Governance Committee

Thursday 12 October 2023 at 10.00 am

Town Hall, Sheffield, S1 2HH

The Press and Public are Welcome to Attend

Membership

Councillor Fran Belbin
Councillor Sue Alston
Councillor Nighat Basharat
Councillor Simon Clement-Jones
Councillor Craig Gamble Pugh
Councillor Mike Levery
Councillor Alison Norris
Councillor Joe Otten
Councillor Minesh Parekh
Councillor Sioned-Mair Richards
Councillor Paul Turpin

Sheffield
City Council

PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE MEETING

The Governance Committee is leading on work to transition to a committee system of governance from May 2022. It is a politically proportionate Committee which will be tasked with oversight of the transitional work and will approve the recommendations to be made to Full Council.

The Committee will be outward facing. The Council will not be working in isolation on this project but will seek input from outside the organisation, ensuring citizens are engaged and are provided with opportunities to help shape this programme of work The Council will also be engaging the professional support of agencies such as the Local Government Association, the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and Monitoring Officers from other local authorities which have recently transitioned or are about to transition to a Committee system. This will ensure the Council is supported through this period and learns from best practice to ensure that the system implemented in Sheffield responds to the needs of our City.

A copy of the agenda and reports is available on the Council's website at www.sheffield.gov.uk . You may not be allowed to see some reports because they contain confidential information. These items are usually marked * on the agenda.

Members of the public have the right to ask questions or submit petitions to Governance Committee meetings and recording is allowed under the direction of the Chair. Please see the website or contact Democratic Services for further information regarding public questions and petitions and details of the Council's protocol on audio/visual recording and photography at council meetings.

PLEASE NOTE: Meetings of the Governance Committee have to be held as physical meetings. If you would like to attend the meeting, you must register to attend by emailing committee@sheffield.gov.uk at least 2 clear days in advance of the date of the meeting. This is necessary to facilitate the management of attendance at the meeting to maintain social distancing. In order to ensure safe access and to protect all attendees, you will be asked to wear a face covering (unless you have an exemption) at all times when moving about within the venue.

It is also recommended that you undertake a Covid-19 Rapid Lateral Flow Test within two days of the meeting. You can order tests online to be delivered to your home address, or you can collect tests from a local pharmacy. Further details of these tests and how to obtain them can be accessed here - Order coronavirus (COVID-19) rapid lateral flow tests - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). We are unable to guarantee entrance to observers, as priority will be given to registered speakers. Alternatively, you can observe the meeting remotely by clicking on the 'view the webcast' link provided on the meeting page of the website.

If you require any further information please contact Jay Bell email jay.bell@sheffield.gov.uk.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE AGENDA
12 OCTOBER 2023

Order of Business

1. **Welcome and Housekeeping Arrangements**

2. **Apologies for Absence**

3. **Exclusion of Public and Press**
   To identify items where resolutions may be moved to exclude the press and public.

4. **Declarations of Interest**   (Pages 5 - 8)
   Members to declare any interests they have in the business to be considered at the meeting.

5. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**   (Pages 9 - 20)
   To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 July 2023

6. **Public Questions and Petitions**
   To receive any questions or petitions from members of the public.

7. **Interim report of review of Council's approach to public questions**   (Pages 21 - 38)
   Report of the Head of Policy and Partnerships

8. **NHS Governance Proposal**   (Pages 39 - 46)
   Report of the Director of Public Health

9. **Member Development Working Group**
   Verbal update from the Head of Democratic and Member Services

10. **Governance Review Implementation Plan (GRIP) Update**   (Pages 47 - 54)
    Report of the Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement

11. **Workplan**   (Pages 55 - 68)
    Report of the Head of Policy and Partnerships

12. **Date of Next Meeting**
    The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 22 November 2023

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ADVICE TO MEMBERS ON DECLARING INTERESTS AT MEETINGS

If you are present at a meeting of the Council, of its Policy Committees, or of any committee, sub-committee, joint committee, or joint sub-committee of the authority, and you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest** (DPI) relating to any business that will be considered at the meeting, you must <u>not</u>:

- participate in any discussion of the business at the meeting, or if you become aware of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the meeting, participate further in any discussion of the business, or
- participate in any vote or further vote taken on the matter at the meeting.

These prohibitions apply to any form of participation, including speaking as a member of the public.

You **must**:

- leave the room (in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct)
- make a verbal declaration of the existence and nature of any DPI at any meeting at which you are present at which an item of business which affects or relates to the subject matter of that interest is under consideration, at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent.
- declare it to the meeting and notify the Council's Monitoring Officer within 28 days, if the DPI is not already registered.

If you have any of the following pecuniary interests, they are your **disclosable pecuniary interests** under the new national rules. You have a pecuniary interest if you, or your spouse or civil partner, have a pecuniary interest.

- Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain, which you, or your spouse or civil partner undertakes.

- Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from your council or authority) made or provided within the relevant period* in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

  *The relevant period is the 12 months ending on the day when you tell the Monitoring Officer about your disclosable pecuniary interests.

- Any contract which is made between you, or your spouse or your civil partner (or a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest) and your council or authority –

  - under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and
  - which has not been fully discharged.

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- Any beneficial interest in land which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, have and which is within the area of your council or authority.

- Any licence (alone or jointly with others) which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, holds to occupy land in the area of your council or authority for a month or longer.

- Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) –
  - the landlord is your council or authority; and
  - the tenant is a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest.

- Any beneficial interest which you, or your spouse or your civil partner has in securities of a body where -

  (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of your council or authority; and

  (b) either -
    - the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or
    - if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

If you attend a meeting at which any item of business is to be considered and you are aware that you have a **personal interest** in the matter which does not amount to a DPI, you must make verbal declaration of the existence and nature of that interest at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent. You should leave the room if your continued presence is incompatible with the 7 Principles of Public Life (selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty; and leadership).

You have a personal interest where –

- a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial standing (including interests in land and easements over land) of you or a member of your family or a person or an organisation with whom you have a close association to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the Council Tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward or electoral area for which you have been elected or otherwise of the Authority's administrative area, or

- it relates to or is likely to affect any of the interests that are defined as DPIs but are in respect of a member of your family (other than a partner) or a person with whom you have a close association.

Guidance on declarations of interest, incorporating regulations published by the Government in relation to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, has been circulated to you previously.

You should identify any potential interest you may have relating to business to be considered at the meeting. This will help you and anyone that you ask for advice to fully consider all the circumstances before deciding what action you should take.

In certain circumstances the Council may grant a **dispensation** to permit a Member to take part in the business of the Authority even if the member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest relating to that business.

To obtain a dispensation, you must write to the Monitoring Officer at least 48 hours before the meeting in question, explaining why a dispensation is sought and desirable*,* and specifying the period of time for which it is sought. The Monitoring Officer may consult with the Independent Person or the Council's Standards Committee in relation to a request for dispensation.

Further advice can be obtained from David Hollis, General Counsel by emailing david.hollis@sheffield.gov.uk.

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

Governance Committee

Meeting held 20 July 2023

PRESENT: Councillors Fran Belbin (Chair), Sue Alston (Deputy Chair),
Simon Clement-Jones, Craig Gamble Pugh, Mike Levery, Alison Norris,
Joe Otten, Minesh Parekh, Sioned-Mair Richards, Paul Turpin and
Ruth Milsom (Substitute Member)

1.   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1   An apology for absence were received from Councillor Nighat Basharat.

2.   EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

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

3.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

4.   MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1   RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 6 April 2023 were agreed
as an accurate record.

5.   PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1   The Committee received questions from a member of the public, prior to the
meeting.

5.2   Ruth Hubbard

1. What input, if any, has this committee had into the preparation of the Annual
Governance Statement?

The Chair (Councillor Fran Belbin) explained that each committees remit is
specifically defined by the Council's constitution. The Annual Governance
Statement was part of the Council's statutory audit regime so the
responsibility for approving it quite properly sits with its Audit and Standards
Committee.

2. What general and specific issues arising from Lowcock has the committee

identified (or had referred to it) that it needs to take forward as part of its work. I'm quite surprised to see no Report about this for the Cttee and its work given the stated commitment to learning the lessons and the essential governance narrative of Lowcock (despite the weakness of the recommendations in this respect).

> The Chair stated that as agreed at their meeting on 19 June 2023, primary responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the actions agreed in response to the Lowcock report sits with the Strategy and Resources Committee. As that paper sets out: "the Council also has commitments from the LGA peer challenge report, Committee system review and other reports to monitor. Monitoring arrangements will look at these alongside the Inquiry recommendations to ensure actions focused on similar themes are considered together. To do this, progress will be monitored by the [Council's internal] Performance and Delivery Board and Claire Taylor, Chief Operating Officer. Further accountability will be ensured through monitoring by the Council's internal audit function. As included in the EGM motion on 10 May, 'Strategy and Resources Policy Committee; Audit and Standards Committee, Governance Committee and other committees as appropriate will be used as vehicles to drive this process in an open and transparent way'. Strategy and Resources Committee will receive a report against progress on these actions, and those for other recent reports, during winter 2023 and summer 2024."

> As part of this process, it may be appropriate for specific issues to be considered by the Governance Committee during the course of the year. The committee's work programme is an evolving document and can be altered or added to during the course of the year, as required.

