vice Chair and Group Spokespersons. For each meeting of the committee there will be a:
    a. Pre-agenda briefing to discuss and agree agenda items and approach to items (and to briefings about items). Looking ahead at the committee's forward plan. Opportunity for all spokespersons to relay early information to their own Groups.
    b. Pre-meeting briefing to discuss published papers on the agenda and the process for the meeting itself. Spokespersons to brief their own Groups as necessary to ensure informed and organised discussions in committee.
51. There will be no rule preventing councillors from overturning recent decisions via a normal decision process within a certain period (eg six months), but this should be monitored and given consideration as part of the six-month review.
52. Policy Committees to have responsibility for monitoring the performance of services. Strategy and Resources Committee to have responsibility for considering the overall performance of the Authority as well as the performance of individual Policy Committees eg with regard to delivery against the Corporate Plan (see Strategy and Resources Policy Committee).
53. Up to thirty minutes for public questions and petitions on every Policy Committee agenda (see 'Public Engagement')
54. Where currently individual members are appointed 'champions' for certain issues (for example there is currently a 'heritage champion') this will be included in the ToR of the relevant Policy Committee. If that committee then wishes to nominate an individual (this may be the Chair) to liaise with partners or stakeholders it may do so, but the committee as a whole, as decision-maker, should retain collective responsibility and accountability for the matter.

6.7   STRATEGY AND RESOURCES POLICY COMMITTEE (AND FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE)

6.7.1   Governance Committee Members have heard the need for a committee with responsibility for considering corporate, overarching, cross-cutting or particularly strategic issues. It's important to remember that Members will collectively be managing a business with a turnover in excess of £1 billion. Over time this committee will develop proposed budget and policy frameworks, including corporate plans, with input from all of the other committees. These it recommends to Full Council. This helps define the remits and objectives of the various policy committees which can then take decisions on issues within their own budgetary and policy remits without reference to the Strategy and Resources Committee except to share their work programmes in advance and to be held to account on delivery (eg of the Corporate Plan).

6.7.2   The Governance Committee has heard and expressed concern that such an arrangement might be considered to be 'a Cabinet by another name'. Other evidence and feedback received disputed this notion on the basis that such a committee has oversight and responsibility rather than all of the

decision-making power, which remains distributed amongst various politically proportionate policy committees and, in a crucial difference to a cabinet, is politically proportionate itself. It should be noted that the membership of this committee will include members of all Groups on the Council, including members who are not chairs of a Policy Committees, because membership must reflect the Council's overall political proportionality.

6.7.3   This section should be read with regard to the 'Scheme of Delegations' section below, which further specifies some of the functions of these committees.

6.7.4

> Recommendations:
> 55. A Strategy & Resources Policy Committee including all Policy Committee Chairs and the Finance Sub-Committee Chair within its membership, with overarching responsibility for the policy and budgetary framework, to be chaired by the Leader of the Council;
> 56. No substitutes can attend for members of this committee
> 57. A standing Finance Sub-Committee, reporting to the Strategy & Resources Committee (whose membership is not limited to members of Strategy and Resources Committee);
> 58. Ability for scheduled Strategy & Resources Committee meetings to take urgent decisions for the other Policy Committees but only in extremis – if the relevant committee's Urgency Sub-Committee has been unable to meet in an appropriate timeframe (see 'urgent decisions');
> 59. Strategy and Resources Committee to have responsibility for considering the overall performance of the Authority as well as the performance of individual Policy Committees eg with regard to delivery against the Corporate Plan. In instances where there is a serious performance concern, they have the ability to refer this concern to Full Council for consideration (see 'Scrutiny').
> 60. Any issue which is wider than any one of the Policy Committee's remits (budget or policy) is within the remit of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee.
> 61. Any issue identified as being of significant strategic importance or financial risk to the organisation is considered to be by its nature cross-cutting and therefore within the remit of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee
> 62. In the case of any issue falling within the remit of S&R as above, this committee may opt to either take the decision itself or to dictate which individual Policy Committee will take the lead for the issue by ensuring it gets the necessary one-off delegation to do so. All Committees' ToR to include having authority for (and responsibility to deliver) anything referred to it in this manner by S&R, even if it is a matter which would otherwise go outside of that Cttee's remit. In the case of individual committees leading on cross-cutting issues, an expectation of suitable communication between Chairs and committees may be assumed.
> 63. Finance Sub-Committee has within its remit, inter alia:

> a. Strategic financial overview
> b. Property decisions
> c. Accountable Body decisions
> d. Corporate Revenue & Capital monitoring
>
> 64. Strategy and Resources Policy Committee, alongside the Finance Sub-Committee, to conduct revenue and capital budget monitoring in order to ensure this takes place with sufficient regularity.

6.8   URGENT DECISIONS

6.8.1   In the processes of any democratic institution there is arguably a tension between pace and inclusivity. This was illustrated and discussed during many of the debates around the referendum last May. At the level of day-to-day decision-making it is periodically necessary to take decisions within a particular, short timeframe in order to secure an important benefit or to avoid a serious issue. Reasonably common examples include applying for a suddenly-announced grant scheme or responding to a serious local incident. In these cases, if a scheduled committee meeting will not be taking place within the necessary timeframe, swifter options need to be available.

6.8.2   The first principle has been to say that an urgent decisions protocol should aim for Member decisions to be taken by Members wherever possible. The second principle is that these should be well-informed Members as far as possible, ie members of the appropriate Committee. Thirdly, where any compromise is needed in order to ensure that the decision is taken swiftly enough, there must be a mechanism for reporting the decision, and that compromise, to Members and the public.

6.8.3
> Recommendations:
> 65. Urgency sub-committee for each policy Committee including S&R (size to be determined by the AGM in light of political proportionality requirements)
>> a. Quorum of 3 members, which must include Chair or Vice Chair.
>> b. All parent committee's members and their named substitutes (where applicable) may act as substitute members of an urgency sub-cttee
>> c. Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair has to confirm that the decision could not have been foreseen and to delay taking the decision to the next scheduled meeting of the relevant Committee would seriously prejudice either the Council's or the public's interests before an urgency committee can be scheduled
> 66. Ability for scheduled Strategy & Resources Committee meetings to take urgent decisions for the other Policy Committees for reasons of efficiency but only in extremis – if the relevant committee's Urgency Sub-Committee has been unable to meet in an appropriate timeframe.

> 67. Ability for urgent decisions to be taken by specified senior officers in consultation (wherever practicably possible) with the Chair where, in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer in consultation (wherever practicably possible) with the Chair, it would not be possible to convene an Urgency Sub-Committee Meeting or take the decision to a scheduled strategy and Resources Committee meeting within a timescale that would not seriously prejudice either the Council's or the public's interests
> 68. Where consultation with the Chair is required, consultation to be permitted, in the absence of the Chair, with the Vice Chair or, in the absence of the Chair and the Vice-Chair, with the Leader of the Council.
> 69. Provisions currently contained in the Leader's Scheme of Delegations to allow specified officers such as the Chief Executive, Executive Directors, the Director of Legal and Governance and the Director of Finance and Commercial Services to take decisions without consultation in cases of Emergency/Extreme Urgency to be replicated within the constitution with the necessary amendments made to reflect the move to a committee system e.g. the reference to Executive decisions to be amended to refer to all decisions.
> 70. A requirement that all decisions taken in accordance with urgency provisions to be reported back to the committee at their next scheduled meeting. Use of urgency provisions overall should be monitored and considered in future reviews of the effectiveness of the system.

6.9 LOCAL AREA COMMITTEES

6.9.1 There are seven Local Area Committees across the city, which were set up in 2021 as part of the Council's response to feedback from residents. They are made up of all of the elected Councillors from the local area. This means that they are politically proportionate to the local electoral outcomes, not proportionate to Sheffield City Council as a whole. Every single Councillor is necessarily on one of the Local Area Committees.

6.9.2 Local Area Committees are formal committees with some decision-making authority, but many of their important roles do not require any particular authority (eg facilitating, brokering, listening, amplifying). Nevertheless they do take certain operational decisions with local impacts, within the scope agreed by Full Council.

6.9.3 There is a commitment from the organisation to work with and learn from our communities through Local Area Committees. The proposed structure therefore retains the 7 Local Area Committees in their current form including the range of decisions delegated to them.

6.9.4

> Recommendations:
> 71. Seven Local Area Committees with a mechanism (via work programme standing items on each Policy Committee's agenda, giving committees the opportunity to note the referral and to plan the

> matter more substantially into their work programme if they wish) to allow for referrals between them and Policy Committees as necessary and regular informal meetings of local area committee chairs to ensure effective coordination;
>
> 72. The Strategy & Resources Policy Committee will have a special responsibility to monitor what is referred to all committees by Local Area Committees and to look for patterns and lessons, in liaison with the LAC chairs.
>
> 73. The policy committee with responsibilities for communities will have a role to oversee the Communities/Localism strategy within which the LACs are operating.
>
> 74. Note that the Monitoring Officer will be responsible for the review of all referrals to ensure they are going to the appropriate body in the first instance and the Chair of the referring committee to be notified where any referral pathway is changed.

6.10 SCRUTINY (INCLUDING STATUTORY SCRUTINY)

6.10.1 This is one of the most important changes when moving from a Cabinet and Leader model to a committee system. Overview and Scrutiny Committees were originally invented as a mitigation to a perceived weakness in the Cabinet and Leader model. In a committee system there is no legal requirement for separate Scrutiny Committee(s) now that cross-party check and challenge (and cross-party policy development) is built into every decision-making committee and Full Council.

6.10.2 Some statutory scrutiny responsibilities remain and must be effective, including Health, Crime and Disorder and Flooding.

6.10.3 There is no requirement for any kind of post-decision review mechanism akin to Overview and Scrutiny's 'call-in' procedure, in the committee system. As above, this is because the issue which it was designed to address no longer exists in the committee system (ie there are no decision-makers – such as a Cabinet or an individual councillor – able to take decisions without all parties being proportionally involved). At its 25 January 2022 meeting te Governance Committee nevertheless considered a recommendation for a 'dissent' mechanism which would have allowed for a form of post-decision review by a separate body of Councillors. The proposal was for this to happen if a significant minority (40%) of the decision-making committee voted within 5 days to escalate the issue for a second look by Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (or by Council, if S&R was the original decision-maker). Members rejected this proposal and asked for further work to be carried out.

6.10.4 Further review of comparator authorities has shown that only a minority of committee-led authorities have provision for any form of 'dissent' or 'call-in'. Wirral, which had such a system in place when it first moved to the committee system, experienced some significant delays to decision-making as a result of this process and a recent government inspection

recommended that it delete the mechanism, on the basis that it was not clear how it added value for a decision to be moved from one politically proportionate committee to another. The decision is presumably going to be identical since the political balance remains static in the two settings. During the inquiry, members of the Governance Committee heard about one authority which allowed the public to 'call in' decisions if a certain petition threshold was met in a very short space of time post-decision.

6.10.5   Some key ideas behind the proposal below are:
- Pace is important
  - avoiding the need for a 'call-in period' after a decision during which decisions can't yet be implemented
  - avoiding 'making the 'same decision twice'
- Respecting the autonomy of committees, within their delegated remits
- Learning from the experience of 'scrutiny' under the cabinet model, that pre-decision scrutiny in the form of effective cross-party involvement in policy development (which will naturally be enhanced in the new committee system) is a better way to influence the outcome of a decision than call-in ('post-decision review').
- The public and stakeholders should have opportunities to make their views known to and through councillors, and to influence issues, in advance of a decision being taken.

6.10.6
Recommendations:
75. No separate scrutiny committee;
76. Statutory Scrutiny functions to be written into the Terms of Reference of the appropriate Policy Committees
a. Health Scrutiny to be delivered via a standing sub-committee of the Adult Health and Social Care Policy Committee. The expectation is that its membership should include councillors from both the parent committee and the Policy Committee with responsibility for Children's services.
77. No mechanism for immediate post-decision suspension of implementation pending reconsideration of a decision (ie no equivalent of the old 'call-in' mechanism)
78. A strong mechanism by which Full Council can rescind *in advance* a Committee's delegated authority with regard to a specific decision on their Work Programme, in order that Full Council will take the decision instead (see 'Full Council')
79. Strategy and Resources Policy Committee will have a role to hold the other Policy Committees to account on their delivery against the Corporate Plan. In instances where there is a serious performance concern, they have the ability to refer this concern to Full Council for consideration (see 'Strategy and Resources Policy Committee')

6.11   OTHER COMMITTEES

6.11.1   The change in Governance can be effected without any change to the non-policy-making committees such as the regulatory committees of Planning

and Licensing, Audit & Standards and Employment Committees. These continue to serve their current functions.

6.11.2   As there will be a significant organisational shift required to mobilise the Policy Committees, the proposal here is not to make any substantive changes to these Committees at this stage.

6.11.3   This proposal includes the retention of a Governance committee to oversee the operation of the new system and to consider all matters of governance including the Council's Member development strategy. This Committee should include senior Member representation. This Committee should report to Full Council in a similar way to the Audit and Standards Committee.

6.11.4
> Recommendations:
> 80. No substantive changes to the committees referred to as Other Committees in the Governance Framework
> 81. Various partnership bodies etc will need to have members nominated where previously the Cabinet Member (Co-Operative Executive Member) would have gone. In general it is assumed that the relevant Chair(s) or Vice Chairs of Policy Committees will be nominated by Full Council instead.

6.12   SCHEMES OF DELEGATION

6.12.1   All decisions previously made by the Co-Operative Executive will be made at one of the new Policy Committees in the normal course of events. Decisions previously made by Individual Executive members are generally of a less strategic nature and could either be made by a policy Committee or an individual officer if this is considered a more suitable route. Where decisions are made by officers, the thresholds and circumstances around this, and mechanisms for transparency and holding decision-makers to account will be clear.

6.12.2   Analysis reaching back over the past three years shows between 60-80 individual executive member decisions per year, of which up to 20 are urgent decisions taken by the Leader which may ordinarily have been Cabinet-level decisions. On reviewing this list, it was found that a significant number relate to contracting and procurement which is often combined with commissioning and purchasing decisions. A principle for the Committee system of governance should be that the mandate or commission for a requirement comes from the policy committee and then officers deal with the operational procurement and contracting element of the work. A number of decisions were property related as this level of delegation covered financial values of £150 - £500K. The chief property officer asked the Governance Committee to consider raising the threshold for officer delegations to £250K as this limit was considered more realistic when considering property prices within the city. This would have left all property decisions exceeding £250K with committees. The Governance

Committee did not agree this recommendation, option to keep the threshold at the current level of £150k.

6.12.3 The proposal is for Strategy & Resources Committee to take decisions relating to the council's real estate in order to deliver its recently agreed asset management strategy. Grants is another area that needs special consideration especially where bidding and accepting grants results in liability for the Council

6.12.4 To allow for the uninterrupted continuation of the council's operational delivery a provision will need to be made for the continuing validity of delegations from cabinet or cabinet members to officers from decisions which took place before the move to a committee system.