3. I've mentioned this before but i'd like to make sure it's placed on public record that the Governance Review entirely ignored the resolution by full council that the Review should focus on assessing its working against the governance principles (such as they are). No one seems concerned by this at all. There was some very early work done on this in June '22 but that then came to a hard stop. The failure of the Review in this respect (as well as in other respects such as any meaningful public engagement) means that the committee has continued on a path where its focus is insular and technical (and I assume also plays to some party political purposes). The limited focus of the work so far was acknowledged recently in the Report at Strategy & Resources Policy Committee. There are lots of implications to this avoidance of discussion, focus and operationalisation (in the constitution) of anything that might be meaningful. There is a large gap between stated governance principles and their embedding and demonstration in the constitution. This is your regular reminder that the reason governance changed has come about is solely because of the sustained work of citizens and communities. But it also means the council is also way out of step with CiPFA/SOLACE framework and approach, which does have statutory force. Again, no one seems particularly bothered.

In respect of this meeting...

a) the necessarily very limited Governance Review implementation Plan is

unlinked to any clear aims, objectives and outcomes (nor any way of measuring these). In this respect it's not really an action plan, just activity.
b) I'm slightly alarmed that in the workplan it appears draft performance measures are to be brought forward for August's meeting. However, as none of the groundwork for this has been done - the committee has spent two years making a technical change but avoiding (and I think refusing) any discussion of meaning in its work and what you are trying to do (including in relation to principles) that I fail to see how this timescale is in any way workable given that developing meaningful performance measures requires a huge amount of thinking about focus, purpose and objectives.

Would the committee like to comment?

> The Chair explained that the aim of the Six Month Review of Governance was to undertake an 'early look' at how the committee system is working, picking up and addressing issues before they become more entrenched. It was not meant to be a wholesale assessment of the system but sought to draw on initial experiences and learn from good practice. The Governance Review Implementation Plan (GRIP) sets out some of the improvements we need to make. It isn't strategic and is activity-based but will help to deliver the issues identified in the Six Month Review.

> The draft performance measures item is scheduled for next formal meeting so that Governance Committee Members can have an initial conversation about the task and hopefully, to kick off the work. This is more about managing Member and officer capacity over the year alongside the other items in the workplan as we have a busy agenda and can't do it all at once. We have not pre-formed ideas about how we develop the performance measures for the Committee System but will undoubtedly want to use the Design Principles and others such as the CIPFA/SOLACE framework as the foundations. We'll also want to apply those principles in how we develop the performance measures and would welcome ideas from stakeholders and independent expertise and also considering how to connect this to a wider performance framework. The Chair mentioned she was personally committed to much greater public engagement.

4. Where is the Involve final Report? Those stakeholders who contributed were promised a look at the final draft and opportunity to comment, in Jan 2021 initially. I and others have pursued this since then. The last time I asked about it was in October 2022 and at that point we were promised the report within two weeks as was the Committee as I recall. I'm at a loss about what to ask about this anymore - the passing of time would seem to make it less and less relevant but this was tens of thousands of public money, the freely given time of stakeholders who were promised sight of the final draft 18months ago ......

> The Chair recognised previously that the Committee did not really have capacity last year to make the most of the opportunity to work with Involve and we are very conscious in trying to make full use of the expertise they have in driving improvement in how we better involve the people of

Sheffield in the issues that matter to them and the decisions that the Council makes. It was a key part of what Members want the Council to achieve in the year ahead, is part of the Governance Committee's workplan, and we have now restarted the work with Involve which will include publishing the full report with direct recommendations to the Council.

Ruth Hubbard had asked if a courtesy letter could be sent to those stakeholders.

The Chair was happy for a courtesy letter to be sent.

6. GOVERNANCE REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (GRIP) UPDATE

6.1 The Committee received a report of the Director of Policy & Democratic Engagement. The Governance Review Implementation Plan (GRIP) addressed issues arising from the six-month Governance Review which was presented to Full Council in May 2023 as part of the Annual General Meeting. The majority of the actions were for officers to undertake over the coming year and were predominantly practical actions to support the continuous improvement of the Council's governance. The Governance Committee will receive regular updates on progress over the coming year. This was the first update for the Committee on initial progress.

6.2 The Head of Policy and Partnerships, Laurie Brennan, mentioned that the GRIP would be appended to each formal committee meeting agenda, so that Members had sight of the progress of the actions highlighted in the plan.

6.3 Members of the Committee asked questions and made comments and the key points to note were: -

6.4 A Member of the Committee mentioned they would be happy for the plan to remain in its current table format for the remainder of the year, as it was clear and gave Members sight of the progress against these actions.

6.5 A Member of the Committee referred to 4.1 of the GRIP, they stated that more work needed to be done on this which linked to policy committee remits which was a function to be explored further, as part of the Governance Committee's work plan. The Member believed that some work had already begun outside of this Committee on this, therefore, this should be highlighted within the plan.

The Head of Policy and Partnerships stated that this work relating to policy committee remits had began an the intention was to feed that information back into this Committee at a later stage.

6.6 A Member of the Committee believed there was a column missing on the GRIP which represented Member and public engagement.

The Head of Policy and Partnerships mentioned that officers would carry

out actions in an open and transparent way where necessary.

6.7   A Member of the Committee mentioned timeliness of Members receiving reports before a meeting. He stated how it made better discussion in meetings when receiving reports in a timely manner. Therefore, wished that report deadlines be embedded into the GRIP.

The Head of Policy and Partnerships mentioned that officers had already began to discuss this issue. He asked if Members would welcome a report relating to 'report deadlines' at the next formal meeting of the Governance Committee.

6.8   The Chair referred to the action at 4.2 of the plan. She added that a report was to be taken to the next meeting of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee therefore this action had already progressed.

6.9   A Member of the Committee raised her struggles as a working Member to attend all the briefings in her diary. She previously asked that online sessions to be recorded for later viewing, although the suggestion was rejected.

The Head of Policy and Partnerships stated that this topic could be explored further as part of that item in the GRIP. He also stated that he would check with the Council's legal service as to whether there were any legal implications with recording meetings.

The Interim General Council (David Hollis) explained that this topic had been raised with him recently and that he was looking into this issue further. He added that there were other factors to consider, such as the Council's retention policy and whether then the recordings would be subject to Freedom of Information requests.

6.10   **RESOLVED:** That the Committee notes the progress against actions in the Governance Review Implementation Plan.

7.   MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

7.1   The Committee received a report of the Director of Policy & Democratic Engagement. The Head of Democratic and Member Services, Jason Dietsch presented the report to the Committee. He explained that the report was divided into 4 sections and Committee were being asked the following: -

1. Provide any comments on the existing Member Development Strategy 2021-25 and particularly any changes of emphasis or priority in the light of the implementation of the committee system and recent pieces of work, including the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review, the Race Equality Commission and the Street Tree Inquiry report.

2. Formally re-establish the Member Development Working Group, noting the proposed membership of the Group and to consider the draft terms of reference for the group and to request that the Group works on a programme of learning and

development for Members, for the forthcoming year and reports back to Governance Committee.

3. Discuss and suggest any priorities for the 2023/24 Member Development Programme and areas which might be categorised as mandatory learning and development for elected members to complete.

4. Ask the Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement to produce new role profiles and to work with the Member Development Working Group on the profiles which will then be submitted to the Governance Committee for its consideration.

7.2   Members of the Committee asked questions and made comments and the key points to note were: -

7.3   A Member of the Committee mentioned there was an officer previously that had responsibility, along with a budget to sorely oversee Member development. She wondered whether all the information gathered by this officer was retained and if it would be useful to get their views on this rather than starting again. She raised the importance that Member development be Member-led and also suggested that there be officer training parallel to Member development, focussing on the working relationships between Members and officers. The Member also wished to see 'conflict resolution' included in the strategy as Members often had challenging interactions with members of the public in meetings outside of the Town Hall.

> The Head of Democratic and Member Services confirmed there was previously an officer that had oversight of Member development and that the information was retained within the Council. With the re-structure to Democratic Services, to support the new Committee System, provision had been put in place for an officer to again oversee Member development although he appreciated it was not to the capacity of the previous officer mentioned. He agreed that it was important for Member development to be Member-led and believed this would come through the working group. He mentioned there was officer training recently due to the transition to the new Committee System but agreed with the point relating to more training needed to be done around Member and officer working relationships.

7.4   A Member of the Committee referred to the programme for 2023/24 which set out the most recent and planned activity in the member development programme. She referred to the 'Communications Team Workings' for Chairs, Deputy Chairs and Spokespersons, and stated that as a Member currently in one of those roles she welcomed that training be provided earlier in the year. The Member also mentioned that a policy library would be useful for Members, especially new Members and members of the public being able to see what policies each portfolios were working towards.

> The Head of Democratic and Member Services noted the point made regarding 'Communication Team Workings' and stated he would take away the point relating to a policy library.

> The Director of Policy & Democratic Engagement explained that the

'Communication Team Workings' was part of his remit and agreed to look at bringing this session forward.

7.5   A Member of the Committee referred to the mention of the Race Equality Commission in the report. He believed that following the commission, the Council had agreed to be anti-racist, as recommended by the commission although was unaware of how this was progressing. He stated that he had been informed that conversations were happening at an officer level but had not received anything as a Member. Therefore, as part of the Member Development working group, this needed to be captured and ensure the Council was delivering as it agreed.

The Head of Democratic and Member Services stated that he would work with Equalities officers within the Council on this piece of work and ensure it was fed not the working group.

The Director of Policy & Democratic Engagement mentioned there was a report to be taken to Strategy & Resources Policy Committee which would set out the progress made, since the Council's initial response to the Race Equality Commission report. He added that Member development and Member roles was a key part of that and confirmed that would be included In the report going to Strategy & Resources Policy Committee.

7.6   A Member of the Committee mentioned how he recently asked how many Members had undertaken Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training at a Full Council meeting, as recommend by the Race Equality Commission. He explained that the data was unable to be provided, and then when asked the same question again at a future meeting, data showed that half of members had completed it. He raised the importance of Members embracing their position on being anti-racist.

7.7   A Member of the Committee referred to recent Member training session. She stated that the sessions were useful although raised the difficulty in attending due to work commitments. She added that if she had been given the programme of training earlier then it would have been easier to make arrangements with work so she could attend more sessions.

7.8   A Member of the Committee raised the importance of reducing those barriers discouraging people to becoming a Councillor. Also reducing those barriers for working Members being able to access training and development sessions. He also welcomed guidance on how the Council dealt with Members needing to be granted maternity, paternity or adoption leave. He also believed there would be an increase in completing mandatory training, if members of the public could view whether Members had completed certain training modules or not.

The Head of Democratic and Member Services explained there was a guidance document relating maternity, paternity and adoption leave which was produced with the group Whips although this may need to be reviewed again. He added that attendance statistics for Members could also be looked at again. He stated that mandating training could be something for the working group to consider as this will be part of their remit.

7.9 A Member of the Committee asked whether any specific Committee training had been carried out. She also raised the importance of advising Members how certain training would benefit them. Also, to consult with as many Members as possible, including the Conservative and Independent Members. She also stated how we needed to be careful if mandating training as there was no legal sanction, excluding training which was a legal requirement and also to take into account training that Members may have undertaken outside of the Council.

The Head of Democratic and Member Services stated that he would look into specific Committee training for Members. He added that a role of the working group would be to provide that link between other group Members.

7.10 A Member of the Committee raised the importance of Chair and Deputy Chair training, as a Chair of a Committee this would have been welcomed before having to Chair meetings. He also mentioned the quality of training sessions and ensuring Members got what was expected from the sessions.

7.11 **RESOLVED:** That the Governance Committee;

(1) provides any comments on the existing Member Development Strategy 2021-25 and particularly any changes of emphasis or priority in the light of the implementation of the committee system and recent pieces of work, including the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review, the Race Equality Commission and the Street Tree Inquiry report;

(2) formally re-establish's the Member Development Working Group, noting the proposed membership of the Group and to consider the draft terms of reference for the group and to request that the Group works on a programme of learning and development for Members, for the forthcoming year and reports back to Governance Committee;

(3) discusses and suggests any priorities for the 2023/24 Member Development Programme and areas which might be categorised as mandatory learning and development for elected members to complete; and

(4) asks the Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement to produce new role profiles and to work with the Member Development Working Group on the profiles which will then be submitted to the Governance Committee for its consideration.

8. PUBLIC QUESTIONS TASK AND FINISH GROUP

8.1 The Committee received a report of the Director of Policy & Democratic Engagement. The Head of Policy and Partnerships explained that the report set out a proposal for Governance Committee to undertake a review of Council's approach to Public Questions, in response to Recommendation 16 of the Six-Month Review of Governance. The proposal suggested establishing a Task and Finish Group of Governance Committee Members to work with citizens, stakeholders and officers over the summer with proposals presented to

Governance Committee in October 2023.

8.2   The Head of Policy and Partnerships stated that the intention was to run a public workshop, with Members of this Committee in replace of the next formal Committee meeting. He mentioned that in advance of that workshop, officers planned to consult with members of the public who had previously asked a public question at any of the Council's Committee meetings, with the ambition to understand what worked well and how the process could be improved.

8.3   Members of the Committee asked questions and made comments and the key points to note were: -

8.4   The Chair referred to the next formal Governance Committee meeting date being the 30 August 2023. Although appreciated that this may not be the date used to hold the workshop due to Member availability therefore would look at alternative dates in early September 2023 to hold this public workshop.

8.5   A Member of the Committee raised the importance of public participation in this piece of work and how it was crucial the listen to the public's voice at that workshop and then keep them engaged throughout the process.

8.6   A Member of the Committee welcomed the proposal and mentioned how public questions were a key part of Council meetings.

8.7   A Member of the Committee raised the importance of consulting with as many people as possible, not just members of the public who had asked questions at Council meetings previously. She suggested that people could submit written comments for the workshop in order to receive as much information as possible as well as considering the process for petitions as well as questions.

8.8   A Member of the Committee stated how receiving large amounts of public questions two days prior to a Committee meeting was not sustainable on officers time in the build up to a meeting. It was also not satisfactory for Members and those questioners receiving adequate responses in such a short period of time. She mentioned how public questions and petitions at LAC (Local Area Committee) meetings was also not fulfilling and not achieving what those LACs were set up to do, she also stated that there had been an decrease in public participation since the introduction to those LACs. The Member also referred to Policy Committees engagement toolkit and how this was not being used to its full potential. The Member asked what other routes members of the public would be able to feed into this process, other than the public workshop mentioned.

8.9   A Member of the Committee raised the importance of involving people who would not usually submit a question or petition at a council meeting, to understand what barriers there was discouraging people form asking those questions.

8.10   The Head of Policy and Partnerships thanked and noted all the comments made from Members. He agreed that engaging with a wide range of people was crucial. He mentioned that networks such as the Equality Partnerships in Sheffield needed to be consulted. He stated that there would be various routes for people to feed

into this work such as online surveys and officers would go away and propose how to best carry out this piece of work. He conformed that the public workshop is a good starting point but would not be the only way members of the public can feed into this process.

8.11   A Member of the Committee raised the importance of the planning for this workshop. He mentioned how it would be useful to understand why members of the public chose to submit public questions rather than contacting their ward Councillors.

8.12   A Member of the Committee referred to the connection between members of the public contacting Customer Services and submitting a public question.

The Head of Policy and Partnerships mentioned that officers would consult with officers within Customer Services around their experiences with dealing with questions from members of the public.

8.13   **RESOLVED:** That the Governance Committee;

(1) considers and agree the proposed scope of the Public Questions review, in line with the Six-Month Review's recommendations;

(2) discusses and agrees the proposed terms of reference for the Public Questions review; and

(3) nominates Councillors Fran Belbin, Sue Alston, Mike Levery, Sioned-Mair Richards and Paul Turpin to lead the Task and Finish Group.

9.   GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

9.1   The Committee received a report of the Director of Policy & Democratic Engagement. The Policy and Improvement Officer, Alice Nicholson, explained that the Committee's Work Programme was attached at Appendix 1 for the Committee's consideration and discussion. This aimed to show all known, substantive agenda items for forthcoming meetings of the Committee, to enable this committee, other committees, officers, partners and the public to plan their work with and for the Committee.

9.2   The Policy and Improvement Officer referred to part 2 of the programme which highlighted any potential items which were not yet included on the programme. She mentioned two new potential items for the Committee to consider, these were:

        1.   Member appointments to external bodies
        2.   NHS Governance and the Council's Committee System

9.3   Members of the Committee asked questions and made comments and the key points to note were: -

9.4   A Member of the Committee referred to a previous discussion around Policy

Committees not having sight of cross-cutting issues which went to Strategy & Resources Policy Committee although they had direct links within that work.

9.5   A Member of the Committee referred to an item on the programme relating to Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's). He mentioned that Transport, Regeneration and Climate Change Policy Committee expressed the need for decisions on TRO's to be devolved to Local Area Committees. Therefore, suggested that this be considered during that item.

> The Head of Policy and Partnerships explained that this item was listed so that the Governance Committee could look at their relationship within this topic. He added that a report on this could be brought to a future meeting of this Committee.

9.6   A Member of the Committee suggested an item be included relating to meeting timings, in order to support working Members with other commitments and also to not discourage people from wanting to become a Councillor.

9.7   A Member of the Committee referred to the 'Reviewing Committee Remits' item listed on the programme. She raised the importance of looking into this issue further as she mentioned that Committees workloads were currently unbalanced.

9.8   A Member of the Committee referred to the 'Understanding Committee Roles and Remuneration' item on the programme. He mentioned that officer roles should be looked at as well, as part of this item.

9.9   A Member of the Committee suggested that a Public Health impact assessment tool be included across all policy committees so that all decision were influenced by this priority.

9.10   A Member of the Committee suggested that this Committee looked into how cross-cutting issues were made.

9.11   The Head of Policy and Partnerships thanked and noted Members comments on the work programme. He agreed to amend the programme based on the comments made at the meeting. He also stated that the programme was currently a list of items which needed to be organised on a priority basis and that this could start to be arranged due to the discussions made during this item.

9.12   **RESOLVED:** That (1) the Committee's work programme, as set out in Appendix 1 be agreed, including any additions and amendments identified in Part 1; 2; (2) that consideration be given to the further additions or adjustments to the work programme presented at Part 2 of Appendix 1; and (3) that Members give consideration to any further issues to be explored by officers for inclusion in Part 2 of Appendix 1 of the next work programme report, for potential addition to the work programme.

10.   DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10.1   It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled for the 30 August 2023, although this was subject to be replaced for a public workshop on Public Questions and Petitions. If replaced, then the next formal meeting of the Committee will be the 12 October 2023.