6.12.5
> Recommendations:
> 82. The current, standard approach to continue, whereby Councillors take any decision explicitly reserved to Full Council or a Committee, except in specifically defined urgent or emergency circumstances.
> 83. All levels of decision currently identified as Individual Executive Member decisions will be taken by a committee except in limited specific circumstances – for example, mandates or commissioning will continue to sit with Members but the actual contracting and procurement decisions (in line with the political mandate or commission) will sit with officers.
> 84. Procurement and contracting decisions are taken by officers once a committee has agreed the commission or purchasing decision and the budget on any given requirement
> 85. All property related decisions of a value of £150k or more shall be reserved to the Strategy & Resources Policy Committee,
>   a. Ongoing review of this threshold to be within the Governance Committee's terms of reference
> 86. A standing sub-committee of the Strategy & Resources Committee be established to deal with the any decision which is to be taken by the Council in its role as a charitable trustee
> 87. All Capital allocations and monitoring to be reserved to the Strategy & Resources Committee and may be discharged by its Finance Sub Committee.
> 88. All member-level decisions on bids for grants to be reserved to the finance sub-committee to ensure financial commitments are considered when applying for and accepting grants
> 89. Provision for the continuing validity of delegations from cabinet or cabinet members to officers from decisions which took place before the move to a committee system.

6.13 STAFFING, RELATIONSHIPS AND CASEWORK

6.13.1 The Council will need to adapt or replace a significant number of formal or informal processes, procedures and practices which have hitherto underpinned the relationship between Co-Operative Executive Members

and officers. This includes the extremely varied processes by which ideas progress through officer and member checkpoints over a period of weeks, months or years on their way to becoming a public issue or decision. This encompasses the network of officers and whole teams which currently form a loose constellation around each Individual Executive member and the Co-Operative Executive as a whole. This will need to be re-aligned appropriately to serve whole committees as well as their Chairs, Vice Chairs and Group Spokespersons, and work to do this is underway.

6.13.2   The Council currently provides secretarial services to members in key leadership positions in order to facilitate the effective and efficient discharge of their responsibilities. There is a need to redefine this offer for the new arrangement.

6.13.3   Members are aware that the Council has been giving consideration to its Democratic Services, Member Support and corporate Policy capacity, and the way that this is organised, in light of the transition to a committee system and a change process is now underway affecting members of these teams in order to adapt to fit the new model and provide a sufficient level of capacity to support the structure described in this report. Given that this is an operational matter it is not appropriate to consider the detail of this change process further in this public report, however as noted below in the 'financial implications' section, the costs of those changes to staffing arrangements in support of the new structure are not yet known.

6.13.4   These are not matters for formal decisions by Members, but some key actions underway on this front are:

- An appropriate degree of personal support (diary management etc) to be provided to 'Lead Members'. Lead Members defined as:
    o Leader and Deputy
    o Lord Mayor and Deputy
    o Chairs of Policy Committees (and to a lesser extent Vice Chairs)
    o Leaders of Political Groups (in effect, secretary function for the Group)
- Officer training programme is in delivery / development, to include BAU induction of senior managers etc in future
- Member Development Strategy and associated Member Development and Induction plan is under final stages of development, with initial dates circulated to members for key specialist training pre- and post- transition

- The Council to convene a 'Virtual Team Around each Policy Committee' comprising eg:
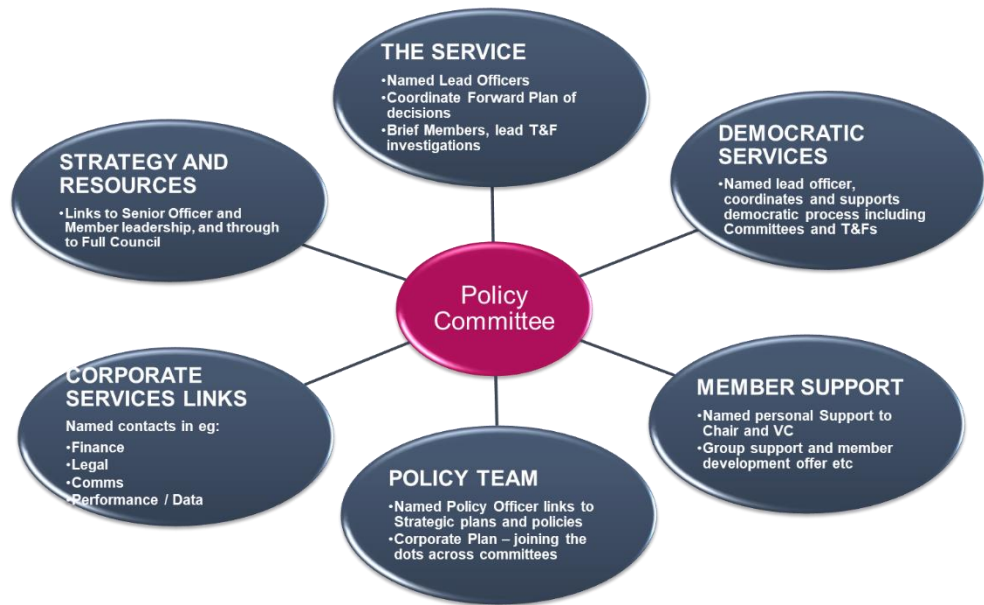
6.14 ONGOING REVIEWS OF GOVERNANCE

6.14.1 There is no such thing as a perfect system, and it can be expected based on feedback from other local authorities that Councillors' experience of working within the system will lead to very rapid refinement of that system in the early months and years. Therefore it is important to build in regular reviews.

6.14.2 The Full Council has the ability at any time to call for an amendment to any optional part of the structure that is implemented over the 10 year period that the Council is required by law to operate under this system of governance (and beyond), however it is helpful to allow time for any structure to be properly tested.

6.14.3 This committee's engagement activity has helped to confirm the importance of seeking and acting on direct feedback from residents and stakeholders across the City when aiming to understand the perceived health of the local democratic environment.

6.14.4

Recommendations:
90. A standalone Governance Committee will continue into 2022/23.
91. The Governance Committee should have named responsibility for, amongst other things, ongoing review and maintenance of the constitution and the governance system it describes.
92. The Governance Committee's Terms of Reference should specify their commitment to direct engagement and participation of the public, stakeholders and partners in their ongoing consideration of the health of Sheffield's democratic environment.
93. Ongoing assessment, via survey activity and community-based conversations at LACs (and, initially, Involve's ongoing work) of the

> degree to which the public feel they understand the way decisions are made and are able to influence those decisions.
>
> 94. The Governance Committee shall conduct a review of the effectiveness of the new system, commencing six months after implementation (November 2022) with a view to Full Council implementing any necessary changes at its AGM in May 2023. This review will:
>   a. Take account of any changes to the local and national context
>   b. Include the previously agreed 'strategic aims' and 'design principles' in its assessment criteria
>   c. Actively seek and use feedback from residents, stakeholders, councillors, officers and partners to inform its judgements against those criteria

7.0   NEXT STEPS

7.1   Work will continue apace to draft the final version of the constitution and to design the operational detail and delivery of the systems described by this report. Recruitment to key posts in the new officer structures is likely to be needed. Most importantly, the ongoing work on public participation and engagement will continue through the Spring. Preparation for the six-month review is already underway with support of the Transition to Committees project team, so that once this project resource is removed after May the new teams are as equipped as possible to carry out an effective review.

8.0   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1   The Local Government Act 2000 Part 1A prescribes permitted forms of governance for local authorities in England. Following a referendum carried out under this Part Sheffield City Council resolved at its Annual Meeting in May 2021 to operate a committee system of governance, which must conform with any relevant provisions in the Act, from the date of its Annual Meeting in May 2022.

8.2   The Council is required under section 9P to prepare and keep up to date a constitution containing its Standing Orders (Procedure Rules), its Code of Conduct under s 28 of the Localism Act 2011, such information as the Secretary of State may direct and such other information as the authority considers appropriate. The constitution of a committee system authority must also contain a statement as to whether the authority has resolved to have an overview and scrutiny committee. The SoS has not directed that any other information should be included, but it is good practice for the constitution to describe the arrangements made by the Council under LGA 1972 s101 for the discharge of its functions, the appointment of its committees under s102 of that Act and the way that it meets other statutory requirements concerning governance arrangements. Once operating a committee system the Council is no longer required to comply with and/or include within its constitution those legislative requirements that apply specifically to Council's operating Executive arrangements.

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8.3   Where specific proposals in this Report have been recommended in order to comply with a specific legal obligations this is indicated in the relevant section of the Report.

8.4   Having held a governance referendum, the Council may not change its governance arrangements without a further referendum, and may not hold such a referendum earlier than 10 years from the date of the first referendum. It may however review the way that it operates its committee system and revise its constitution accordingly.

8.5   The recommendations in this paper are consistent with the legal framework within which the Council must operate from the date of its AGM in May 2022.

9.0   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1   The Council's transition to a committee system is mandatory, following a binding referendum in May 2021. The proscribed decision taken at that time had financial implications but these were not yet knowable. Much of the work done since then has helped the Council towards understanding the potential costs of delivering a committee system suitable for a Core City on the scale of Sheffield. The Chief Executive in her evidence to the Governance Committee in December 2021 observed that while the design principle of avoiding a 'costly' system (see Appendix 2) was important, the democratic environment must nevertheless be sufficiently resourced to ensure the Council's ongoing success.

9.2   There are direct and indirect financial implications to the Governance Committee's final recommendations to Full Council. Some of the financial impacts can be defined in advance (such as revised staffing costs in the new 'virtual team around a committee') and others, such as the overall impact, if any, on the capacity of the Council's officer leadership corps, will only become clear once the system has been in operation.

9.3   The recommendations in this paper are designed to be consistent with the committee's agreed principle that the new committee system "…should not be overcomplicated or costly" however there is further work to be done to conclude the final staffing structure, job descriptions and grades.

9.4   It should be noted that there is not a simple, direct, causal relationship between eg the number of Policy Committees in the proposed structure and the cost of the changes to officer support. This cost includes changes to the whole way of working of these member support services, including things like consolidating the funding for democratic support of Local Area Committees, provision for the degree of continuous training, development and briefing which will be required to ensure that the wider pool of councillors making decisions are suitably skilled and informed, and administration of an effective system which coordinates a pipeline of

decisions amongst a more complex (and more public) decision-making environment than a cabinet.

9.5   There is also an unknown cost of members' allowances in the new world. All Councillors receive a basic allowance and councillors undertaking roles with 'special responsibility' receive an additional amount on top of this. In line with the relevant legislation the Council must periodically convene an independent panel of laypersons (the 'Independent Remuneration Panel' or IRP) to review the Council's scheme of allowances and expenses and make recommendations to Full Council for any changes deemed necessary. Due to the significant changes to members' roles in the new system, an IRP has been convened and is underway to give consideration to the whole allowances scheme. After giving consideration to benchmark authorities and the specifics of Sheffield's new system, they are expected to make recommendations by May 2022 for an appropriate level of remuneration both for the basic allowance and for the various special responsibilities. Until that point the financial implications of this aspect of the change will not be able to be fully understood.

10.0   EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

10.1   The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 requires that public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, must have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is connected to protected characteristics and prohibited by or under this Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

10.2   The move to a committee system of governance represents a great opportunity to reinforce our equality duties and the city's Equality Objectives in our decision making[1]. It is vital that equality, diversity and inclusion considerations are designed into the committees' Terms of Reference as set out above and that they will run through the responsibilities of all decision-makers. Equality, diversity and inclusion is a key consideration in the design and implementation of the Council's Committee System and wider public engagement programme within which this decision-making environment should function. The Council is committed to ensuring that the development of our governance is inclusive, with involvement from all communities and Sheffielders with protected characteristics.

10.3   As part of the Transition to Committees Programme, we have been developing and updating an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) which can

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[1] Sheffield Equality Objectives 2019-23 https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/campaigns/equality-objectives.html

be found at Appendix 4. A later version of this will be included in the proposals that are presented to Full Council on 23rd March 2022. EIA 1153 is a live document and we will continue to update and develop the content over the coming months and as the new committee system is implemented, listening and learning from citizens, staff and Members to ensure that we identify and mitigate any discrimination or barriers that the committee system model may create. The recent meetings of the Governance Committee and the recommendations that have been approved have enable us to focus the EIA considerations around those proposals and the potential shape of the committee system from May 2022.

10.4   As emphasised throughout the Governance Committee's work, the system in place from May 2022 will be the starting point and we'll have to learn as we go. But, the EIA process and engagement with stakeholders and citizens has helped to identify a range of issues we need to consider as we implement the Committee System. We'll reflect learning and citizen voice in the EIA and the mitigation we take as we move forward from May.

10.5   In addition to the learning from citizens and stakeholders to date, we are also talking to the Sheffield Equality Partnership (SEP) and seeking challenge and ideas from community organisations about our thinking on the EDI implications of the new governance system for Sheffield.

10.6   Headline summary of EDI implications
        The EIA assesses implications for people who share protected characteristics (citizens, Members and staff) and there are a number of consistent themes which have been identified and need to be considered in the final proposals for Sheffield's Committee System:

- **Equality, diversity and inclusion running through our decisions** – it is clear from the EIA that the move to a committee system has implications – positive and negative – for people who share protected characteristics in Sheffield, including citizens but also Members and officers in SCC. The most significant opportunity here is to ensure that EDI is fully embedded in our decision making across the new Committee structure and that Members and officers have the knowledge and access to training and development to make decisions which understand and reflect our diverse communities and advance equality of opportunity. Involvement and engagement is a vital part of this but also that officers support the committees with EDI data, intelligence and insight to make high quality decisions.

- **Involvement and engagement** – ensuring that people who share protected characteristics in Sheffield have an equal opportunity to engage in the city's decision-making is vital to democratic decision making.

  o This is partly about the committee meetings themselves which can create barriers to people (Members and citizens) fully participating. These barriers include the timing of the meetings, the physical location and accessibility, the formal

nature of meetings which can be imposing for citizens which potentially impact on communities in terms of race, religion, disability, sex and age. Committees will need to fully consider appropriate approaches to engage communities in their work (eg. Menu of options, communicating to citizens on future agendas, meeting times etc). We should also ensure that we can accommodate any reasonable adjustments that people need in order to fully participate.

  o More broadly, it also about how Sheffield City Council connects to different communities and considers their needs and aspirations as part of the development of proposals, strategy and decisions. Local Area Committees, stakeholders, voluntary, community and faith organisations, networks such as the Sheffield Equality Partnership and the developing co-design engagement vision and framework being undertaken with Involve will be vital to ensuring that communities have a strong voice in Sheffield's decision making and strategy development.

- **Physical meetings** – current legislation ensures that all formal meetings must be in-person and the committee system proposal potentially increases the number of formal physical meetings that take place. This does create potential barriers for citizens and Members who share protected characteristics, including those with caring responsibilities, disabled people, and people across age groups (younger, working age, older). We use 37ccessible's access guides to provide advice to citizens about the accessibility of venues in the city ([Town Hall guide here](#) – as it is intended for committee meetings to take place). The implementation and further expansion of virtual and hybrid technology (as demonstrated during the Covid-19 pandemic) will create greater opportunities for citizens, partners and Members with protected characteristics to engage in the city's decision making, recognising that digital channels are not a solution for all.