Sheffield City Council

Report to Governance Committee

12th October 2023

Report of: Head of Policy and Partnerships

Subject: Interim report of review of Council's approach to public questions

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Author of Report: Alice Nicholson, Policy & Improvement Officer

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Summary:

The Governance Committee in July this year agreed to undertake a review of the Council's approach to public questions.

The purpose of the review to ensure the process for citizens to ask public questions is clear, that public questions are triaged in a way that directs them to the most appropriate forum and that those forums are easy to access; consider processes for responding to public questions and the interplay between timescales and quality of responses so that we can best achieve a consistent approach that is fit for purpose in the Committee System.

To undertake the review creatively with citizens and stakeholders, developing proposals which learn from the experiences of those involved within resource and capacity constraints.

This interim report sets out what the Committee have heard from citizen engagement so far, and next steps.

_____

Recommendations:

1. That the Committee consider and discuss the insight from citizens on public questions and petitions

2. Discuss and agree next steps to develop proposals which will improve our approach to public questions in response to the feedback from citizens.

Background Papers: None

Category of Report: Open

Reviewing Sheffield City Council's approach to public questions

Interim reporting

1.1 This is an interim paper for the Committee, it focuses on the findings of the citizen engagement to date and does not present solutions at this stage. The intention is to do further work with Members, citizens and officers to develop options to improve our approach to public questions and petitions and it is expected that a draft report with proposals will be presented to November's Governance Committee.

1.2 Our engagement to date includes survey on Have Your Say Sheffield site which was complemented by an in-person workshop with citizens on 14th September. Both the survey and invite to sign up to the workshop were promoted through SCC email bulletins and on social media channels. We also contacted people who have submitted a public question or petition in the last 12 months to ask for feedback on their experience.

1.3 The attached slidepack includes an interim summary of the headline findings for the Committee to consider.

Next steps

2.1 Immediate next step is Member feedback in Committee today.

2.2 We will continue evaluation of surveys and learning from workshop, and have already identified further engagement, for example gathering insight from staff who manage and are involved in the process of public questions, both those in governance and responding, and we welcome receiving insight from a citizen engagement session that is being led by an emerging community and citizen-led network.

2.3 After this will be developing solutions, testing these, all with the aim to report back to November's Governance Committee.

2.4 The Task and Finish group will meet over next 6 weeks to discuss:

- Proposals based on findings

- Test / iterate solutions with staff – governance and responding

- Test solutions with citizens

- Draft report of recommendations for Governance Committee

Approach to Public Questions at Sheffield City Council Meetings – interim findings from citizen engagement to date

3rd October 2023

Sheffield City Council Governance Committee review of approach to public questions

What we've done to date

Survey

- Two surveys – one for public questions, one for petitions
- Promoted both on social media and through Council's email newsletters
- Contacted citizens who have asked public questions in the last 12 months and asked them for their views.

Workshop

- Public workshop in the town hall on 14th September
- Promoted along with the survey
- Table discussions with Members focused on listening to citizen experiences with people who have and people who haven't asked questions before.

Findings from the surveys and workshop Public questions and petitions at Committees – Your Experience (Qualitative Data)

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Most respondents (over 70%) said they had never asked a question at a Council meeting

We asked if there is anything that would encourage you to ask questions?

People said to encourage them to ask questions they need more and clearer information, more about what each Committee is responsible for, what the process is, what they can expect if they do ask, and help in knowing what they could ask about and where to direct it, should it be a Council department, a Councillor, or to a meeting of the Council, if so which one.

Many respondents said they didn't know they could ask a question.

Public Questions at Committees – the process of asking

When people had asked a question they had strong views about the process, it was unclear, it was complicated, it wasn't accessible, not easy to find, it should be online, it should be available offline.

The interplay of publication of papers and timeline for submission in advance was mixed, for some at times it resulted in poor quality answers, not enough time for Councillors to get true depth answers, other times people felt they had missed an opportunity to ask because papers publication was too close to meeting day, others were pleased to have any opportunity.

People want the opportunity to be anonymous, to not attend but to still have questions read and answered, and publicly logged.

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Public Questions at Committees– the process of response

When people did ask a question, many were angry with the quality of response, that often they didn't receive a response at all, that if they did it was shallow, meaningless, too politicised, that promises of a follow-up answer were not fulfilled.

Overwhelming was that **all** questions and answers should be published, for all Committees, they should be able to be tracked in the process, a log of submission, of response, what action, that can be seen publicly by all.

People wanted to see how what they asked had influenced change in the decision or the way we operate.

Public Questions at Committees – your experience

Of those who replied they have asked a question the experience felt predominantly negative, that members and officers could be rude and abrupt, the questioners had no confidence in the system, that they were not listened to, the power to influence change or a decision was negligible.

Not all experiences were negative, some welcome the opportunity and the support of Councillors.

People commented that being able to ask questions is democracy, and the process, response, influence should reflect this.

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Public Questions at Committees– thoughts on improvement

People are asking for a clear protocol of what, when, how, that helps to manage expectations and guid through the process of asking a question.

A listening organisation where public can influence, take the politics out.

People commented that being able to ask questions is democracy, and the process, response, influence should reflect this.

The opportunity to ask, participate should be accessible to all.

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Petitions to Council Committees – your experience

People generally thought the process was easy, with it split about 50/50 whether routed through our online form or a national online platform.

Information on how to submit a petition was readily available, occasionally people were confused by the number of signatures which trigger whether it is heard at Full Council or a Committee.

The main complaint was that our response or action to a petition is not easy to find, and that sometimes felt petitions were simply ignored.

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A sample of the data output from survey: Public Questions at Committees – Your Experience

Survey question results: Have you asked a question at Full Council, a Policy Committee, a Local Area Committee or any other?
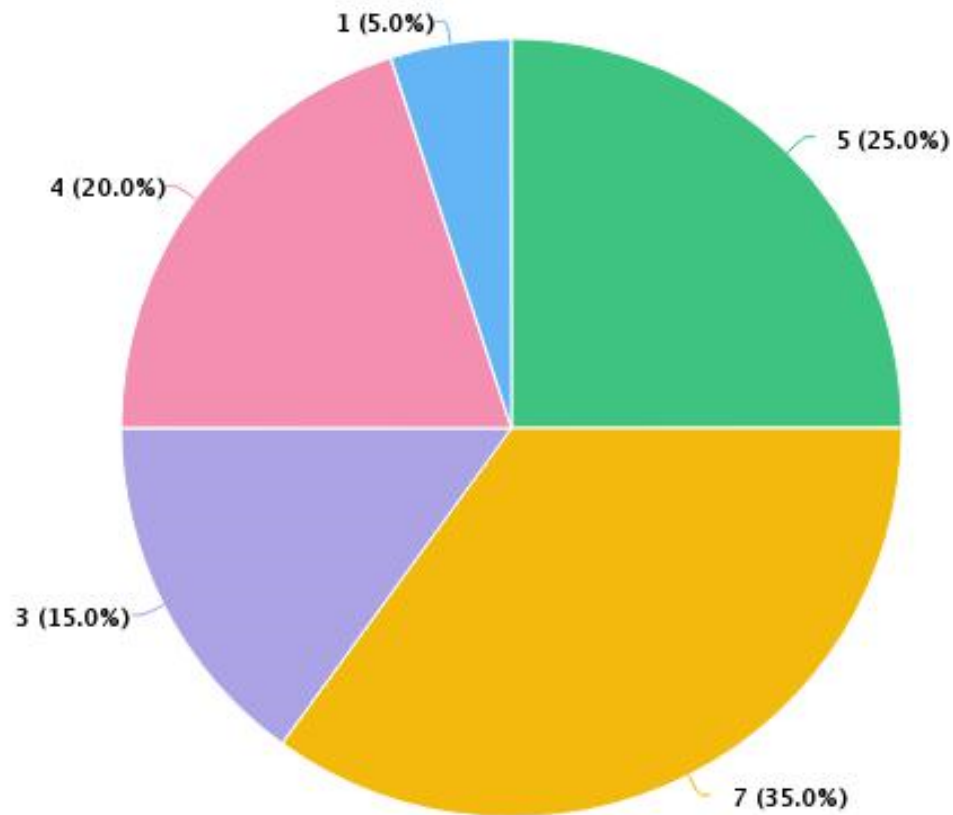

15 (8.9%) 20 (11.9%)

133 (79.2%)
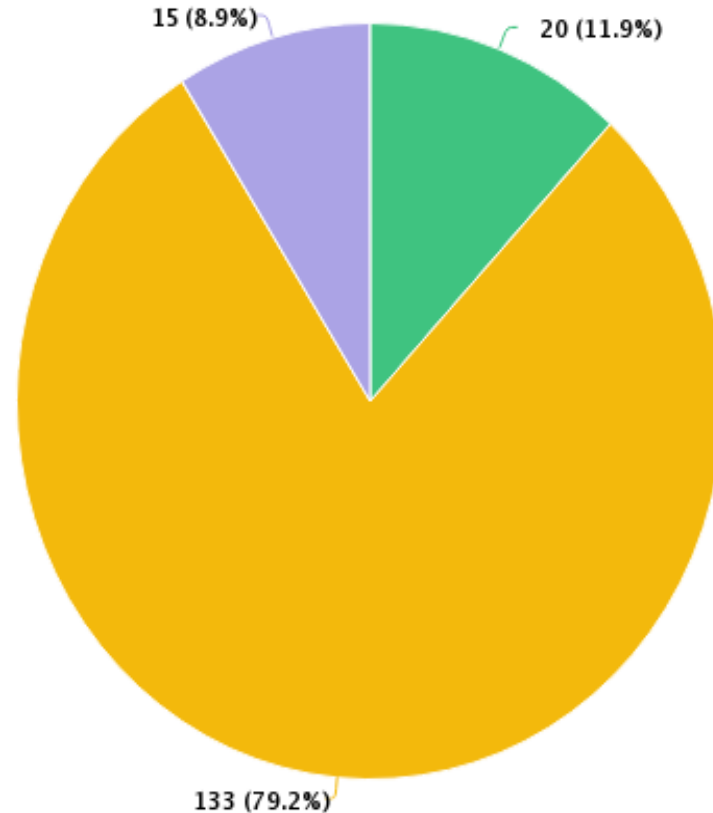
Question options
(Click items to hide)

● Yes I have asked a question once   ● No   ● Yes I've asked more than one question

Survey question results: Which Committee did you ask your question at?