- **Time demands and wellbeing** – this is an issue that should be assessed in the 6 month review of the committee system but there is a risk that if there is a considerable increase in meeting time demand and as a consequence, activity to prepare for and undertake actions agreed that those meetings, that this will increase pressure on the time that individuals (officers and Members) have to undertake their work outside of meetings, managing workloads and work/life balance. We will need to consult Members and staff on the impact on their workloads as this may have implications for health and wellbeing. As part of the proposals, we have included options for Committee Chairs to have job share arrangements, providing more flexibility for Members (eg. Those with caring responsibilities). This may also apply to voluntary, community and faith organisations, stakeholders and communities of interest who may find the new

arrangements complex and more demanding to connect to multiple committees across different policy areas.

- **Accessible and inclusive communication** – ensuring that we enable all communities to have access to information about the committee system (how it works, how to participate etc) and the work and decisions those committees are involved in. We will need to ensure that our communications channels are inclusive and accessible and that through clear forward plans, all communities have access to the information about issues that interest and affect them, how and when they can get involved and what impact that involvement will have. We also need to ensure the SCC website meets accessibility standards. An Equality Impact Assessment is underway to support the final decision and is being kept under review as a 'live document'.
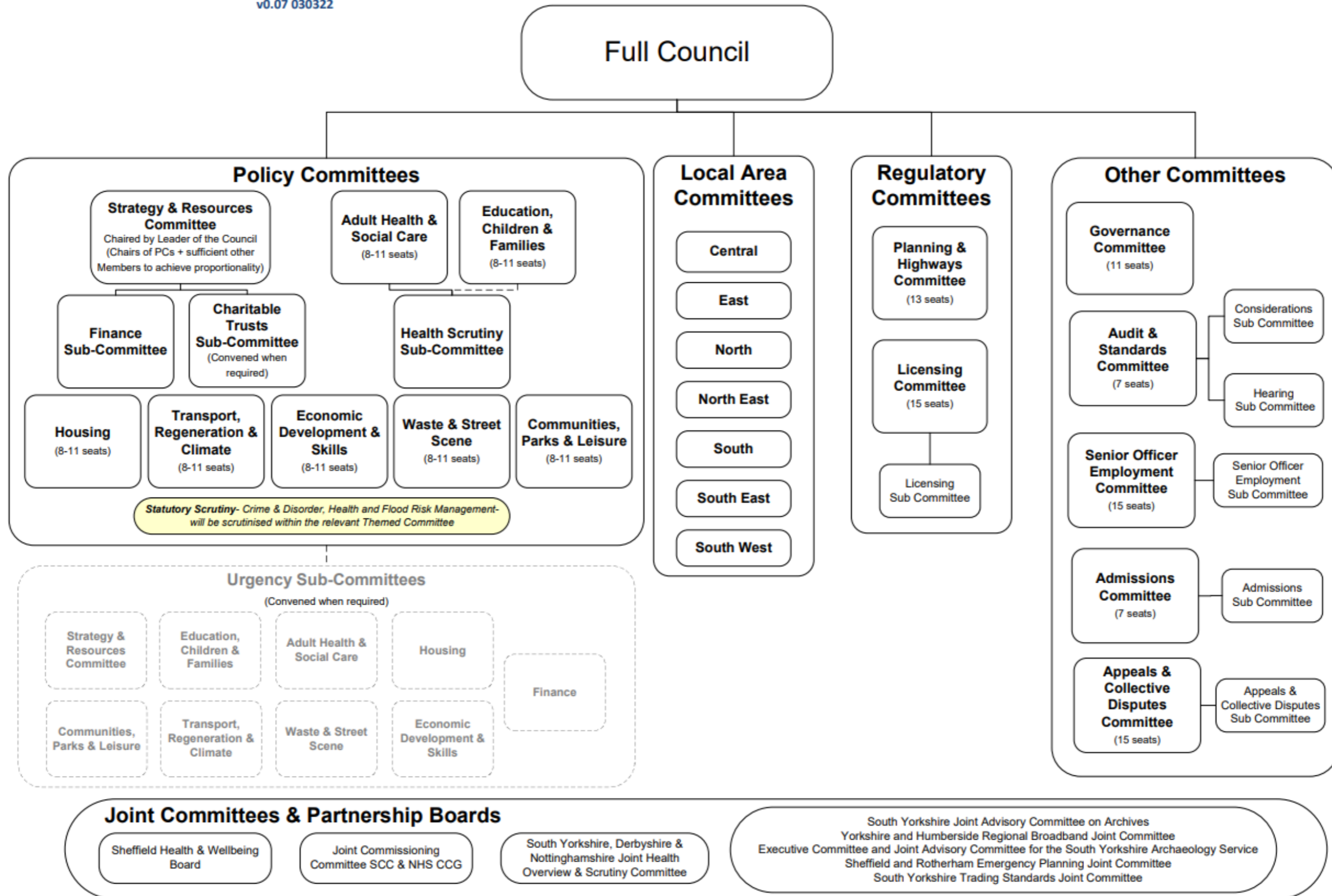
11.0   APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – Proposed Governance Arrangements May 2022 (diagram)
- Appendix 2 – Design Principles
- Appendix 3 – Working draft: Strengths and weaknesses in Sheffield City Council's approach to public participation in decision-making
- Appendix 4 – Draft Equality Impact Assessment (EIA1153)

Alexander Polak - March 2022

Appendix 1

Proposed Governance Arrangements May 2022
v0.07 030322

Full Council

Policy Committees

Strategy & Resources Committee
Chaired by Leader of the Council
(Chairs of PCs + sufficient other Members to achieve proportionality)

Adult Health & Social Care
(8-11 seats)

Education, Children & Families
(8-11 seats)

Finance Sub-Committee

Charitable Trusts Sub-Committee
(Convened when required)

Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Housing
(8-11 seats)

Transport, Regeneration & Climate
(8-11 seats)

Economic Development & Skills
(8-11 seats)

Waste & Street Scene
(8-11 seats)

Communities, Parks & Leisure
(8-11 seats)

Statutory Scrutiny- Crime & Disorder, Health and Flood Risk Management- will be scrutinised within the relevant Themed Committee

Urgency Sub-Committees
(Convened when required)

Strategy & Resources Committee

Education, Children & Families

Adult Health & Social Care

Housing

Finance

Communities, Parks & Leisure

Transport, Regeneration & Climate

Waste & Street Scene

Economic Development & Skills

Local Area Committees

Central

East

North

North East

South

South East

South West

Regulatory Committees

Planning & Highways Committee
(13 seats)

Licensing Committee
(15 seats)

Licensing Sub Committee

Other Committees

Governance Committee
(11 seats)

Audit & Standards Committee
(7 seats)

Considerations Sub Committee

Hearing Sub Committee

Senior Officer Employment Committee
(15 seats)

Senior Officer Employment Sub Committee

Admissions Committee
(7 seats)

Admissions Sub Committee

Appeals & Collective Disputes Committee
(15 seats)

Appeals & Collective Disputes Sub Committee

Joint Committees & Partnership Boards

Sheffield Health & Wellbeing Board

Joint Commissioning Committee SCC & NHS CCG

South Yorkshire, Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

South Yorkshire Joint Advisory Committee on Archives
Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Broadband Joint Committee
Executive Committee and Joint Advisory Committee for the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service
Sheffield and Rotherham Emergency Planning Joint Committee
South Yorkshire Trading Standards Joint Committee

<u>**Appendix 2**</u>

<u>**Design Principles**</u>

In May 2022 Sheffield City Council is changing the way decisions are made. The new way of doing things is called a committee system.

This is a list of 'design principles' which were agreed by Councillors when they were planning for this change. The principles say how the council would like to make decisions in future.

Councillors have agreed to keep these principles in mind when they design the new committee system. Then, once it is in place, they have agreed to use these principles to check how well it is working.

<u>**Top five principles**</u>

When it comes to the way it makes decisions, Sheffield City Council aims to…

  A. ……be democratic. Sheffield City Council is committed to local democracy
  B. …be open and trustworthy. Make decisions publicly, so people can tell who is responsible for what
  C. …include all Councillors. Show what decisions everyone's local councillors are involved in
  D. …listen to everyone. Have the voice of residents at the heart of our decisions
  E. …be forward looking and keep improving. Respond to the fast-changing world by trying new things and checking often whether it's working

The new Committee System…

  1. **…**should not be over-complicated, or costly
  2. **…**should include Full Council meetings which are time well spent
  3. **…**should make sure people in each part of the system know what's happening in the other parts, and that they all work together

  4. **…**should make it easy to know what decisions will be made, and when
  5. **…**should make it easy to know what decisions have been made and why (and what they mean)
  6. **…**should show the evidence for decisions, and what options were considered
  7. **…**should make it clear who is allowed to decide what, and why they have that power.
  8. **…**should hold decision-makers to account
  9. **…**should allow urgent decisions to happen quickly, without having to compromise on the other things in this list
  10. **…**should help Councillors from all parties to find the things they can agree on, and not let disagreements become blockages

11. **…**should seek out and listen to all voices from across the city, valuing them equally
12. **…**should show how Councillors took people's views into account when they made each decision
13. **…**should help the Council work well with others locally and nationally
14. **…**should make it easier for people to find information about how the City works, and how they can get something done through the Council

15. **…**should have high expectations of Councillors' behaviour
16. **…**should allow councillors to balance their time between local work, formal meetings and their own careers and families
17. **…**should include support and training for councillors

Engagement Principles:

When we are engaging with people through this process, we will value:

18. ….<u>Transparency</u> - we will communicate in a way that easy for everyone to understand
19. ….<u>Diversity</u> – We will consider everyone's backgrounds, interests and needs
20. ….<u>Inclusive participation</u> – We will provide lots of opportunities for people to get involved in a way that suits them
21. ….<u>Equality</u> – Everyone's ideas will be equally encouraged and treated with respect
22. ….<u>Responsiveness</u> – We will listen, and use what we hear to help us take decisions

Strengths and weaknesses in Sheffield City Council's approach to public participation in decision-making

Interim headline findings

Working draft for the Governance Committee

Introduction

Involve is in the process of reviewing what previous public and stakeholder engagement says about: the strengths and weaknesses in Sheffield City Council's (SCC) current approach to public participation in its decision-making.

This work is not an in depth study, but a short review of the following materials:

- Papers* recommended by attendees at the roundtables led by Involve for the Council in December 2021;
- Points made by attendees at the roundtables;
- Information gathered for drafting case studies of public participation regarded by the Council officers and/or roundtable attendees as examples of good practice in Sheffield;
- Informal conversations with a small number of stakeholders and Council officers who were unable to attend the roundtables.

The review is currently ongoing and the contents of this slide deck are therefore subject to change. However we wanted to provide Members of the Governance Committee with early access to some of the emerging key messages.

Public participation is a broad term, defined as "the engagement of individuals with the various structures and institutions of democracy, including voting, contacting a political representative, campaigning and lobbying, and taking part in consultations and demonstrations." The focus of Involve's work for SCC, and therefore this briefing, is more specific. It looks at public participation *in decision-making between elections* (including consultation and two way public engagement).

Work timeline

- Roundtables with stakeholders and community organisations to test plans for Involve's work with SCC (complete)

- Review of what previous public and stakeholder engagement has told SCC about the strengths and weaknesses of its approach to public participation (ongoing – some emerging messages included in this slide deck)

- Review of case studies seen as involving good practice in public participation in decision-making in the city (ongoing – some emerging messages included in this slide deck)

- Codesign workshops bringing together stakeholders, community organisations and Council officers to develop shared principles and a shared vision for public participation in SCC decision-making (forthcoming)

- Training and support for SCC around implementing its new approach (forthcoming)

Pockets of good practice in public participation (*more to add*)

This section highlights examples of public participation in Sheffield which have strong elements to them and provide lessons for future engagement work. It includes: projects led by the Council, projects led by the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), and partnership projects.

★ **Clear Air Zone consultation (2019)** - A strong multi-channel communications campaign made it easy for Sheffielders to notice and respond to the Clean Air Zone consultation. The approach included targeted engagement with people who would be most affected by the proposed changes, such as taxi drivers.

★ **Community Champion Project (2021 - ongoing),** which is led by the VCS and funded by the Council, empowers communities to make informed choices on health and wellbeing. Trusted volunteers provide information and listen to people's concerns in informal settings. The current focus is Covid-19 and vaccines, though volunteers support a number of issues. This model avoids the mistrust many communities feel towards SCC. The concerns and needs raised by communities are fed back to decision-makers.

★ **Hate crime reporting (2017)**. A collaboration between a cross-party Hate Crime Task Group (set up by the Safety Community Scrutiny Committee) and the Equality Hub Network enabled targeted engagement with communities affected by hate crime. This informed recommendations to the Scrutiny Committee and subsequent steps taken by the Council and stakeholders to address hate crime.

★ **Local Area Committees (LAC) supporting the VCS to engage residents (2021)**. As part of setting LACs' priorities, the Council supported over 40 local organisations to have conversations with Sheffielders who are less likely to have their voices heard. This was part of a suite of engagement activities (e.g. an online survey, drop in meetings) and enabled a diversity of community voices to feed into the development of each LAC's local action plan.

★ **ShefFood (2009 - ongoing)** is a cross-sector partnership of local public agencies, businesses, academic and community organisations committed to working together to create a more sustainable and resilient food system for the Sheffield region. Although it is not an example of public participation, it shows what can be achieved through a long term strategic partnership.

★ **Young people's experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic (2021).** An online survey of secondary level children provided an insight into the lives of young people. Steps were taken to encourage honest feedback such as making the survey anonymous. The findings have fed into the development of various Council plans.

Emerging lessons learned from good practice examples

- ★ **Work collaboratively with others:** Public participation can be strengthened by working in partnership with local organisations and individuals who have existing knowledge and are already trusted by local people.

- ★ **Use approaches that suit your audience(s)**: Use engagement methods that work for the communities and Sheffielders you're trying to reach. Be flexible, don't stick rigidly to one method if you're not reaching your target audiences.

- ★ **Sufficiently resource and staff projects:** Dedicated and skilled people, working in the Council, the VCS and in communities, are at the heart of projects that work well. Make sure you sufficiently resource projects (£ and people), giving due consideration to how follow up will happen and, where needed, how projects will be sustained.

- ★ **Mechanism for impact:** Have a mechanism for feeding Sheffielders' views / the result of engagement to the Council and decision-makers, so that Sheffielders' views have been heard and responded to and impacts can be tracked.

- ★ **Have a feedback loop:** Communicate the results of an engagement project to those who took part and to the wider public. Let people know what has - and, as importantly, has not - happened as a result of their involvement, and why.