1 (5.0%)
5 (25.0%)
4 (20.0%)
3 (15.0%)
7 (35.0%)

Question options
(Click items to hide)

● Full Council ● A Policy Committee, includes Strategy & Resources, and Finance ● A Local Area Committee ● A Regulatory Committee, for example Highways , Licensing, Planning ● Other (please specify)

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Survey question results: Were you satisfied with the answer?

2 (10.0%)

18 (90.0%)
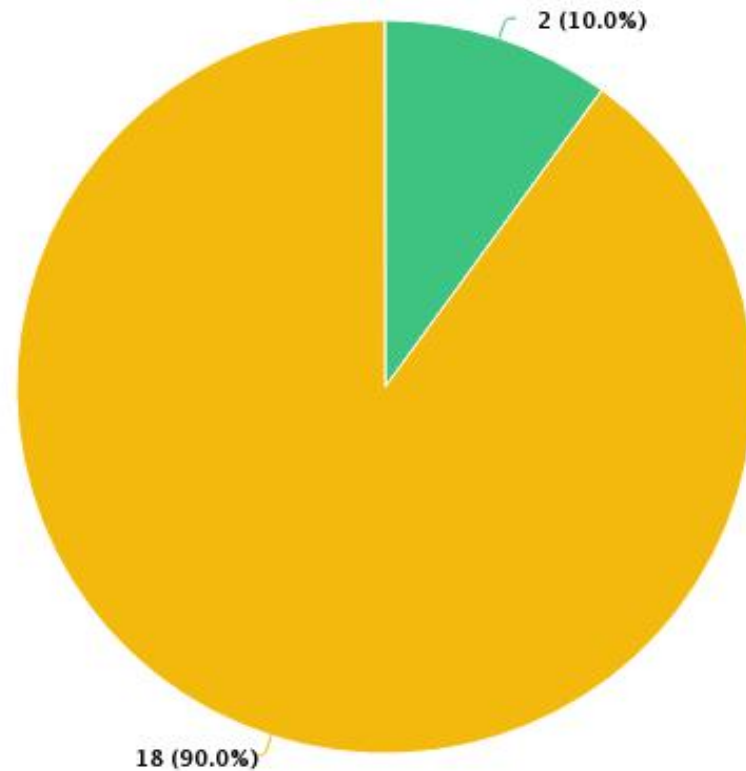
Question options
(Click items to hide)

● Yes   ● No

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Please tell us why you haven't asked a question at Committee

80

73

60

41

40

27

20

8   7
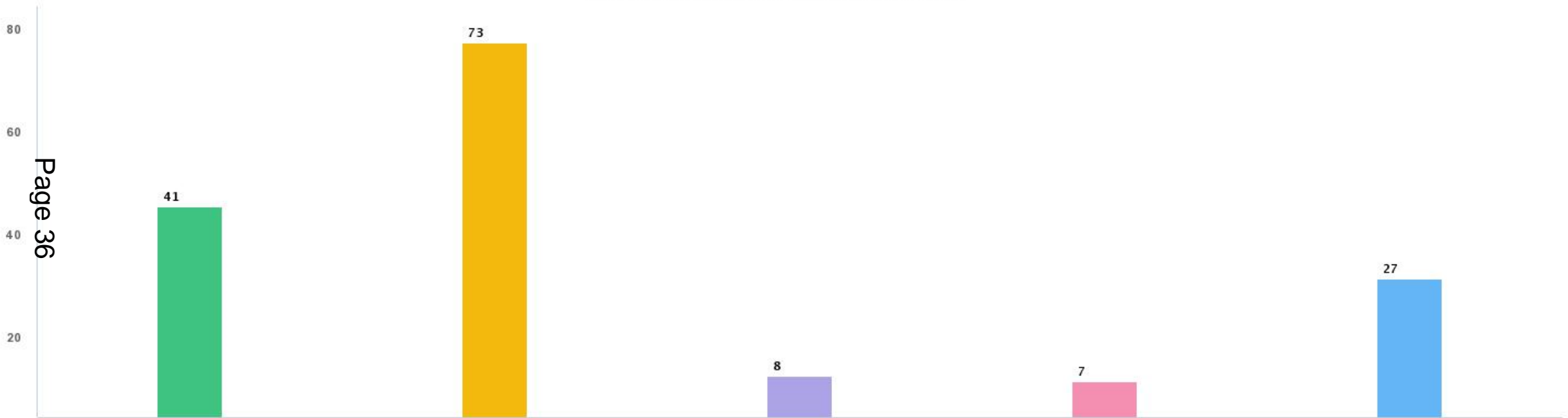
Question options
(Click items to hide)

- Other (please specify) - I tried to ask a question but found the process confusing - I got the answer elsewhere - I didn't know how or where to ask a question - I didn't know I could ask

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Next Steps for the task and finish group – over next months – to report at November Governance Committee (22.11.2023)

- Member feedback in Committee

- Continue evaluation of surveys and learning from the workshop – Process, Experience, and Solutions

- Insight from a citizen engagement session led by emerging community and citizen-led network

- Insight from staff who manage and are involved in public question process, both governance and responding, through survey and focus group

- Next meetings of Task and Finish Group
  - Proposals based on findings
  - Test / iterate solutions with staff – governance and responding
  - Test solutions with citizens
  - Draft report of recommendations for Governance Committee

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Report to Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report: Joe Horobin, Director of Integrated Commissioning

Tel: 0114 273 5891

Report of:	Director of Public Health
Report to:	Governance Committee
Date of Decision:	12th October 2023
Subject:	Governance to support partnership working with NHS Sheffield

Type of Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken	Initial	X	Full	
Insert EIA reference number and attach EIA	2253			
Has appropriate consultation/engagement taken place?	Yes		No	X
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes		No	X

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes		No	X

If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-

*"The (**report/appendix**) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (**insert relevant paragraph number**) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."*

Purpose of Report:

This paper sets out a proposal for the Governance Committee to sponsor a task and finish group to consider appropriate Sheffield City Council membership of the forum that considers joint SCC and NHS commissioning and planning through a pooled budget under Section 75 of the NHS Act 2006.

The Group will be asked to consider:

1) How that forum should be recognised within the Council's governance arrangements;
2) Who should be a member or attend that forum on the Council's behalf, considering the needs of partnership working and the appropriate roles of Members and Officers; and
3) What arrangements need to be in place to ensure this forum supports effective democratic decision making in Sheffield.

On the basis of these deliberations they will be asked to develop a proposal to put to Full Council for consideration and adoption.

Recommendations:

That Governance Committee:

1. Consider and agree the proposed scope, and Terms of Reference, of the Task and Finish Group to review governance arrangements to support partnership working with NHS Sheffield

2. Agree Elected Member representation for that Task and Finish Group from across the three political groups

3. Agree to receive a proposal for consideration from this Task & Finish Group at their meeting on 28th February 2024

Background Papers:
(Insert details of any background papers used in the compilation of the report.)
N/A

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed.	Finance: Kayleigh Inman, Senior Finance Manager
		Legal: Sarah Bennett, Assistant Director Legal Services
		Equalities & Consultation: Ed Sexton, Senior Equalities and Engagement Officer
		Climate: Victoria Penman, Sustainability Programme Officer
	Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.	
2	**SLB member who approved submission:**	Greg Fell, Director of Public Health
3	**Committee Chair consulted:**	Cllr. Fran Belbin, Chair of Governance Committee
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	

Lead Officer Name: Joe Horobin	Job Title: Director of Integrated Commissioning
Date: 12th October 2023	

1. **PURPOSE**

1.1   This paper sets out a proposal for the Governance Committee to sponsor a task and finish group to consider appropriate Sheffield City Council membership of the forum that considers joint SCC and NHS commissioning and planning through a pooled budget under Section 75 of the NHS Act 2006.

2. **BACKGROUND CONTEXT**

2.1   The Council has had a strong approach to collaboration with the NHS since the Government launched the Better Care Fund in 2013. This required LAs and NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to create pooled budgets under S75 of NHS Act 2006, with a mandated minimum set by government, and a focus on services for adults.

2.2   In Sheffield we have responded to that prompt to develop joined up ways of working with our NHS partners by establishing one of the largest pooled budgets in the country, with the most recent iteration covering £754m of activity across services for adults and children and young people. This represents a sustained and ongoing commitment to partnership working in service delivery, and to getting the most out of the Sheffield public service pound.