Weaknesses in SCC's approach to participation raised during previous engagement *(interim only)*

★ **Lack of meaningful public participation in decision-making** - A number of interrelated factors – including tokenism, not feeling genuinely listened to, lack of feedback and scepticism about the impact on decisions - contribute to a scepticism that public engagement will have a genuine impact on Council decision-making. The majority of Sheffielders who responded to the Big City Conversation survey do not feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area.

★ **Issues relating to how Sheffield's diverse communities are engaged** – both the 2021 update from the Race Equality Commission and stakeholders raise issues relating to how the Council and service providers engage Sheffield's diverse communities. This includes under-representation of some communities in engagement activities, dominance of more proactive voices (and those with more resources); disconnections between service providers and BAME communities; and incorrectly grouping different ethnic minority groups together.

★ **Lack of awareness about services and how decisions are made** - For Sheffielders to be able to engage in the Council's decision-making, they need to know how to take

part. Currently, Sheffielders do not feel adequately informed about how decisions are made in their local area or how local public services are performing, and they feeling poorly informed about the Council's work overall.

★ **Disconnect between Sheffielders and the Council** - stakeholders comment on a lack of trust in the Council and disconnect between citizens and the Council.

★ **Role of the VCF sector** - Sheffield's diversity of VCS organisations can play an important role in supporting public participation in decision-making, in addition to having a voice in Council decision-making in their own right but many feel that the Council is not listening or effectively engaging them.

★ **Local Area Committees** – a sense of frustration and missed opportunity around the introduction of LACs to date, particularly as a solution in themselves to engaging communities and concerns of how geographically based LACs connect to communities of interest.

★ **Limitations of traditional democratic systems** – particularly responsiveness and representativeness.

Ideas for improvement raised by stakeholders and/or the public *(interim only)*

Purpose of engagement
* ★ Have a clear purpose for engaging Sheffielders. Be honest about the rationale for engagement, and what influence Sheffielders can expect to have on the outcome.

Who engages
* ★ Ensure it isn't the "same old people / groups" taking part.
* ★ Actively support Sheffield's diverse communities to engage, particularly those who are underrepresented, underserved or who are facing disadvantages.
* ★ Engage with the VCS prior to commencing engagement activities to better understand the context, what is needed and to reach underrepresented groups.
* ★ Don't allow a lack of knowledge to hinder people's participation.
* ★ Acknowledge that not everyone will want to take part. They may be too busy or simply not interested.

How to engage Sheffielders
* ★ Match the approach(es) to your audiences. Vary the engagement approach / model depending on the communities and audiences.
* ★ Use a diversity of methods to reach as wide a range of people as possible.
* ★ Make engagement accessible to all. For example, digital exclusion is still a significant challenge and needs to be taken into account. Venues used to hold meetings need to be trusted and accessible.
* ★ Move up the ladder of participation. Public participation shouldn't just be about extracting information. Co-creation methods should be used as well.

Ideas for improvement (cont)

Integrating public engagement into decision-making
- ★ Develop principles for engagement. Host a discussion about principles and values and develop a shared understanding with communities.
- ★ Develop a framework for participation that is creative and responsive to innovations, particularly to counter the impact of inequalities.
- ★ Embed public and community engagement within all Council processes so that it is part of "business as usual." Directly involve Sheffielders in decision making at neighbourhood level up to city-wide level.
- ★ Actively take into account the views of marginalised / underserved communities when designing mechanisms which support community decision making.
- ★ Build on existing engagement infrastructure and learn from what has worked well (e.g. champions project) and what hasn't (e.g. trees). Host sharing sessions between members, officers and local community representatives.

Ensuring public participation has impact
- ★ Public participation needs to take place before decisions have been made. This means Council decision making needs to be more open and deliberative.
- ★ Public participation needs to make a difference. There needs to be a demonstrable impact that is evident in Council decision-making.
- ★ There needs to be an accountability mechanism, to ensure feedback is going to the right places and to track the impact it has had over time.

Ideas for improvement (cont)

Resources and training for engagement
- ★ Provide formalised support to (under resourced and marginalised) communities to take part and contribute to decisions
- ★ Invest in training around participatory models, for example second LAC staff into community organisations.

Greater connectivity and collaboration
- ★ Develop a culture where Sheffielders, public services and community organisations collaborate on local issues
- ★ People want to see more deliberation and consensus-building, more collaboration between political parties, and with communities and stakeholders
- ★ People want there to be better communications, with the Council being more open with Sheffielders, listening, talking and asking their views, providing feedback.

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11Equality Impact Assessment Number 1153

PART A
Introductory Information

Proposal name

> Sheffield's Committee System

Brief aim(s) of the proposal and the outcome(s) you want to achieve

When it comes to the way it makes decisions, Sheffield City Council aims to…
- **Be democratic.** Sheffield City Council is committed to local democracy.
- **Be open and trustworthy.** Make decisions publicly, so people can tell who is responsible for what.
- **Include all Councillors.** Show what decisions everyone's local councillors are involved in.
- **Listen to everyone.** Have the voice of residents at the heart of our decisions.
- **Be cutting edge and keep improving.** Respond to the fast-changing world by trying new things and checking often whether it's working.

This EIA is a live document and will be updated as the programme develop. Through the course of the programme, we will ensure that we consider the impact of the new LACs, the devolution of decision making to communities and the new Committee System. However as with any decision there may be unintended consequences of any changes that result from these decisions. We will try to ensure any negative impacts are mitigated.

Proposal type
- Budget   ▪ Non-Budget

If Budget, is it Entered on Q Tier?
- Yes   ▪ No

If yes what is the Q Tier reference

Year of proposal (s)

▪ 21/22	▪ 23/23	▪ 23/24	▪ 24/25	▪ other

Decision Type
- Coop Exec
- Committee (e.g., Health Committee) which committee
- Leader
- Individual Coop Exec Member
- Executive Director/Director
- Officer Decisions (Non-Key)
- Council (e.g., Budget and Housing Revenue Account)
- Regulatory Committees (e.g., Licensing Committee)

Lead Committee Member

> Governance Committee

Lead Director for Proposal

Appendix 4

Dawn Shaw and Gillian Duckworth

Person filling in this EIA form

Hannah Matheau-Raven

EIA start date

01/10/2021

Equality Lead Officer

- <mark>Adele Robinson</mark>
- Annemarie Johnston
- Bashir Khan

- Beverley Law
- <mark>Ed Sexton</mark>
- Louise Nunn

Lead Equality Objective (see for detail)

■ <mark>Understanding Communities</mark>	■ Workforce Diversity	■ Leading the city in celebrating & promoting inclusion	■ Break the cycle and improve life chances

Portfolio, Service and Team

Is this Cross-Portfolio

- <mark>Yes</mark>
- No

Portfolio

All

Is the EIA joint with another organisation (eg NHS)?

- Yes
- <mark>No</mark>

Please specify

N/A

Consultation

Is consultation required (Read the guidance in relation to this area)

- Yes
- <mark>No</mark>

If consultation is not required please state why

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Appendix 4

The referendum in 2021 was a democratic choice about how the city council of Sheffield is governed with considerations as to what is wanted from a democratic system which led to the vote for a move from a Cabinet way of working to a Committee system; a clear public opinion. We have followed this referendum result with number public engagement opportunities specifically about the new shape of the system and how it might work, as well as opportunities to participate in consultation at a local level with the LAC meetings.

Moving forward, we aim to proactively engage and consult with partners such as the Equality Partnership to ensure that equalities runs through the system to ensure the best outcomes and decisions made with Sheffielders at the centre.

Staff Consultation- The Democratic Services Team have commenced an MER to meet the needs of the new Committee system. This work is well underway and will have been completed by the time that the system launches on 18th May 2022. As part of this, staff consultation will have been completed and concluded.

Are Staff who may be affected by these proposals aware of them
- Yes   - No

Are Customers who may be affected by these proposals aware of them
- Yes   - No

If you have said no to either please say why

Appendix 4

We have actively engaged with the public and been open to feedback to develop the proposals as well as ongoing feedback throughout the process. However, we do accept that not everyone in Sheffield will be aware of the democratic changes, nor can we assume that everyone who will have wanted to participate will have been able to.

This EIA outlines our learning and considerations so far as well as actions to take to ensure that we keep moving in a positive direction. It is a live EIA and we will continue to develop it as the new Committee System is implemented and we learn from and listen to citizens, Members and staff about how it works for them and mitigations/changes we need to make to ensure that our Committee System model is accessible to all.

The channels that we have used include but are not limited to:
- The SCC webpage- https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/your-city-council/moving-to-committee-system-of-governance including updated progress plans
- Stories in Sheff News- https://sheffnews.com/news/sheffield-city-council-governance-referendum-results-2021
- A variety of social media
- Employee updates
- Face to face (where legally and safely able to do so) in local venues
- Remote engagement sessions on Zoom
- An inbox set up to receive and answer questions- transitiontocommittees@sheffield.gov.uk
- Using hybrid technology to enable people to webcast committee meetings- https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1

We have also invited parties with a vested interest in the system to feedback to us any considerations or learning we should take as part of the December 2021 Inquiry Sessions on 7th and 8th - https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=632

Further and ongoing comms are being reviewed with requirements being established.

Initial Impact

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty we have to pay due regard to the need to:
• eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
• advance equality of opportunity
• foster good relations

For a range of people who share protected characteristics, more information is available on the Council website including the Community Knowledge Profiles.

Identify Impacts

Identify which characteristic the proposal has an impact on tick all that apply

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▪ Health	▪ Transgender
▪ Age	▪ Carers
▪ Disability	▪ Voluntary/Community & Faith Sectors
▪ Pregnancy/Maternity	▪ Cohesion
▪ Race	▪ Partners
▪ Religion/Belief	▪ Poverty & Financial Inclusion
▪ Sex	▪ Armed Forces
▪ Sexual Orientation	▪ Other
▪ Cumulative	

Cumulative Impact

Does the Proposal have a cumulative impact
▪ Yes   ▪ No

▪ Year on Year	▪ Across a Community of Identity/Interest
▪ Geographical Area	▪ Other

If yes, details of impact

There are different stages to the introduction of the Modern Committees System, with each building on and learning from the last as outlined below:

- Local Area Committees – The LACs were implemented first, prior to the referendum and were successfully stood up during the pandemic in 2021. During implementation, there were many lessons in terms of how to engage with Members early in the process, keeping relevant services informed and how best to engage with the public in a localised bespoke way. We are still learning from the LACs as they continue and will see a cumulative impact through changes and improvements to services as a result. Predominantly, the impact of LACs has been understanding the needs of local communities at a characteristic level, engaging with a variety of communities, with differing needs all to support their influence and enablement to voice issues and opinions. This can be evidenced through the Local Community Plans. Additionally, LACs are geographical in nature with a variety of communities within them that cross over LAC boundaries and are intersectional in nature. As such, we are working with the Sheffield Equality Partnership to ensure that LACs are inclusive for all Sheffielders and recognise that communities of identify and interest are citywide.

- Transitional Committees - The transitional committees were set up as a learning opportunity between the referendum result and the implementation of the modern committee system in May 2022, and also were an opportunity to explore links to LACs and ways of working. The cumulative impact from this process is using the learning to inform the Policy Committees by instilling best practice discovered as well as understanding pitfalls. The Transitional Committees have needed to understand how we then translate the findings from LACs at a localised view and then use this information and the equalities considerations at a citywide and strategic level.

- Policy Committees- From both the LACs and the Transitional Committees, we have taken learning that has had a direct and cumulative impact on the design of the Policy Committees as we have progressed through the design phases. We understand the need to consider equalities at the citywide and strategic level and our processes need to connect the local view to the citywide view. As a result of this learning, we will strive to embed this consideration into our

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ways of working within the committee system. Getting this right will have a cumulative impact on equalities as the relationship should be symbiotic and create opportunities for positive outcomes. The LACs can gather information on equalities and perspectives locally, define actions, refer these actions to the committee system for a holistic review, this system can then drive citywide change which will filter back through the LACs.

We will continue to engage citizens and stakeholders at each stage of the committee system, recognising that everyone (including Members and officers) will take time to adjust to new ways of working and new ways of democratic decision-making, and are aware that we need to continue to learn and evolve.

As the committee system was voted for in a result from a referendum, legally it must be in place for 10 years before another referendum could be cast. The opportunities for review during the delivery of the system are:

- Post Implementation Review at 6 months- as proposed to Governance Committee; and
- Yearly as part of the elections process
- We are also committing to reviewing the system with particular scope on equalities, diversity and inclusion 6 monthly/annually as part of the work for the Equalities Sub-Group.

We hope that with these opportunities and behaviours enabling us to learn as we go, we will have a positive cumulative impact on Sheffield and our residents; across all characteristics. Additionally, we will engage and involve the Sheffield Equality Partnership in the review and work with them regularly to ensure that we connect people with protected characteristics to policy making.

Proposal has geographical impact across Sheffield
- Yes   - No

If Yes, details of geographical impact across Sheffield

The geographical impact will be locally felt by, with and as a result of the LACs. Each LAC is made up of 4 Sheffield wards, totally 7 LACs citywide. Their aim is to understand local communities, what they want, need, feel and how they want to progress. This will be captured in a consistent template, but the content will be bespoke according to what is reported by residents as part of the local engagement exercises led in 2021 and 2022. This will be repeated annually to measure progress and to keep assuring that the right things are being considered.

The Committee system will have a geographical impact but from a city-wide lens. Policy and strategy will be formed, using intel from the LACs, guided by equality input, and will work with LACs to understand how to roll out, how to action and how to drive policy forward.

The LACs can then cascade this out locally and seek further feedback. The impact should be positive as everyone has an equal opportunity to feed into this process, regardless of where they live, with due consideration to the fact that equalities override geographical boundaries and communities may be prevalent across the city.

Local Area Committee Area(s) impacted
- All   - Specific

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If Specific, name of Local Committee Area(s) impacted
N/A

Initial Impact Overview

Based on the information about the proposal what will the overall equality impact?

Overview

Briefly describe how the proposal helps to meet the Public Sector Duty outlined above

This Duty means we need to understand the effect that the Programmes and enduring Committee system have on inequality. To do this we will examine the available evidence and work with staff, residents and people who use services to consider the impact of these proposals on the people who share protected characteristics enabling a rigorous analysis of decision making and identifying any negative and positive impact on people with protected characteristics. This enables us to meet our duties as outlined above and we have committed as a Council to undertake this process

Local Area Committees

The Empowering Communities Programme (ECP) established 7 Local Area Committees (LACs) in May 2021. The new LACs will engage, enable, and help empower communities across the city with increasing control over decision,

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marking a major shift in power to communities with a rolling programme of devolution over the next 12 to 18 months.

EIA 916, Local Area Committee Programme, provides an initial assessment of equality impacts of LACs in greater detail. In addition, each LAC continues to develop its own local equality analysis and impact assessment.

Policy Committees

Furthermore, as a result of the referendum in May 2021, SCC is working to also implement Policy Committees alongside LACs, to replace the Leader/Cabinet democratic model of decision making. This Committee system will be launched from 18th May 2022 from the point of sign off at AGM.