2.3   Governance arrangements to support joint planning and commissioning evolved over time, culminating with the formal establishment of the Joint Commissioning Committee in 2019. This provided a publicly accountable space for Cabinet Members and CCG Governing Body members to do joint planning, with potential for delegated decision making should that become desirable.

2.4   With changes to the Council's governance following the referendum in 2021, and to that of the NHS following the Health and Care Act 2022, the Joint Commissioning Committee is no longer an appropriate structure for this work and has been removed from the Council's Constitution.

2.5   Partnership working with the NHS remains important, with joint commissioning, planning and delivery of services critical to delivering the most for Sheffielders from resources available. As a result we need to consider the right governance arrangements to maintain this whilst respecting the principles behind the shift to a committee system.

2.6   This work will need to consider:

- The right membership to support an ongoing relationship with the NHS and provide relevant policy area expertise

- The necessary working and support arrangements to ensure relevant committee members are engaged in the development of proposals
- How development of proposals through the joint forum links to formal decision making through relevant policy committees.

3. TASK AND FINISH GROUP DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE AND APPROACH

3.1 Draft Terms of Reference for Governance Committee to consider:

Purpose

1. To develop a proposal for governance arrangements to support joint planning and commissioning with NHS Sheffield for consideration at a future Governance Committee meeting

2. In doing this to consider:
   a. How to link into existing NHS governance
   b. The benefits to partnership working of ongoing relationships
   c. The respective roles of Elected Members and Officers
   d. The required working arrangements to ensure this links to and supports democratic decision making through Policy Committees

Membership

Recognising the pressure on Member and officer capacity, and balancing this with the potential broad policy implications of this work, there are to be six Members on this Task and Finish Group, at least one of which should be drawn from the Governance Committee, and with equal representation from the three political groups.

The Task and Finish Group should identify a Member lead from their number to help convene the work and support reporting back to the Governance Committee.

The Group should also involve NHS partners and relevant Council officers in their deliberations to ensure relevant policy expertise and to proceed in a spirit of open partnership.

Outline timetable of activity

It is proposed that the Task and Finish Group will conduct its work through four sessions:

1. Exploring and developing a shared understanding of the role of the NHS in Sheffield, how it functions, and how the Council needs to relate to it
2. Considering who needs to be involved in joint discussions, considering the role of committees in decision making, the importance of policy expertise, the relevance of political balance, the importance of community consultation/involvement, and the importance of ongoing relationships to partnership working

3. Considering the supporting working arrangements required to support joint planning and commissioning and to ensure this is properly joined up with committee decision making

4. Development and agreement of a final proposal based on the discussion in preceding sessions

It is intended that the Task and Finish Group bring draft proposals for the Governance Committee to consider at their meeting on 28th February 2024, with the aim that any constitutional implications can be considered at the following Annual General Meeting.

4. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?

4.1 Strong partnership working is vital to the delivery of effective, joined up public services in Sheffield. Proposals developed through this joint forum will be subject to formal decision making through committees so it is vital to ensure we have properly considered the proper structures to support both.

5. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

5.1 There is no duty to consult on membership of and support for partnership forums. Consultation on future proposals for new or revised services resulting from these arrangements will be carried out on a case by case basis as appropriate.

6. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

6.1 Equality Implications

6.1.1 The Equality Impact Assessment indicates that this proposal will be neutral in its impact, in seeking to maintain the current positive working relationship with NHS Sheffield.

6.1.2 Individual EIAs will be completed for any decisions arising from the work of the new joint forum once established.

6.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

6.2.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

6.2.2 The Council and NHS partners work together as a whole system to ensure that funding can serve Sheffield's population effectively. This incorporates achieving the strategic shift to prevention that all partners see as the key change required to improve health and wellbeing as well as making the best use of available resources.

6.2.3 Joint planning arrangements have been a critical component of our approach to the funding challenge around health and social care

services over recent years. Maintenance of effective partnership working and the mechanisms to support these, and ensure the right connection to decision making, will be critical to ensuring this continues.

6.3   Legal Implications

6.3.1   There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. Where the task and finish group finds changes are needed that require changes to the Council's Constitution those should be considered by the Committee and approved by Full Council.

6.4   Climate Implications

6.4.1   There are no climate implications of this proposal.

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Sheffield City Council

Report to Governance Committee

12ᵗʰ October 2023

Report of: Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement

Subject: GRIP – Governance Review Implementation Plan update

Author of Report: Laurie Brennan

Head of Policy and Partnerships

Summary:

Governance Committee agreed that it was appropriate for action to begin immediately to address issues arising from the six-month Governance Review. This was presented to Full Council in May 2023 as part of the Annual General Meeting and Governance Committee received an update at its meeting in July 2023.

This update includes a short summary of the key achievements from the Governance Review Implementation Plan (GRIP) along with the detailed spreadsheet in Appendix 1.

Recommendations:

1. That the Committee note the progress against actions in the Governance Review Implementation Plan.

Background Papers: None

Category of Report: Open

Governance Review Implementation Plan update

1. In the Six Month Review of Governance, Full Council approved the Governance Review Implementation Plan (GRIP) which predominantly comprises of practical, officer-led actions to improve the function of our committee system. Along with practical actions, there are a number of items which are work in progress as they are part of the Governance Committee's workplan for this year (eg. democratic participation).

2. Governance Committee agreed to receive regular updates on the delivery of the actions in the GRIP and where appropriate, to receive and consider draft content (eg. draft guidance to support the committee system).

3. To help bring to life the material in the GRIP itself, the below summarises the key achievements from the GRIP to date along with actions we still need to complete.

Improving how we explain the system

This was a critical part of the Governance Review and focused on how we better enable Members, citizens and officers in SCC to navigate the system and support committees to be effective in their role.

What we've done

- Rebranded and reformatted the democracy area of the SCC website to make it cleaner and easier to navigate for anyone trying to find dates or content for Committee meetings.
  See: https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1

- Undertaken initial work to improve citizen involvement in our committees through a deep dive into public questions and petitions with citizens and stakeholders (interim findings on Governance Committee, 12th October).

- Re-instated the Member Development Working Group to support Member learning and development. This has included work to improve the role profiles of Members within the Committee System.

What we still need to do

- Develop and implement improvement to Public Questions with citizens and officers, learning from the recent engagement activity

- Continue to improve the accessibility of our Committee meetings both in terms of physical and online access, working with the Sheffield Equality Partnership network. This includes further testing hybrid technology for meetings and using less formal places in the Town Hall for committee meetings.

Improving the support we provide to those working in the system

What we've done

- Provided support and signposting to wellbeing advice and support for Members through the internal Member Newsletters

- Updated internal approaches to Policy Committee workplans so that the overall set of workplans are regularly discussed by Committee Chairs and the Senior Leadership Team to ensure we better manage cross-cutting issues and support cross-committee working.

- Improved briefing guidance available to officers, particularly to support clearer work planning and support better committee system oversight by the S&R Committee

- Created a SharePoint portal to support officers to better navigate the Committee System. This will include access to guidance on work planning, briefings, decision and policy report templates, and guidance on key impact assessments (EIAs, CIAs).

- Achieved a consistent increase in the number of EIAs being completed and published with reports, ensuring we are evidencing any implications for people in Sheffield and appropriate mitigations.

What we still need to do

- We need to develop the skills of our officers to improve the quality and consistency of reports being presented to committees. We are working with our HR Team to develop the learning and development needed.

- Make it easier for officers to develop and get reports completed and published on time using the Mod.Gov app.

- Finalise a new policy toolkit to support officers engaging Committees in policy development.

Supporting development of our governance beyond the Six Month Review

What we've done

- Implemented Member Questions at Policy Committees, building on the established approach used at Full Council

- Introduced a proactive work planning approach for Full Council meetings, working cross-party with Whips

- Introduced new word limits on Notices of Motion at ordinary meetings of Full Council

What we still need to do

- Review the remits of Policy Committees and the associated relationship with Local Area Committees (part of the Governance Committee's work plan for this year)

- Support the improvement of democratic participation in the Committee System, complementing the work in the Future Sheffield programme to transform our approach to citizen engagement at SCC.

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ID	Theme	Action	Refined Action	Progress/Update	Responsible Teams	Target Date	Status
1.1	Improving how we explain the system	Consider how we can make it easier for citizens to know what is happening in Policy Committees and how they can get involved	Improve the information published on the Council's website regarding Policy Committee meetings and their work programmes.

Determine other routes for communicating Policy Committee activity to citizens | Work going on with webteam on Mod.Gov to rebrand and reshape the experience and accessibility of Mod.Gov. Content will be rewritten and working with supplier to update content. (UPDATED 06.07.23). | Democratic Services | 01/09/23 | Mod.Gov rebrand is complete |
| 1.21 | Improving how we explain the system | Ensure the process for asking public questions is clear, that citizens are directed to the most appropriate forum and that those forums are easy to access | Publish clear guidance on Sheffield City Council's websites about how citizens can bring public questions to a Policy Committee | Looking at ways to improve citizen experience and ease of submitting public questions.
Public questions task and finish group to be scoped at first Governance Committee (July 23) | Democratic Services | 01/10/23 | Work in progress - integral to output of Governance Committee Review of approach to public questions - report 12.10.23 |
| 1.22 | Improving how we explain the system | Ensure the process for asking public questions is clear, that citizens are directed to the most appropriate forum and that those forums are easy to access | Produce guidance for Officers on directing citizens to the most appropriate forum for their question | Public questions task and finish group to be scoped at first Governance Committee (July 23) | Democratic Services | 20/07/23 | Work in progress - integral to output of Governance Committee Review of approach to public questions - interim report 12.10.23 |
| 1.23 | Improving how we explain the system | Ensure the process for asking public questions is clear, that citizens are directed to the most appropriate forum and that those forums are easy to access | Improve the accessibility of Policy Committee meetings for citizens. Consider results of AccessAble Town Hall assessment. Consider options for virtual attendance. | To be included in wider work that Governance Committee will carry out in 2023/24.

Work ongoing to identify resource to develop hybrid options. Democratic Services working with Facilities Management to resolve Town Hall meeting room issues. Considering how to provide 'Disability Confident' training for staff. | Democratic Services

Facilities Management | Ongoing | Ongoing project of Facilities Management and Democratic Services. Hybrid in Council chamber is at beta testing stage, and a protocol to be developed |
| 1.3 | Improving how we explain the system | Develop clearer guidance on the roles and responsibilities for Chairs, Co-Chairs, Deputy Chairs and Group Spokespeople and how officers are expected to brief and interact with these roles | Produce, and publish on SCC's intranet, guidance for officers on the roles and responsibilities of each role within a Policy Committee, along with expecations for communications and briefings | Guidance in production.

Opportunity to clarify Committee remits for all Members and info on roles/responsibility. Connects to Member Development. Aim for Governance Committee in late summer. | Democratic Services | Sept/Oct 2023 | A Sharepoint site created for officers is in testing phase |

2.1	Improving the support we provide to those working in the system: Advice, Guidance and Support	Develop mechanisms for Portfolio Officers to share best practice in resourcing and working in the Committee System	Work with officers across portfolios to design and implement systems for sharing best practice and peer guidance for working in the Committee system	Start with dedicated session with Council's Extended Leadership Team (Heads of Service) in summer 2023.	Laurie and Jason	01/09/23	Ongoing - to be determined when will take place
2.2	Improving the support we provide to those working in the system: Advice, Guidance and Support	Consider how we can provide officers with 'quick wins' in terms of tools and support	Identify areas of potential improvement within the Committee system that can be designed and implemented quickly to include: report templates for non-decision reports; intranet guidance as above; peer guidance as above.	Draft SharePoint site for Officers in place. Democratic Services working on structure and content (06.07.23)	Project Team	01/09/23	Ongoing - see above 1.3 Sharepoint site; non-decision report template in design
2.3	Improving the support we provide to those working in the system: Advice, Guidance and Support	Ensure Members and Officers are signposted to wellbeing support services that are available through the Council	Include in Members newsletter, on Members intranet, in Member induction materials.	Complete.	Democratic Services	Complete	Done
2.4	Improving the support we provide to those working in the system: Advice, Guidance and Support	Re-emphasise role of S&R and Senior Officers in identification of cross-cutting issues and directing them to most appropriate forum	Include in work planning guidance; Strengthen oversight of composite work programme at SLB and S&R;	Form 1 (ie. the process to add items to workplans) and SLB/S&R reporting processes have been updated. S&R considering composite work programme at June meeting. Reference included in work programming guidance		Complete	Done
2.5	Improving the support we provide to those working in the system: Advice, Guidance and Support	Job Share Chair Protocol should be adhered to and promoted amongst officer and members to develop a greater understanding of the role.	Make protocol available on Intranet; Circulate protocol to appropriate members and officers post AGM; Include references to co-chairing in briefing and work programming guidance; include co-chairing in member and officer training and development where appropriate	Job Share Chair Protocol has been updated. No further action required this year.		Complete	Done
2.6	Improving the support we provide to those working in the system: Advice, Guidance and Support	Produce Guidance on briefing practises	Develop Guidance; add to intranet and circulate; include references to it in work programming guidance.	Discussed with Corporate Leadership Team (CLT - ie. Directors)\n\nNew briefing arrangements in place S&R Committee.	Laurie	01/09/23	Done - In place for S&R
2.7	Improving the support we provide to those working in the system: Advice, Guidance and Support	Develop a Policy Development Toolkit to be used alongside the engagement toolkit	Develop and circulate guide. Consider other options for improving policy development practise	Toolkit in production.'Policy Clinic' drop ins planned for Officers.	Laurie	01/09/23	Ongoing in development

Ref	Theme	Recommendation	Action	Progress	Lead	Date	Status
2.8	Improving the support we provide to those working in the system: Advice, Guidance and Support	Develop work programming guidance for members and officers	Develop, circulate. Put arrangements in place for early work programme conversations.	Underway as part of new municipal year.		ONGOING	Ongoing - in development for future years
3.1	Improving the support we provide to those working in the system: Effective and Timely Reports	Consider how we can help officers to better understand the process for getting a Committee report prepared, signed off and published in a timely way	Produce, and publish on SCC's intranet, guidance for officers on how to take a report to a Policy Committee (including timescales for each milestone)*Should include early conversations with 'sign off services' legal, equalities etc)*	Existing guidance being reviewed and updated. Revised report sign off timeline in production. SharePoint site in production. Report Management System to be explored	Democratic Services	01/09/23	Ongoing - see above 1.3 Sharepoint
3.2	Improving the support we provide to those working in the system: Effective and Timely Reports	Develop training for officers on effective, accessible report writing	Commission training for Officers on writing reports for Policy Committees that are concise, effective and accessible	Conversations ongoing with L&D Team as to Development hub options.	Democratic Services	01/09/23	Ongoing - likely we will need to commission external support in 2024
3.3	Improving the support we provide to those working in the system: Effective and Timely Reports	Ensure the impact assessment process is robust, transparent and applied consistently	Produce and publish guidance for officers on completing and publishing Equalities, Climate and Environmental Impact Assessments with committee reports. Consider change to report template "have you checked with an Equalities Lead as to whether an EIA is required? Is it attached?) Ensure TAC lists are up to date with Climate and Equalities Officers invited to pre-agenda and pre-briefings.	Change to report template complete. EIA and CIA guidance to be signposted on SharePoint Site and included in officer guidance. Team Around the Committee lists updated.	Democratic Services Equalities Team Climate Team	Complete / in progress	Ongoing - good progress, link from Sharepoint to EIA - process and protocol under test - evidence of sustained improvement of EIAs being published with reports
4.1	Further work beyond this review	Consider whether we need to develop a clearer framework on the balance of decisions between Policy Committees and LACs	Develop and publish guidance for Officers and Members on what decisions should be taken at Policy Committees and which should be taken at LACs	Included in broader guidance see 3.1	Democratic Services Legal Services LAC Team	01/09/23	Work in progress to bring back to Governance Committee
4.2	Further work beyond this review	Consider how we will address the recommendations in the 'Involve' report	Connect to Future Sheffield and propose a Governance Committee Working Group to support/oversee the work	Initial scoping of work underway (July 2023)	Strategy & Partnerships Equalities & Engagement Team	01/04/24	Work in progress will report back to Governance Committee
4.3	Further work beyond this review	Develop Governance Committee Work Programme for 2023/24	Include task and finish groups of engagement and public questions; monitoring progress against GRIP; developing performance framework and metrics; review of Committee remits	Work programming process post AGM. Draft workplan presented to Gov Committee on 20th July 2023.	PDE Service	Complete	Committee Work Programmes are live documents - GRIP updated, public questions task and finish group operating

4.4	Further work beyond this review	Introduce word limit to Notices of Motion		Will be implemented at future ordinary meetings of Full Council. Links to consititutional amendments	Democratic Services	Complete	Done - operational
4.5	Further work beyond this review	Introduce Pro-Active work programming for Full Council.	Implement through regular Whips Meetings.	On the agenda for the next Whips meeting	Democratic Services	Complete	Done - operational
4.6	Further work beyond this review	Implementing Members Questions at Policy Committees		Propose same approach as full council. Consultation with members and officers underway.	Democratic Services	01/09/23	Done - operational

Sheffield City Council

Report to Governance Committee

12th October 2023

Report of: Head of Policy and Partnerships

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Subject: Committee Work Programme

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Author of Report: Alice Nicholson, Policy & Improvement Officer

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Summary:

The Committee's Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1 for the Committee's consideration and discussion. This aims to show all known, substantive agenda items for forthcoming meetings of the Committee, to enable this committee, other committees, officers, partners and the public to plan their work with and for the Committee.

Any changes since the Committee's last meeting, including any new items, have been made in consultation with the Chair, and the document is always considered at the regular pre-meetings of the Committee.

The following potential sources of new items are included in this report, where applicable:
- Questions and petitions from the public, including those referred from Council
- References from Council or other committees (statements formally sent for this committee's attention)
- A list of issues, each with a short summary, which have been identified by the Committee or officers as potential items but which have not yet been scheduled (See Appendix 1)

The Work Programme will remain a live document and will be brought to each Committee meeting.

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Recommendations:

1. That the Committee's work programme, as set out in Appendix 1 be agreed, including any additions and amendments identified in Part 1.

2. That consideration be given to the further additions or adjustments to the work programme presented at Part 2 of Appendix 1.