Of note, at the time of writing and between the referendum result and the launch of the committee system in May 2022, SCC implemented transitional committees, with the aim of trying out different approaches to take this learning into the new model. This learning has been captured throughout this document and has been considered throughout the design phase.

Both the central Committee systems and LACs will involve people who share characteristics under the Equality Act, so it is intended that the new approach will help us meet our PSED. Each new LAC area will be asked to consider equality and diversity in their local plan and the new Policy Committees will be asked to consider the EDI as part of their work forward plans. However, with any decision there maybe unintended impacts especially as at this stage we are still unsure of all the changes that will happen.

We are especially mindful of the different demographics that make up Sheffield and ensuring smaller communities in each area are represented, such as people with a sight impairment, learning disability, the LGBTQIA+ community etc. Some people may be less likely to feel comfortable getting involved, so we have taken actions to ensure that we listen to a range of voices not just the loudest, including holding engagement events in local accessible spaces, hosting remote sessions throughout the pandemic with controls in place to create a safe environment for all. We have also worked with the Sheffield Equality Partnership and other VCF organisations to ensure this diversity of voice and influence.

Now that the Local Area Committees are in place, we will continue to ensure that all LACs make the required reasonable adjustments, meet accessibility standards, champion diversity and inclusion, ensure that they are participative and collaborative and finally ensure that LACs seek out representative voices from lesser heard from groups. This is a fundamentally positive change for all residents of Sheffield regardless of protected characteristic. The Local Area Committees are to develop local plans of which Equality and Diversity will be at the heart of each plan. However, there may be unintended consequences especially as we are not yet sure about the demographic makeup of each area.

Given the disparities and inequalities that we know exist across the city and between different groups of people in relation to health, education, housing, income, crime etc, we will also ensure that tackling inequalities are considered as a central part of these plans. The LACs will use data available for each area and group of people to inform the plans and actions. This will include engaging with people of different ages and taking into account the needs of people of different ages within each area.

With the Policy Committee system launch scheduled for May 2022, and the LACs already established, we are keen to review, instil and embed our commitments to:

Transparency – we want to provide relevant information that demonstrates our intentions and decision-making to citizens in a way that is accessible and understandable

Diversity – we recognise that the city of Sheffield is made up of a broad and diverse group of people encompassing different ethnicities, gender, age, socio-economic backgrounds, values and physical and mental ability. We have a wide range of languages, cultures, digital, literacy and numeracy skills represented across the city and all backgrounds, interests and needs should be considered.

Inclusive participation – provide all citizens with clear routes and opportunities to contribute to and influence outcomes that will directly affect their lives. Schedule meetings at times and in places that are convenient for as many people as possible and provide parallel ways for people to take part in a way that suits them.

Equality – encourage open discussion so that no sections of the community are left out and all ideas are treated with respect. Decisions should not be controlled be one particular section of a community.

It is clear that decision making must be informed by equality considerations – the new committee system must ensure that equality impacts and interests form part of evidence gathering that informs decisions. Sources of information would need to include Equality Impact Assessments; equality implications identified in decision reports; equality analysis of stakeholder feedback and as part of the new system, there is the expectation that Committees will analyse agendas/submissions for EIAs to embed a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion as good practice.

This EIA aims to identify equality impacts and recommendations that consider the Duty to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, to inform Elected Members and the decision to approve the new committee system.

This EIA is a live document and will be updated as the programmes develop, ensuring that we consider the impact of the new LACs and the devolution of decision making to communities as well as the new Policy Committees, how they engage, operate and behave.

Is a Full impact Assessment required at this stage? ▪ Yes   ▪ No

If the impact is more than minor, in that it will impact on a particular protected characteristic, you must complete a full impact assessment below.

Initial Impact Sign Off

EIAs must be agreed and signed off by the Equality lead Officer in your Portfolio or corporately. Has this been signed off?

▪ Yes   ▪ No

| Date agreed | 25/02/2022 | Name of EIA lead officer | Ed Sexton |

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Appendix 4

Part B

Full Impact Assessment

Health

Does the Proposal have a significant impact on health and well-being (including effects on the wider determinants of health)?

■ Yes   ■ No   *if Yes, complete section below*

Members/Officers   **Customers**
■ Yes   ■ No   ■ Yes   ■ No

Details of impact

Whilst Health is an important consideration for the Committee System, we do not currently believe that the implementation will have an evident impact on the health of staff, Members or citizens of Sheffield. As the Council is committed to becoming a public health organisation, consideration to health will always be given when making decisions and implementing changes throughout the duration of the Modern Committee System. Should any medium/high health be identified, a detailed Health Impact Assessment will be completed, and appropriate actions and changes will be taken.

Engagement

- *Access -* We have a responsibility in terms of our engagement, with staff, Members and citizens, to ensure that we understand and cater to different and a variety of health-related needs to best support people to participate in the new Modern Committee System. As such, we need to be mindful of how we gather this data, and the response we will be able to provide. We will need to engage stakeholders early to ensure that they have everything needed, reasonable adjustments, different technology, assessed the needs for breaks etc. for the launch and to test our ways of working.

- *Partners -* The new governance model also has clear links and commitments to other committees which can have an impact on the health of the citizens of Sheffield, such as the Sheffield Health & Wellbeing Board, Join Commissioning Committee SCC & NHS CCG, South Yorkshire, Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Mechanics of Meetings

There are several ways in which the Committee meetings will operate that may have an impact upon health of those involved or in attendance:

Time spent in meetings - The current recommendations include a guillotine clause for committee and council meetings, of 2.5hrs and 3.5hrs respectively which will cap meetings and ensure a commitment to purposeful conversation with a timely close. However, there is a consideration required of the notable increase in meetings that both Members and Officers will be required to attend and the impact of this on health. There is a risk that if there is consideration increases, that this will increase pressure on time that individuals have to undertake their work outside of meetings, managing workloads and work/life balance. This will need to be monitored and receive feedback on as part of the

6 month review to understand any changes required to make this more practical and feasible.

- *Remote working -* Due practices have been in place throughout the covid-19 pandemic to ensure that staff are operating safely and responsibility, including a move to facilitating engagement sessions and meetings online as opposed to face to face. Current national legal requirements ensure that formal democratic meetings must take place in person but we are developing more hybrid options to enable people to participate remotely where they wish to.

- *Reasonable adjustments -* If we have made every effort to engage with those participating in meetings, remotely or face to face, we should be able to accommodate adjustments if required. For example, for those with chronic pain conditions, there may be a need for pacing breaks to allow for management of those conditions. We may also consider screen breaks for remote sessions to support eyesight and posture complications.

- *Considerations of Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) -* As we will see an increase in the numbers of meetings that Members and staff will attend, there will be additional papers to prepare, minutes to type up and communication to issue. As such we must recognise the impact on staff responsible for this and ensure that they are adequately supported with appropriate and feasible timescales for production. Effective line management will also help to mitigate this.

- *Co-Chairing/Job Share -* Members can also be supported through the use of co-Chairs, which may allow the additional responsibility of Chairing a committee to be shared to accommodate for health impacts.

- *Benchmarking other Local Authorities -* SCC has been committed to gathering evidence from other LAs who have moved to a Modern Committee System to inform our own system design work. As part of this, we also plan to gather information on any health impacts they have experienced. The LAs included in this work have so far been: Hartlepool, Wirral, Cheshire East, Kingston, Reading, Bright & Hove and Newark & Sherwood. Whilst we recognise that these authorities are not directly comparable to Sheffield in terms of demographics, size, core city status, deprivation levels or wealth, it was pertinent to seek advice and guidance on the practical questions and issues they experienced. When it comes to Health impact, we will seek to engage with authorities with the closest models to our proposals and also closest to Sheffield in terms of measurables for a realistic view on what impact we may see.

Decision Making

- *Health related decisions -* As part of the new model, we have considered where health related decisions may be made, most likely within the Adult, Health and Social Care committee and the Education, Children and Families Committee. However, where there is a cross-cutting implication, it may refer to the Strategic and Resources Committee as a coordinating function. Governance Committee Members have also been considered how to best continue a robust approach to delivering our health scrutiny duties as part of the new Committee System.

- *Urgent Decisions (e.g., pandemic response) -* Additionally we recognise, particularly after the past 2 years of the covid-19 pandemic, the need for urgent decisions to be made in relation to health. In these cases, an urgency

sub-committee may be called for the above committees to ensure a timely response to crisis.

- **Efficient working -** While having a place for these decisions to be made, we also need to support quick and effective decision making as if a delay is caused in either meeting or the decision being made, this may cause a negative or greater negative health impact and we must be aware of the cost of this delay or 'doing nothing'. Our mitigation for this is investing in Chairing and Co-Chairing training to facilitate discussion to reach timely and quality decisions, robust planning of meetings to ensure appropriate and manageable agenda items and adequate preparation in terms of time and support.

- **Robust, quality decisions -** We must understand, as part of our decision making that there may be disbenefits to a decision made in terms of health. For example, if a decision is made to remove 20 mile an hour speed limit signs and replace with 30 miles an hour signs, this may cause an increase in speeding and accidents. We must also endeavour to understand the opportunity costs of opting to not chose something better than what is decided. This may be due to resource, capacity, funding etc. but mut be considered to ensure that the decision is correct and the risk manageable.

- **Consideration of subject matter experts -** If the right people are not consulted ahead of the meetings or available to provide evidence, guidance or advice in the formal of written submissions or physical presentation, we risk making the wrong decision or a worse decision that we could have. In cases pertaining to health, we must consider inviting representatives from health to advise in a more robust way that commenting on a paper; Finally

- **Controversial decisions -** Where a controversial decision is being made in any capacity, with health impacts large or small, positive or negative, we must consider working with Health colleagues to complete a Health Impact Assessment to support our decision making and understanding the impact we are making.

There are some additional methods of monitoring the impact of the Modern Committee System that could be indicators of an impact on health:
- Decrease in participation numbers may indicate a decline in health or discomfort
- Staff including Members exceeding the expected numbers of hours to be involved in the system which may demonstrate an impact on health in terms of stress
- An increase in staff including Member sickness
- Attendance of Members decreasing and an inability to meet quorum
- Vacant posts within the Committee Support Team

Comprehensive Health Impact Assessment being completed

- Yes   - No

Please attach health impact assessment as a supporting document below.

Public Health Leads has signed off the health impact(s) of this EIA

- Yes   - No

Health Lead   **Magda Boo**

Age

Impact on Members/Officers   **Impact on Citizens**
■ Yes   ■ No   ■ Yes   ■ No

Details of impact

The Modern Committee System will have an impact on members of staff, Members and citizens within varying age groups with unique needs. However, we do not currently believe that the implementation of this programme has a direct or clear impact on or discriminates against any age groups. However, consideration to age will be given at all opportunities and appropriate decisions or actions will be taken if any age-related risk and/or need are identified.

We know there is a high proportion of staff over the age of 46 with some in the higher age brackets and closer to retirement.

Sheffield is one of the 8 core cities in England and its population has grown above the national average and the City Region, rising from 513,000 in 2001 to 584,000 by 2019. This has resulted from increases in births, net inward migration and longer life expectancy. There are around 60,000 under-graduate and post-graduate students studying at Sheffield's two universities, 25% of whom are overseas students.

Sheffield has a higher proportion of its population aged 65 years or over (16%, or 93,600 people) than the other English Core Cities. This is projected to increase to 19.2% by 2034, with the largest increase in the number of people aged over 85

Life Expectancy in the city is 78.4 years for men and 82.1 years for women and there are greater numbers of women than men in the city, due to higher life expectancy for women.

The age group that has increased the most from 2011 to 2018 is 25-34 year olds, with 15.5% of our population being in this group. 18.1% of the population is under 16. The factors which are having the most impact on this changing city profile are increasing numbers of university students and the inward migration of households with young families.

Engagement

- *Proactive Participation -* It is clear that the Council and Members will need to do proactive participation in terms of communications and engagement to ensure that citizens of all ages are sighted on the Modern Committee System and are aware of how to get involved digitally abled or not. We must use exercises such as this to understand the correct mechanisms for engagement that suit all ages and not assume that an 'all age' approach is the right or best approach to take. We will need to think creatively about the range of engagement channels and how best we can meet the needs of our citizens.

- *Links to Youth Cabinet -* As part of our commitment to working with the Equality Partnership, we will also seek to improve links with the Youth Cabinet to ensure that we provide equal opportunity for young people to get involved in the system as well as older populations, who have admittedly appeared to be more proactively engaged. This may be due to our methods of engagement, and we are seeking feedback on this.

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Mechanics of Meetings

- *Timings of meetings -* while we are keen not to assume any age group would be less keen on evening or early meetings, we can safely assume that younger age groups may have conflicts with schooling/learning hours early on in the day, those of working age may work a multitude of hours in various shifts and those who are retired may not be keen for evening meetings while they have the day free. Our current proposal is for LAC meetings to take place on weekdays in the evenings at 6pm and 10am weekdays for Policy Committee meetings. This may not be standard and we will need to challenge this in practice with consideration to room availability, Member needs etc. We recognise the work of the Age Partnership who identified that older members of the partnership did not want to attend later meetings while younger people did, this will need to be balanced with a practical approach. This initial spread is our starting point and we will continue to monitor attendance to establish if this works. We commit to monitoring the success of these arrangements and review as part of the post-implantation review period.

- **Length of Meetings** - The current recommendations include a guillotine clause for committee and council meetings, of 2.5hrs and 3.5hrs respectively. This may help Elected Members, Officers and members of the public who are limited in time due to home commitments, learning, school, work, childcare etc.

Decision Making

- *Democratic decision making must be in person -* This may impact on people with young families who wish to attend, people of working age who may be in work at the times of the meetings and older people who may not wish to make the journey into the meeting (though we also recognise this may be an unfair assumption). Decision Making meetings will have a hybrid facility whereby those who are digitally abled can currently watch the webcast after the fact and soon will be able to attend remotely to ask public questions from the comfort of their own home. However, this does then exclude those not digitally abled.

Disability

Impact on Members/Officers
- Yes   - No

Impact on Citizens
- Yes   - No

Details of impact

Disability is an important consideration for the Modern Committee System, as it may present a range of complexities that we need to understand and plan to mitigate such as physical access to buildings, provision of information in different formats and provision of services so disabled people are encouraged and empowered to be independent. We recognise that we will need to consider demonstrable action to ensure these systems and processes are accessible, inclusive and bias free, both remotely and in person, for the people of Sheffield. Where applicable, we have listed below the ways in which this characteristic has been considered.

The 2011 census told us that there are over 103,000 disabled people in the city and over a third of all households include a disabled person. Also 29% of people with a long-term health problem or disability live in areas that are amongst the 10% most deprived in the country. This compares with 23% in Sheffield as a whole.

Engagement

- ***Accessible and Inclusive Communication -*** In order to avoid discrimination, we must understand how to ensure our communication is accessible and inclusive for those with disabilities, however these may present. As part of this, we will review our channels for communication to appraise if we have the correct channels doing the right things and that our messages are understood.

- ***Our Web Offer -*** We accept that our website and associated sites are not currently meeting accessibility standards and are taking action to rectify this as a priority, including language use, interfaces with readability software and document readability.

- ***Role Opportunities -*** So as to not discourage disabled people from considering being an Elected Members, suitable allowances & expenses schemes and co-Chair arrangements can be promoted.

Mechanics of Meetings

- ***Formats for accessibility -*** We currently provide documentation in paper form for Members and, should it be necessary, could provide these packs in public places to support access and remove the technological barrier some may experience. Papers are printed on request for Elected Members attending committee meetings and certain accessibility requests, such as large print, can be accommodated but this is not done as standard. Papers are available in a single format but should comply with accessibility standards. Part of the transition to a new committee system will include the review of the format of papers issued to committees, so there is an opportunity for accessibility to be part of that. Hearing loops can be used in the council chamber and meeting rooms, but signing isn't provided currently in the committee rooms or as an additional component to the webcast. The use of signing in LAC meetings is being explored, so this is something that could be considered for all council and committee meetings.

- ***Accessible -*** We promote the use of AccessAble Accessibility Guides to determine suitable locations for in-person events, which has been particularly useful for LAC meetings held in communities. However, this may be considered for Policy Committee Meetings should the Town Hall become inappropriate due to size, accessibility needs etc. AccessAble allowed us to consider available facilities including ramped/sloped access, manual doors, ambulant toilets, assistive listening, mobility impaired walkers, accessible toilets, step-free standard toilets and large print.

- ***IT Support -*** SCC IT have worked tirelessly to provide multiple types of solutions to support with a range of disability needs from a technical perspective which is a self-serve process, so that staff, including Members, do not need to disclose a disability unless they so wish and do have the option to remain private if they prefer.

- *Locations* – Our intention is for Council and Committee meetings, with the exception of LAC meetings, to be held in the Town Hall. The central location means it has good transport links, but due to the age of the building, access into and around it is limited. Improvements have been made to make the building more accessible but as these are retrofitted, there are still limitations and impacts, such as longer access routes to certain areas for Elected Members, officers and citizens.

- *Public Questions* - Questions from the public must be submitted prior to a committee. As no questions can be raised on the day of the committee, this does not exclude people who are unable to attend in person from submitting a question.

- *Length of Meetings* - The current recommendations include a guillotine clause for committee and council meetings, of 2.5hrs and 3.5hrs respectively. This may help Elected Members or Officers who have a disability by limiting the time required to attend or support a meeting in a single sitting.

- *Accessible* - We promote the use of AccessAble Accessibility Guides to determine suitable locations for in-person events which has been particularly useful for LAC meetings held in communities. However, this may be considered for Policy Committee Meetings should the Town Hall become inappropriate due to size, accessibility needs etc. AccessAble allowed us to consider available facilities including ramped/sloped access, manual doors, baby changing facilities, breast feeding facilities and seating.

Decision Making

- *Hybrid tech* - Currently decision-making committees must be attended in person, as such, Members with access difficulties are not able to attend remotely, using hybrid meeting technology. We hope that legislative changes may better enable the use of emerging technologies in light of the response to the pandemic. Hybrid technology also is more likely to support accessibility to anyone who had the required technology and therefore is more likely to exclude people suffering from technological or digital exclusion rather than disability.

Pregnancy/Maternity

Impact on Members/Officers
- Yes   - No

Impact on Citizens
- Yes   - No

Details of impact

Pregnancy, parental leave and parental responsibilities of any kind are important considerations for the Modern Committee System, as they may present a range of complexities that we need to understand and plan to mitigate such as safety and physical access to buildings (pushchairs), childcare and appointments are worked around where possible. We recognise that the system in addition to the wider Council governance will need to consider demonstrable action to make these systems and processes as accessible as possible, both remotely and in person.

Where applicable, we have listed below the ways in which this characteristic has been considered.

Engagement

- **Promotion of the System -** Particularly for this cohort who may have less available time due to domestic commitments, there may be opportunities to promote engagement activities, updates and events through relevant touchpoints such as schools, GPs, health clinics, VCF groups etc. so that we can involve them in a way that suits their needs. This will need exploring in more detail as we progress through implementation and define what future engagement and communication requirements there may be.

Mechanics of Meetings

- *Financial Aid -* Elected Members can claim Childcare and Dependant Carers Allowance for specific reasons set out in part 6, schedule 2 of the Constitution. This is limited to ½ day up to 4hrs. As the new committee system is likely to increase the time commitment required from Elected Members, there's an opportunity to review this allowance to ensure it's still suitable.

- *Length of Meetings -* The current recommendations include a guillotine clause for committee and council meetings, of 2.5hrs and 3.5hrs respectively. This may help Elected Members or Officers who are pregnant or parents by limiting the time required to attend or support a meeting in a single sitting.

- *Timings of Meetings -* Where possible, we have tried to consider domestic responsibilities as part of booking the meetings for both LAC and Policy Committees. However, we are aware that we may not have been entirely successful with this consideration. We were keen to avoid school drop off times and bed times, though accept these may differ across different households.

- *Accessible -* We promote the use of AccessAble Accessibility Guides to determine suitable locations for in-person events which has been particularly useful for LAC meetings held in communities. However, this may be considered for Policy Committee Meetings should the Town Hall become inappropriate due to size, accessibility needs etc. AccessAble allowed us to consider available facilities including ramped/sloped access, manual doors, baby changing facilities, breast feeding facilities and seating.

Decision Making

- *Linkages with Children and Families -* Alignment of the proposed Policy Committees to areas within the corporate structure should enable the Governance model to work more effectively, ensuring that meaningful policy is developed and decisions taken. The Children & Families policy committee will have a clear commitment and focus to support pregnancy and parental leave/issues of Sheffield citizens. Additionally, this committee will also be chaired by the Member with statutory responsibilities for Children.

Race

Impact on Members/Officers
- Yes   ▪ No

Impact on Citizens
- Yes   ▪ No

Details of impact

Race is an important consideration for the Modern Committee System, as it may present a range of complexities that we need to understand and plan to mitigate such as language barriers, cultural differences, lack of visible representation and institutional fear. We recognise that the LACs as well as Policy Committees in addition to the wider Council governance will need to take into account demonstrable action to ensure these systems and processes are accessible, inclusive and bias free, both remotely and in person, for the people of Sheffield. Where applicable, we have listed below the ways in which this characteristic has been considered.

The 2011 census told us that there are over 105,000 people who are Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) in the city, this is likely to have increased over the past 10 years. Also 38% of the BAME population live in areas that are amongst the 10% most deprived in the country. This compares with 23% in Sheffield as a whole.

We know the age profile of BAME people in the city according to the 2011 census differs considerably, If we look at primary, secondary, and special school pupils we see that around 35.5% of all primary school pupils are from a Black, Asian and /or Minority Ethnic (BAME) background and 29.1% of pupils in secondary schools but just 7% of over 50's and 6% of over 65s. Also, wards have very different BAME populations from for example 40% of Burngreave residents are BAME but only 4% of west and east Ecclesfield and 3% of Stocksbridge and Upper Don.

Engagement

- *LAC Surveys-* As part of the work of the LACs, we issued surveys to understand our communities more so, which did contain demographic information. One of our learnings from this was that individuals from BAME communities were more likely to engage in a survey by a paper copy than online. In response to low online return rates, we undertook an exercise to establish action that could be taken to attain more parity in responses. Also of note, once the submissions were received, there was very little different between races of what the answers were, just a difference in preference for returning the information to us.

- *Understanding our Communities-* We have made efforts to engage with communities across Sheffield with the understanding that they may well have different perspectives and different needs from the system as well as different requirements for engagement. We will commit to continuing to engage with the public across all racial boundaries, learning as we go with the aim to understand what they feel that the impact of this system may be and any changes that may be required.

- *Understanding the system -* We have a big undertaking ahead of us to ensure that the Modern Committee System is communicable to a variety of audiences which includes audiences of different races with different needs relating to race. We will continue our work in understanding the scope of this exercise and update this document with clear actions once defined.

- *Review of Race Equality Commission findings-* evidence heard by the REC demonstrated that we have work to do to ensure our data is of good quality,

which may effect how we understand our communities. This data issue also outlines how we have not been specific enough in terms of ethnicity. We aim to stop using BAME as a blanket term, and instead cleanse our data to provide more racial nuance and evidence of intersectionality that will in turn provide us with clearer insights and understanding into the ethnic make up of Sheffield.

- *Lack of trust -* There has been a history to acknowledge that has led to a lack of trust in the Council and other institutions in terms of race. We are committed to doing more to gain this trust back and hope that over time, in demonstrating that commitment, we can move forward. As part of this, we commit to doing better monitoring of our data to ensure quality which will also help us understand the responses and actions required.

- *Equal voices -* As seen by engagement with the LACs, people from the more affluent South West of the city – which has a lower percentage of people from a BAME background than other parts of the city – are more likely to engage. The LAC survey results also showed a lower percentage of BAME people responded compared to their percentage of overall demographics in all LAC areas. Through ongoing development of the Engagement strategy, mechanisms may be put in place to ensure all communities and individuals have the opportunity to engage with the democratic processes once more clearly defined.

- *Representation -* Policy committees will be composed of Members to ensure political proportionality. This proportionality could be applied across other demographics, such as race to ensure a more balanced viewpoint. As the current race demographics of Elected Members don't match the demographics of the city, a degree of proportionality may be achieved by ensuring Members representing wards (LAC areas) with a high number of people from a BAME background are involved in all policy committees.

- *Improved Member Monitoring*- In a similar vein with representation, we aim to improve our practices in terms of Member demographic monitoring. With this, we would be able to better understand our communities by working to ensure fair and balance proportionality in terms of visible and non-visible characteristics.

- *Community Plans -* Some but not all BAME communities are much more likely to live in poverty, have poor health, poor educational outcomes, poor housing, and be victims of crime etc. as evidenced within key poverty statistics including [BME statistics on poverty and housing and employment via the Institution of Race Relations](#) and also UK Poverty Statistics held by the [Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#). The LACs will use data available for each area and group of people to inform the plans and actions. This will include engaging with different BAME communities and considering the needs of people of different ethnicities within each area.

- *Technology -* We have taken efforts to understand how people of different races use technology as part of engagement and communication within their communities. Our learning is that while language may be a barrier, as may financial access, communities often use a variety of social media applications and platforms to communicate whether this be with their own devices, family devices or publicly available devices such as those found in libraries and schools. However, the issue may be, instead of access, how the Council generates interests within those online communities in the Modern Committee System.

- *Public Questions -* Where a person wishes to raise a public question but experiences a language barrier, we can also introduce Language Line translator services to ensure that their voice is equally heard. We also accept that asking a question directly, particularly in a face to face setting or on camera can feel intimidating, particularly when the attendees in the meeting might not look like you or share your perspective. In these cases, we also think that hybrid options might help as questions can be asked on behalf of people, you can ask while off camera and the distance may support some confidence. Additionally, this raises another area of work around the importance of stakeholders, visibility and representative community organisations.

- *LAC Meetings in Community Spaces* - It has been important to establish LAC meetings in community spaces so that people can feel engaged in the democratic system from within their neighbourhoods, where there if a degree of familiarity, safety and representation between citizens.

Mechanics of Meetings

- *Language Barriers -* Information on the council website and committee reports are only published in English, with the exception of specific targeted messages which may be translated into different languages which are commonly spoken across Sheffield. The ability for non-English speakers, or those with limited English language skills, to translate or access this information can be hampered by the format of the report and the use of excessive technocratic jargon. This can limit the engagement of different communities. Part of the transition to a new committee system will include the review of the format of papers issued to committees and training for Officers in report writing. As such, there's an opportunity to ensure the format and type of language used in the reports is as accessible as possible. Officers will also be undertaking training on report writing to support keeping things simple and understandable.

- *Virtual meetings -* Virtual meetings held so far, while unable to be decision making meetings, were accessible to anyone who had the required technology and were therefore more likely to exclude people suffering from technological or digital exclusion rather than a particular protected characteristic. As we know that the BAME community as a whole are more likely to have lower household income, it is possible that they were adversely impacted by this engagement method and thus not been able to participate fully. With the rising cost of living crisis it is essential that the Council thinks of creative and inclusive ways in which BAME people who do not have access to technology or the internet are given access to more digital channels. Only when these barriers are broken down will all BAME people be able to engage in future digital engagement events.

Decision Making

- *Hybrid Technology Barriers*- We must consider access to decision making early on in the process to ensure that the right decisions are made. There are risks where barriers to the hybrid technology exists for example, we know statistically, BAME communities experience lower income and therefore may not have the technology required. We understand the need to attain widespread engagement and will pledge to undertake understanding of networks that already exist, that are meaningful to communities and are active. We do not expect everyone to come to us, particularly in the case of race where there may be fear of the institution or distrust, so it is important for us to be proactive and go out to people to enable a two-way conversation.

If we can do this ahead of decision making, we should enable these communities to exercise their influence.

Religion/Belief

Impact on Members/Officers
- Yes
- No

Impact on Citizens
- Yes
- No

Details of impact

The Modern Committee System will have an impact on the people of Sheffield who inevitably have different religious beliefs. However, we do not currently believe that the implementation of this programme has a direct and clear impact on or discriminates against any particular religion/s. That said, consideration to religious beliefs will be given at all stages of this programme and appropriate decisions or actions will be taken if any religion-related risk and/or need are identified until the completion of this programme.

According to the 2011 census 53% of Sheffield people stated in the Census they had a Christian religion, 31% no religion and 8% Muslim. This will be different across the new LACs.

Engagement

- ***Considerate timings of meetings -*** In devising the schedule for council meetings, different religious observances could be considered, as these may limit Elected Members or Officers to attend or support the committee meetings as well as the public being available and able to engage. Examples could be avoiding holding meetings on specific days such as Christmas, Eid-Al-Adha, Hanukkah etc. As well as avoiding times of day that may conflict with prayer.

Mechanics of Meetings

- ***Length of meetings in relation to worship practices -*** additional consideration may need to be given during times of worship. Examples may include instances of fasting over Ramadan that may affect abilities to concentrate, focus and listen for long periods of time. If meetings were to occur on dates featuring such practices, due thought will be given to arrangements to support the meetings being accessible and practical without excluding anyone based on religious needs or practices they are observing.

- ***Reports -*** Reports will be written with cultural sensitivity and awareness to ensure that no parties feel excluded or discriminated against within reports or the intention of the reports.

Decision Making

- ***Co-Optees -*** The views and perspective of people of different religions could be heard through the use of co-optees on committees, representing religion aligned networks.

Sex

Impact on Members/Officers   **Impact on Citizens**
- Yes   - No   - Yes   - No

Details of impact

Sex is an important consideration for the Modern Committee System, as it may present a range of complexities that we need to understand and plan to mitigate such as under representation, engaging in stereotypes and challenging perspective issues. The programme recognises that the LACs as well as Policy Committees in addition to the wider Council governance will need to consider demonstrable action to ensure these systems and processes are inclusive, bias free and safe for the people of Sheffield. Where applicable, we have listed below the ways in which this characteristic has been considered.

Sheffield had a total of 287,391 men and boys in 2017. This was slightly lower than the 290,398 women and girls during the same period. This is similar to the national figures. There is very little difference in terms of numbers between men and women at any age apart from when we look at older people. The difference between the sexes in the 65+ age group is 9,086 more women than men. This may be different across the new LACs.

Also, in 2019, median gross weekly earnings of full-time workers were £572.70 for males, and £485.10 for females. For all males, median annual pay was £27,922 compared with £18,865 for all females, a pay gap of £9,057.

For all males, median annual pay was £27,922, compared with £18,865 for all females; a pay gap of £9,057.

Single female pensioners tend to have a lower income than male pensioners. Other issues which cannot be separated from experiences of financial exclusion and poverty include age, ethnicity, sexuality, disability and domestic abuse etc.

As women are more likely to be impacted by pregnancy, maternity and as carers, the impacts and considerations in these sections will apply more so to them than men, though it is imperative that we also consider trans men and women as part of this conversation.

Engagement

- *Financial Barriers -* we know that women are more likely to have lower household income, it is possible that they were adversely impacted by the remote engagement methods as well as the potential costs of travel to meetings and thus not been able to participate fully.

Mechanics of Meetings

- *Representation -* Policy committees will be composed of Members to ensure political proportionality. This proportionality could be applied across other demographics, such as sex to ensure a more balanced viewpoint.

- *Co-Chairing/Job Share/Part time -* Members can also be supported through the use of co-Chairs, which may allow the additional responsibility of Chairing a committee to be shared to accommodate for family commitments, appointments, caring responsibilities etc. regardless of gender.

- *Meeting times -* Though an assumption, it is believed that women are often the household leads in childcare and domestic commitments, rightly or

wrongly, and this may need to be a consideration in terms of availability and booking meetings times that enable women to attend without putting them at a disadvantage.

- *Monitoring -* We propose that it may be useful to follow the practice of Cooperative Executive and request that citizens sign up to attend Committee Meetings. The benefits of this would be; increased visibility on numbers likely to attend and support in ensuring we've adequately prepared the facilitates, gather anonymised information about attendance so that we can better understand who is engaging in the process and where we may have gaps. In this consideration, this would be particularly useful to establish if we've considered the meeting timings suitable and also if they're demonstrating enough representation so that women feel able to engage.

Decision Making

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Sexual Orientation

Impact on Members/Officers
- Yes   ▪ No

Impact on Citizens
- Yes   ▪ No

Details of impact

Sexual orientation is an important consideration for the Modern Committee System, as it may present a range of complexities that we need to understand and plan to mitigate such as under representation, safety and confidence issues. The programme recognises that the LACs as well as Policy Committees in addition to the wider Council governance will need to take into account demonstrable action to ensure these systems and processes are inclusive, bias free and safe for the people of Sheffield. Where applicable, we have listed below the ways in which this characteristic has been considered.

Although there is no detailed local data, based on national government estimates there are approximately 5 to 7% of people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual - 28,000 to 39,000 LGB people in the city, if the national estimates were applied to Sheffield's population. See the LGBT Community Knowledge Profile. This is likely to be very different across different ages with more younger people identifying as LGB+ than older people. We expect that the Census data for 2021, shortly available in summer 2022 will help us to build a better picture of LGBT+ communities within Sheffield.

Engagement

- *Key messages -* The key principles of engagement which are often implicitly assumed should be very clearly communicated at all engagement events to ensure all participants are comfortable and confident to participate. This will include messages around tolerance, respecting the views of others, using language that is respectful, inclusive and non-discriminatory. It should also be stated that any explicit or implied hate speech or behaviour will not be tolerated.

- *Community Plans -* The LACs will use data available for each area and group of people to inform the plans and actions. This will include engaging with people of different sexual orientations, taking into account their needs within each area. In particular, LGBTQIA+ people are not always out or comfortable being open with everyone about their sexual orientation and numbers of

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LGBTQIA+ people may be smaller in some areas so we will ensure we work with city wide organisations such as the Equality Partnership as well.

Mechanics of Meetings

- *Safe spaces and expectations -* We will strive for an atmosphere of acceptance within all meetings, decision making or otherwise. Any negative behaviours, language or actions may lead to people being removed from meetings.

- *No presumptions -* Ensuring that we avoid making assumptions about people or using language that may make someone feel forced into disclosing their sexuality is a behavioural consideration that will be in place. We will not put anyone in a position where they fear for their safety, feel as if they have to make disclosures in any case but particularly where it is not relevant. Members and Officers will have undertaken EDI training to support this as well as received Committee specific training to support with chairing and facilitation skills.

Transgender

Impact on Members/Officers
- Yes   - No

Impact on Citizens
- Yes   - No

Details of impact

Trans people are an important consideration for the ECTC Programme, as it may present a range of complexities that we need to understand and plan to mitigate such as under representation, sensitivity issues, cultivation of safe spaces and use of transphobic language. The programme recognises that the LACs as well as Policy Committees in addition to the wider Council governance will need to take into account demonstrable action to ensure these systems and processes are inclusive, bias free and safe for the people of Sheffield. Where applicable, we have listed below the ways in which this characteristic has been considered.

Although there is no specific local data, the Gender Identity Research and Education Society estimates that 0.6% of people are Transgender, that's approximately 3000 people in the city if the national estimates were applied to Sheffield.

Engagement

- *Pronouns -* We will endeavour at every opportunity to use the correct pronouns for individuals, once informed or corrected we will strive to use the preferred terms.

- *Key messages -* The key principles of engagement which are often implicitly assumed should be very clearly communicated at all engagement events to ensure all participants are comfortable and confident to participate. This will include messages around tolerance, respecting the views of others, using language that is respectful, inclusive and non-discriminatory. It should also be stated that any explicit or implied hate speech or behaviour will not be tolerated.

- *Community Plans -* The LACs will use data available for each area and group of people to inform the plans and actions. This will include engaging with

people of different gender identities, taking into account their needs within each area. In particular, LGBTQIA+ people are not always out or comfortable being open with everyone about their sexual orientation and numbers of LGBTQIA+ people may be smaller in some areas so we will ensure we work with city wide organisations such as the Equality Partnership as well.

Mechanics of Meetings

- *Safe spaces and expectations -* We will strive for an atmosphere of acceptance within all meetings, decision making or otherwise. Any negative behaviours, language or actions may lead to people being removed from meetings.

- *No presumptions -* Ensuring that we avoid making assumptions about people or using language that may make someone feel forced into disclosing their birth gender is a behavioural consideration that will be in place. We will not put anyone in a position where they fear for their safety, feel as if they have to make disclosures in any case but particularly where it is not relevant.

- *Public Questions -* Where a person wishes to raise a public question but experiences a lack of confidence, fear or feels unsafe, we can also introduce questions can be submitted before the meeting and raised on an individual's behalf to ensure that their voice is equally heard.

Carers

Impact on Members/Officers		**Impact on Citizens**	
▪ Yes	▪ No	▪ Yes	▪ No

Details of impact

Carers are an important consideration for the Modern Committee System, as it may present a range of complexities that we need to understand and plan to mitigate such as barriers in accessing service (financial and time constraints) and under representation. The programme recognises that the LACs as well as Policy Committees in addition to the wider Council governance will need to take into account demonstrable action to make these systems and processes as accessible as possible, both remotely and in person for the people of Sheffield. Where applicable, we have listed below the ways in which this characteristic has been considered.

While Census data provides us with a good indication of the number of carers in Sheffield, it is likely that there are considerably more than the statistics suggest. The Sheffield Carer's Strategy estimates that only around 1 in 4 carers are known to statutory and voluntary organisations.

The 2011 census told us that there are over 57,000 carers in the city about 10% of people in the city of those 4,559 are young people under age 25 and 58% of carers are women. However, identifying the number of carers both locally and nationally can be a challenge. There are many 'hidden carers' who do not identify themselves as such, not viewing their responsibilities as anything separate from the relationship, they have with the person they are caring for.

Carers are also an ever-changing group with an estimated 2.3 million people, nationally, moving in and out of caring situations each year. Therefore, the number of carers will be different every day.

Engagement

- *Member Engagement -* Engagement material should also be communicated to Members and Officers using different channels that they can access at more convenient times. For example, information can be emailed or made available on the Intranet. There is also an inbox which Members and Officers can use to ask questions and receive feedback.

- *Respecting and promoting remote and flexible working -* We will continue to implement and recognise flexible working, which should also assist those with caring responsibilities to engage better. These working practices provide additional capacity and remove the obstacles of travel time.

- *Advocacy-* As part of the Carer role, advocacy is a key part of day to day life. The Carer may want to be involved in the democratic position directly and feed in their opinions and issues however they may also have a responsibility to act on behalf of the person that they care for. We do not have enough information to understand how these scenarios may present differently but are aware that it is a consideration and that there is a responsibility to fairly advocate for Sheffield residents.

- *Individuals out of area-* We also accept that Sheffield may have residents that are from Sheffield but currently reside out of area; for example, may have been detained under the mental health act outside of Sheffield and are in receipt of care etc. For these individuals, there will be significant barriers to engaging in the committee system, however we feel that we have taken proportionate action to clarify how to engage publicly, including on our website, social medias, campaigns and local area committees. We do accept that there may be further action we could take and are keen to understand any feedback provided on this.

- *Individuals in area who do not live in Sheffield-* As part of the carer role, there may be people who work as carers in Sheffield who do not necessarily live here themselves. However, in working here, they spend a significant amount of time in and around Sheffield and may have views, and wish to engage. In these cases, we have provided opportunities to feed in around caring responsibilities that do not have a pre-requisite to be available to attend meetings or live in Sheffield such as public questions, watching the webcasts of meetings etc. We do accept that there may be further action we could take and are keen to understand any feedback provided on this.

Mechanisms of Meetings

- *Remote access -* People with carer commitments may not be able to access council or committee meetings in person, so the use of web casting, access to online reports and opportunity to submit questions prior to meetings is important. This assumes access to suitable technology which may not be the case for all people but does remove the barrier of travel time and cost and the need for respite care.

- *Length of meetings -* The current recommendations include a guillotine clause for committee and council meetings, of 2.5hrs and 3.5hrs respectively. This may help Elected Members or Officers who are carers by limiting the time required to attend or support a meeting in a single sitting.

- ***Urgency -*** Carers may find short notice changes harder to accommodate as there may be less flexibility in their carer cover arrangements. This should be considered in the meeting procedurals, including urgency rules.

- ***Time demands -*** The move to a new committee system will potentially lead to a greater time commitment from Elected Members, not just within the committee meeting, but in preparing for these, reviewing reports etc. This may apply additional pressure on carers, for which they are not compensated for. Elected Members can claim Childcare and Dependant Carers Allowance for specific reasons set out in part 6, schedule 2 of the Constitution. This is limited to ½ day up to 4hrs. As the new committee system is likely to increase the time commitment required from Elected Members, there's an opportunity to review this allowance to ensure it's still suitable and not disadvantaging those fulfilling caring responsibilities.

Decision Making

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Voluntary/Community & Faith Sectors

Impact on Members/Officers
- Yes   - No

Impact on Citizens
- Yes   - No

Details of impact

The voluntary/community and faith sectors (VCF) are important partners for the Council, as they are linked in with citizens that are often less heard, under-represented and harder to reach. It is pivotal that the VCF sector is able to thrive under the new committee system in Sheffield and is able to facilitate integration of different people with different experiences, challenge stereotypes and negative attitudes and create spaces for a variety of people to collaborate to achieve common goals with a foundation of understanding and respect. We recognise that the LACs as well as Policy Committees in addition to the wider Council governance will need to take into account demonstrable action to ensure that the social value of these organisations is recognised continuously and any impact on funding, access, change is assessed to ensure the continued viability of the sector.

Engagement

- ***LAC Community Plans -*** The LACs will use VCF data available for each area and local VCF organisations will inform the plans and actions.

- ***Relationships -*** We recognise that the VCF Sector in Sheffield is uniquely qualified in and practiced in knowing their local communities. It is vital that we maintain strong working relationships with the VCF sector and enable clear mechanisms for them to be involved in LACs at a local level and also influence agendas at a strategic level.

Mechanics for Meetings

- ***Attendance -*** The VCF could be invited or opt to attend Committee meetings in order to ensure that they are actively participating in the system and that they can present the voices of those heard from less-so. We foresee the VCF playing a great role in working with LACs and helping us to establish which are city-wide issues or which may have the largest implications even if it is for a small minority of people.

- ***Links between LACs and Policy Committees -*** work is being undertaken to establish working links to ensure clarity and effective communication.

Decision Making

- *Ward Pots -* Ward pots in each area will increase significantly and each of the 7 LACs will have £100k funding for them to spend in line with local community plan. Areas will also have money allocated in relation to deprivation. The LACs are able to spend this money differently across Sheffield depending upon what is highlighted in their boundaries as local concerns/actions. As such, the prioritisation of these issues could help to ensure different equality interests benefit and provide a bespoke plan for specific cohorts and support a better overall outcome for the LAC areas.

- *Monitoring of Ward Pots-* We will also undertake rigorous monitoring of ward pot proposals and expenditure including who receives it, what is it spent on and how it benefits equalities etc. We will monitor this proportionately, but aim to establish clear improvements/benefits and good outcomes for residents of different characteristics without a detriment to any particular group.

Cohesion

Impact on Members/Officers
- Yes - No

Impact on Citizens
- Yes - No

Details of impact

Cohesion and the Cohesion strategy are important considerations for the Modern Committee System as it may present a range of complexities that we need to understand and plan to mitigate such as supporting diversity across Sheffield, facilitating integration of different people with different experiences, challenging stereotypes and negative attitudes and create spaces for a variety of people to collaborate to achieve common goals with a foundation of understanding and respect. The programme recognises that the LACs as well as Policy Committees in addition to the wider Council governance will need to take into account demonstrable action to make these systems and processes as accessible as possible, both remotely and in person for our the people of Sheffield. Where applicable, we have listed below the ways in which this characteristic has been considered.

Engagement

- *Accessibility -* As outlined in the Race section of this EIA, we intend to do further work to ensure that our reports and published information online and otherwise improves in accessibility to ensure that language needs are met as well as being generally understandable to the citizens of Sheffield.

- *Cross-Characteristic Collaboration*- We understand that cohesion cannot simple be about one characteristic or way of working, but a holistic behavioural and cultural approach to engagement and partnerships. We endeavour to create spaces for discussion and engagement through our LACs and Committee System where people can share ideas without exclusion and share these with people from different background, histories, areas and perspectives; regardless of being older/young, richer/poorer etc. In our committee meetings, everyone is considered equal with equally valid perspectives, even where there are disagreements and differences. We aim to see this in practice and learn as we go to ensure that we have the right enablers in place to support this.

- **Promotion to improve parity**- much like our learning from the LAC surveys, we aim to monitor engagement in our committee system and identify any gaps where a particular cohort may not be engaging or participating. If we do this, we can start to evaluate alternative methods of engagement or bespoke enablers for participation to improve parity and encourage further cohesion.

Mechanics for Meetings

- *Agenda Management-* There may be scope as part of defining our ways of working in the Committee meetings to allocate time for agenda items to enable parity in interests/perspectives, particularly where an item has been identified as potentially controversial or impactful. We are aiming to keep agendas limited to ensure that this supports discussion and decision making with enough time on the items for a considered and robust decision, and as part of this, we would encourage people with different points of view to have been involved in discussions before and during these opportunities.

- *Tone and Behaviours*- The proposed structure has now been to Governance Committee and published publicly for reference, however, the 'how' is still in development and design phase. As part of this, we foresee work on changing cultures, behaviours and working practices to enable engagement and cohesion. Ton and behaviours within the meetings themselves will be part of this scene setting, environment setting and securing a feeling of safety in terms of physicality and also mentally. To support this, we aim to agree behavioural principles for the committee meetings that will support mutual understanding, trust, enable cohesion and ensure voices are given equal weighting.

- *Chairing*- The role of the chair and/or vice chairs and/or co-chairs will be to facilitate the discussions in the committee meetings, and a large part of this will be to ensure that adequate time and consideration is given to different perspectives and views, enabling parties to inputs where they chose to. As well as this, they will also be responsible for upholding the behavioural principles.

- *Funding Allocation*- In both LACs and Policy Committees, agenda items may cover community-based issues (e.g. decisions about how to allocate funding) to city-wide action and it is important at any level, local or city-wide that we consider equalities when agreeing to allocate funding. In order to appraise if there is an impact on equalities or protected characteristics specifically, consideration should be taken prior to the decision being made so that the decision can be informed and educated. There are many ways of ensuring due diligence is taken, including linking in with the City of Sanctuary, proactive engagement with people from different cultures living/working/studying in Sheffield, reviewing the Cohesion Strategy, discussing proposals with the Equality Partnership and many more. This should be built into action plans for committees to ensure a robust approach.

- *Acknowledging dissent*- part of the decision-making process is to engage with the people of Sheffield to shape proposals and seek feedback on proposals. We understand and acknowledge that part of this process is to be open to receiving feedback that we as Members, officers and fellow members of the public may not necessarily like or agree with. In cases where there is a clear issue such as hate speech or unlawful views; these will not be tolerated. However, where lawful, this is simply part of the process. We aim to, as a minimum, acknowledge those views, record the dissent presented and where clear, consider the root of the concern as part of decision making where it may be decided to investigate further. We also need to consider that decisions, as

informed and as appropriately as possible, may not please all parties. In these cases, we must facilitate a system whereby disagreements in opinion can safely and pragmatically co-exist with each other and decisions taken.

Decision Making
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Partners

Impact on Members/Officers
- <mark>Yes</mark>   ▪ No

Impact on Citizens
- <mark>Yes</mark>   ▪ No

Details of impact

Shaping, seeking feedback on and embedding the Committee system has been a partnership approach so far and we aim to continue to work in partnership with those who have a vested interest, are impacted by or are simply curious about the new system.

We have engaged with other local authorities with committee systems including but not limited to; Hartlepool, Wirral, Cheshire East, Kingston, Reading, Bright & Hove and Newark & Sherwood to understand how they went about implementing a committee system. We received, via webcast and written submissions, lessons learned, tips, suggestions in structures, ways of working and more. All of which was considered throughout the design phase but most notably and publicly within the two Governance Committee Inquiry Sessions 07th and 08th December 2021. https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=632&MId=8147&Ver=4

We also appreciate that there may be an impact on fellow authorities and institutions that occupy similar space as SCC such as NHS Sheffield, universities, schools, police, big employers, developers, housing providers and more. We are keen to better understand these links where they may not currently be clear. However we have already maintained links that were previously in place within the Cabinet model for example:
- Police- partnership working through crime and disorder scrutiny
- NHS- Sheffield Health and Wellbeing Board, Joint Commissioning Committee SCC & NHS CCG, South Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Nottingham Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Smaller employers/organisations and businesses can also be involved in the committee system by participating at a local level in the LACs if appropriate. Recent engagement sessions organised through the LACs saw business owners attend to raise their views about green proposals to remove on street parking and replace with bus lanes. This was a good opportunity to discuss impacts on small businesses and raise any concerns. Where concerns were raised, these were able to be documented, signposted to petitions and public questions as well as referred to the appropriate Transitional Committee, which we will carry through as process to the new Policy Committees.

Additionally, when allocating Councillors to partnership boards such as the Sheffield Health and Wellbeing Board, we could work to provide clarity on a way of allocating that considers equality and representation on the board itself and being careful not to send the same few Councillors each time but provide a variety of perspectives to get involved. We may need to consult with those bodies directly to investigate how this could be done.

We have more work to do with ensuring a robust approach to partnership working in terms of equality issues, boards being representative and driving forward cultural change; and this cannot all happen solely as a result of the committee system. We acknowledge a larger scale cultural change in the Council needs to happen so that we can drive wider change. We will be working with the Equality Partnership Board to support our own learning and seek advice.

Poverty/Financial Inclusion

Impact on Members/Officers
- Yes   ▪ No

Impact on Citizens
- Yes   ▪ No

Details of impact

As alluded to throughout this document, particularly as Sheffield emerges from the pandemic, poverty and financial inclusion are core factors and must be considered in terms of ways of working for the committee system for both staff and citizens.

Around 1 in 5 Sheffield people live in poverty at any one time, almost a third of all children under 10 in Sheffield, currently living in poverty. Almost two thirds of the financial impact of the Government's welfare reforms will be felt by families with children. There are very different rates of poverty in different Wards of the city.

Sheffield's Child Poverty report in 2017 shows the proportion of children living in families in receipt of out of work benefits, or in receipt of tax credits where their reported income is less than 60% of UK median, has increased.

In line with other Core Cities and national trends, the most up-to-date data shows 31.3% (35,820) children are living in poverty in Sheffield after housing costs (AHC). However, the figure masks the wide and well-documented variation between different parts of Sheffield. In Ecclesall ward, 7.8% (AHC) of children were living in poverty, whilst in Burngreave the figure was much higher at 51.19% and Central and Firth Park at 49% in poverty.

In 2017, 17 of the Sheffield's 28 wards had more than 20% of children living in relative poverty (AHC). There are clearly multiple causes of child poverty; however, it is likely that national welfare reforms are a significant driver of changes seen.

Joseph Roundtree Foundation (JRF) research (Monitoring poverty and social exclusion 2016 report) notes 'While overall levels of poverty have remained fairly static over the last 25 years, risks for particular groups have changed. Income poverty among pensioners fell from 40% to 13%, while child poverty rates remain high at 29%, and poverty among working-age adults without dependent children has risen from 14% to around 20%. The number of people in poverty in a working family is 55%. Four-fifths of the adults in these families are themselves working, some 3.8 million workers. Those adults that are not working are predominantly looking after children.

Since then, welfare changes and Universal Credit (UC) is having significant implications for communities in Sheffield, particularly people with more complex lives or who have vulnerabilities that make managing the system harder. This is more likely to include people from BAMER communities, care leavers, people

experiencing domestic abuse, tenants in private-rented accommodation, disabled people or health conditions, and carers.

Engagement

- *LAC Community Plans* **-** The LACs will use data available for each area and group of people to inform the plans and actions. This will include engaging with people on different incomes and considering their needs. Areas may have a different profile relating to poverty and deprivation and this will inform plans and decision making and resource available. We will ensure however that even if there are a small number of people impacted, we will consider the impact on these groups. We will also work with city wide advice agencies

- *Access* – Remote delivery and digital access have a big barrier with potential financial exclusion as engaging remotely relies on people having access and money for: wifi, kit such as laptops, tablets, phones, cameras/webcams, microphones etc. However, face to face meetings also have risks attached with financial exclusion including travel costs for attendees, parking costs where applicable, time out of work to participate etc. To mitigate against some of these concerns, the public questions function can enable people to engage before the meetings themselves to raise points at a time that suits them and avoid taking time from work; they can then watch back the meeting on webcast. The kit and technology access issue is more concerning, particularly as so much has been remote delivery during the pandemic, that we have seen those with lower incomes significantly worse off as a result. Further consideration is required here to ensure that there are multiple options for participation that don't' put people at a financial loss.

- *Face to Face Decision Making*- as decision making still legally must be done in face-to-face meetings and not remotely, this limits those unable to afford travel or the opportunity to attend with the ability to influence decision making. There is the opportunity to influence beforehand, which should be considered as the key opportunity to influence, engage and put forward suggestions, ideas and concerns. However, we are aware of the limitations of face-to-face meetings.

- *Availability*- those in poverty are more likely to have multiple jobs due to shift work, zero hours contracts, low pay etc. All of which would compromise time and availability to participate, potentially during traditional hours. We have considered this as part of the system set up, with LACs taking place in the evenings and Policy Committee meetings to take place on weekday mornings. We hope that this provides enough coverage for people to attend at a local level and/or a city-wide level where able. We hope to review this at the 6 month review point in terms of volume of engagement and any unintentional barriers that we may have set in place.

Mechanics of Meetings

- *Agenda Management*- There may be scope as part of defining our ways of working in the Committee meetings to allocate time for agenda items to enable parity in interests/perspectives, particularly where an item has been identified as potentially controversial or impactful. We are aiming to keep agendas limited to ensure that this supports discussion and decision making with enough time on the items for a considered and robust decision, and as part of this, we would encourage people with different points of view to have been involved in discussions before and during these opportunities.

- ***Financial Barriers -*** we know that women are more likely to have lower household income, it is possible that they were adversely impacted by the remote engagement methods as well as the potential costs of travel to meetings and thus not been able to participate fully.

- ***Lack of trust-*** We understand that people from poorer areas in Sheffield are likely to have worse outcomes in terms of health, employment, education, income, crime etc. and as a result may experience less means to influence as demonstrated by symptoms caused by poverty including low democratic turnout, low numbers of representative decision-maker role models, low trust in institutions etc. There has been a history to acknowledge that has led to a lack of trust in the Council and other institutions in terms of ability to influence and a lack of flexibly to make the system more accessible. We are committed to doing more to gain this trust back and hope that over time, in demonstrating that commitment, we can move forward. As part of this, we commit to doing better monitoring of our data to ensure quality which will also help us understand the responses and actions required. We also will seek feedback on terminology, papers etc to ensure we are appropriately communicating and engaging. It is important to note that the committee system cannot solely resolve this paradox, however, we can set in place enablers to remove barriers to decision making that may have previously been in place.

- ***Feedback not reliant upon attendance-*** Questions from the public can be submitted prior to a committee. As no questions can be raised on the day of the committee, this does not exclude people who are unable to attend in person from submitting a question and therefore removes barriers for those unable to attend. We will also commit to communication channels being available to seek feedback and support our learning of how we can do things better.

Armed Forces

Impact on Members/Officers
- Yes   - No

Impact on Citizens
- Yes   - No

Details of impact

The implementation of the Modern Committee system will inevitably impact on people in the armed forces and/or their friends and families, however we expect this impact to be minimal. Therefore due consideration will be given to understand and mitigate issues that they and their families may face and ensure that their voices are heard. The programme recognises that the LACs as well as Policy Committees in addition to the wider Council governance will need to consider demonstrable action to make these systems and processes as accessible as possible, both remotely and in person. Where applicable, we have listed below the ways in which this characteristic has been considered.

Engagement

- ***LAC Community Plans -*** The LACs will use data available for each area and group of people to inform the plans and actions. This will include engaging with people who are serving, have served or who are families of those serving in the armed forces. Given numbers in each area may differ and be low we will work with city wide and national organisations on these issues as we consider their needs. We will work to the Community Covenant we have signed up to.

- *Individuals out of area*- We also accept that Sheffield may have residents that are from Sheffield but currently reside out of area; for example, individuals may be stationed abroad as part of their role. For these individuals, there will be significant barriers to engaging in the committee system, however we feel that we have taken proportionate action to clarify how to engage publicly, including on our website, social medias, campaigns and local area committees. We do accept that there may be further action we could take and are keen to understand any feedback provided on this.

- *Representative bodies-* As part of developing the forward engagement plan, we could seek to engage with bodies who represent those in the armed forces such as RBLI as another route through to ensuring we provide knowledge and opportunities to those serving. This would rely upon organisation agreement to facilitate this communication but could provide benefits in partnership working as well as ensuring that the armed forces, their friends and families access to the information available.

Mechanics of Meetings

- *Length of meetings-* The current recommendations include a guillotine clause for committee and council meetings, of 2.5hrs and 3.5hrs respectively. This may help Elected Members or Officers who have are serving by limiting the time required to attend or support a meeting in a single sitting, particularly if web access is scarce. However;

- *Hybrid technology-* could also enable those serving to access the democratic process and meetings are available to be watched at a date and time that suits the viewer.

- *Public Questions*- Armed Forces individuals can also submit public questions and not have to worry about being available to attend the meeting as these can be asked on behalf of the submitter.

Decision Making

-

Other

- Yes   - No   *Please specify*

  N/A

  Impact
  - Positive   - Neutral   - Negative

  Level
  - None   - Low   - Medium   - High

  Details of impact

  N/A at this time. If, as we work through the embedding of the proposed structure, we identify any further considerations, we will immediately mobilise and appraise requirements with appropriate actions.

Furthermore, we are working to establish an Equalities Sub-Group that will own this EIA as a living document and commit to reviewing the system, including providing advice and guidance, actionable recommendations and holding the committees to account for consideration of EDI.

Summary of overall impact

Summary of overall impact

Summary of evidence

Changes made as a result of the EIA

Action Plan and Supporting Evidence

What actions will you take, please include an Action Plan including timescales

Action plan embedded.

This action plan is subject to review and feedback to support prioritising activity.

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mmittee%20System%

Supporting Evidence (Please detail all your evidence used to support the EIA)

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Appendix 4

- Census Data- https://www.ons.gov.uk/census
- Big City Conversation- https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/s43893/Appendix%204%20-%20Big%20City%20Conversation%20-%20summary.pdf
- Governance Committee Inquiry Session 1 (7th December 2021) - https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=632&MId=8147&Ver=4
- Governance Committee Inquiry Session 2 (8th December 2021)- https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=632&MId=8148&Ver=4
- Desktop research featured within the evidence pack submitted to Governance Committee 30th November 2021- https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=632&MId=8062&Ver=4
- LAC Survey- Results Summary Paper

Detail any changes made as a result of the EIA

Changes made as a result of this EIA have been outlined throughout this document. We have also embedded change as we have progressed through the design process, taking learning from the LACs and the Transitional Committees.

Further actions for change have been documented as part of the action plan to be owned moving forward by the Equality Sub-Group.

Following mitigation is there still significant risk of impact on a protected characteristic. ▪ Yes ▪ No

If yes, the EIA will need corporate escalation? Please explain below

N/A at this time

Sign Off

EIAs must be agreed and signed off by the equality lead in your Portfolio or corporately. Has this been signed off?

▪ Yes   ▪ No

Date agreed   01/03/2022

Appendix 4

Review Date	0109/2022

DRAFT