3. Note the additional indications of items which are likely to need more intensive work (eg. citizen involvement, task and finish groups, policy review and development work) and consider implications for prioritisation of Governance Committee's forward workplan

4. Consider any further issues to be explored by officers for inclusion on the future iteration of the work programme.

Background Papers: None

Category of Report: Open

COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Update on the Committee workplan for Governance Committee

1. At the previous Governance Committee in July, Members discussed the Committee's draft workplan. As part of the discussion, Members recognised that there a number of significant items which will need and will benefit from longer-term activity, including community involvement and leadership by task and finish groups from the Committee.

2. The Governance Committee's work is an essential part of the Council's commitment to continuously improve our committee system and how we work within it as Members, officers and with citizens and partners. However, there are significant constraints on Member and officer capacity and therefore, prioritising the items on the workplan to focus on the things Members most want to achieve in the municipal year is essential.

3. However, the Governance Committee's workplan contains a mix of items. Some are relatively self-contained (eg. with a paper outlining options and officer recommendations for the Committee to discuss and agree in one meeting) while others need much deeper development work with Member, citizen and officer time.

4. To make this clearer, the workplan has been updated to:
   - Reflect the live workplan for the committee as of 4th October
   - Include an officer steer on where items are likely to need more intensive development work

5. It is recommended that Members consider the current workplan and discuss items to prioritise over the coming months, particularly where there is policy development and involvement activity needed.

References from Council or other Committees

2.1 Any references sent to this Committee by Council, including any public questions, petitions and motions, or other committees since the last meeting are listed here, with commentary and a proposed course of action, as appropriate:

Issue	N/A
Referred from	
Details	
Commentary/ Action Proposed	

Member engagement, learning and policy development outside of Committee

3.1 Subject to the capacity and availability of councillors and officers, there are a range of ways in which Members can explore subjects, monitor information and develop their ideas about forthcoming decisions outside of formal meetings.

Appendix 2 is an example 'menu' of some of the ways this could be done. It is entirely appropriate that member development, exploration and policy development should in many cases take place in a private setting, to allow members to learn and formulate a position in a neutral space before bringing the issue into the public domain at a formal meeting.

2.2 Training & Skills Development - Induction programme for this committee.

Title	Description & Format	Date
N/A		

Appendix 1 – Work Programme

Part 1: Proposed additions and amendments to the work programme since the last meeting:

Item	Proposed Date	Note	Suggested approach
Governance Review Implementation Plan	Standing Item	To update the Committee on progress against actions in the Governance Review Implementation Plan and identify further actions for inclusion. (LB)	Regular update paper to Committee
Member Development Programme	20th July 23	To consider to the existing Member Development Strategy 2021-2025 and priorities for member development activity for the next 12 months, including learning from recent reviews, such as the LGA Peer Challenge and the Race Equality Commission Report. (JD) To update at Committee – 12th Oct 2023	Member working group with regular updates to the Committee as required
Public Questions Task and Finish Group	20th July 23 Update / interim findings at 12th October Committee	As per the Governance Review recommendation: to formally agree the approach, terms of reference of, and appointment to, the task and finish work on public questions: • ensuring the process for citizens to ask public questions is clear, that public questions are triaged in a way that directs them to the most appropriate forum and that those forums are easy to access. • Considering processes for responding to public questions, ensuring a consistent approach that is fit for purpose in the Committee System.	Will require activity between meetings through Member Task & Finish Group, citizen involvement, insight analysis and development of solutions with Members / officers / citizens.
NHS governance and alignment with our committee system	12th October 2023	Governance Committee to sponsor a task and finish group to consider appropriate Sheffield City Council membership of the forum that considers joint SCC and NHS commissioning and planning through a pooled budget under Section 75 of the NHS Act 2006.	Member Task and Finish but supported by Strategic Commissioning / Strategy & Partnerships. Est. completion by Feb 24.

Democratic participation Task and Finish Group	November 2023	To formally agree the approach, terms of reference of, and appointment to, the task and finish group on citizen engagement and involvement: • consider how we can drive progress in realising our ambitions for community involvement and engagement, taking learning from recent reviews including Involve, the LGA Peer Challenge, the Race Equality Commission Report • Publish the report that Involve have prepared for Sheffield • Complement Future Sheffield programme • Connect to Member Development Programme	Will be a long-term project for the committee – citizen involvement and Task and Finish. Will need dedicated Member and officer time outside of Gov Committee meetings
Devolution to Local Area Committees and review of Committee Remits	January 2023	To consider possible changes to decision making in Local Area Committees, and how this will impact on our overall governance arrangements. Taking a holistic approach to reviewing committee remits, taking into account experience of 2023/24 workloads, any changes that have happened as a result of the development of Local Area Committees, and any changes to the council's operating/management structures.	Early conversations with LAC Chairs. Will need significant Task and Finish work to look at Policy Committee remits and the interaction between LACs and city level committees.
Urgent Decisions	28th February 24	To review the use of urgent decisions to date, understand whether the process is working as intended, and whether changes are required (DH, JD)	Policy review work – officer research presented to Committee
Charity Sub Committee and SCC role as a charitable trustee.	March 2024	To consider, and recommend to Full Council, the most appropriate way for the Council to discharge its role as Charitable Trustee	Likely to need Task and Finish group
Measuring the health of the Committee System	TBC	To develop and agree a performance framework and set of metrics to enable us to measure progress as the Committee System develops.	Should be developed and designed with citizens, officers and Members. Small number of workshops.

Changes to delegations	TBC	To consider, and recommend to Full Council, changes to delegations (including grants – initially discussed by the Committee in December 2022).	
Understanding Committee Roles and Remuneration	TBC	To consider the roles of Deputy Chair and Group Spokespeople, and whether current arrangements, including remuneration, are appropriate.	
Establishing a Sub-Committee of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Change Policy Committee to deal with TROs	TBC	Consider the role of Governance Committee in this – is it development, info or approval, for example, is TRC ultimate decision maker on this, plus full council approval.	
International Relationships	TBC	To agree a framework setting out the purpose and arrangements for International Relationships	
Officer support and engagement in Policy Committees	TBC	To be defined – need to work with Governance Committee Members and officers to agree scope and focus	

Part 2: List of other potential items not yet included in the work programme

Issues that have recently been identified by the Committee, its Chair or officers as potential items but have not yet been added to the proposed work programme. If a Councillor raises an idea in a meeting and the committee agrees under recommendation 3 that this should be explored, it will appear either in the work programme or in this section of the report at the committee's next meeting, at the discretion of the Chair.

Topic	
Description	
Lead Officer/s	
Item suggested by	*Officer, Member, Committee, partners, public question, petition etc*
Type of item	*Referral to decision-maker/Pre-decision (policy development/Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)*
Prior member engagement/ development required *(with reference to options in Appendix 2)*	

Public Participation/ Engagement approach*(with reference to toolkit in Appendix 3)*	
Lead Officer Commentary/Proposed Action(s)	

Part 3: Agenda Items for Forthcoming Meetings

Meeting 2	12th October 2023					
Topic	**Description**	**Lead Officer/s**	**Type of item** *Decision/Referral to decision-maker/Pre-decision (policy development)/Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)*	**Prior member engagement/ development required** *(with reference to options in Appendix 1)*	**Public Participation/ Engagement approach** *(with reference to toolkit in Appendix 2)*	**Final decision-maker (& date)** This Cttee/Another Cttee (eg S&R)/Full Council/Officer
Interim findings from the Public Questions and Petitions Review	Interim findings from the recent survey and workshop on public questions and petitions	Laurie Brennan Alice Nicholson	Policy development	Member Task and Finish group involvement	Online surveys In-person workshop Stakeholder-led activity	Governance Committee referral to Full Council
NHS Governance	Governance Committee to sponsor a task and finish group to consider appropriate Sheffield City Council membership of the forum that considers joint SCC and NHS commissioning and planning through a pooled	Dan Spicer	Policy development	Member Task and Finish group involvement	N/A	Governance Committee referral to Full Council (AGM, 2024).

Meeting 2	12th October 2023					
Topic	**Description**	**Lead Officer/s**	**Type of item** *Decision/Referral to decision-maker/Pre-decision (policy development)/Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)*	**Prior member engagement/ development required** *(with reference to options in Appendix 1)*	**Public Participation/ Engagement approach** *(with reference to toolkit in Appendix 2)*	**Final decision-maker (& date)** This Cttee/Another Cttee (eg S&R)/Full Council/Officer
	budget under Section 75 of the NHS Act 2006					
Member Development update	Verbal update from the Member Development Working Group	Jason Dietsch	Update	Member Working Group	N/A	N/A
Standing items	• *Public Questions/ Petitions* • *Work Programme* • *Governance Review Implementation Plan*					

Meeting 3	22nd November 2023	Time				
Topic	**Description**	**Lead Officer/s**	**Type of item** *Decision/Referral to decision-maker/Pre-decision (policy development)/Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)*	**Prior member engagement/ development required** *(with reference to options in Appendix 1)*	**Public Participation/ Engagement approach** *(with reference to toolkit in Appendix 2)*	**Final decision-maker (& date)** This Cttee/Another Cttee (eg S&R)/Full Council/Officer
Democratic participation	• consider how we can drive progress in realising our ambitions for community involvement and	James Henderson Laurie Brennan	Policy development	With Governance Committee and T&F	Yes – align to Future Sheffield and Member Development Programme	TBC – connects to S&R Committee and Full Council

	engagement, taking learning from recent reviews including Involve, the LGA Peer Challenge, the Race Equality Commission Report • Publish the report that Involve have prepared for Sheffield • Complement Future Sheffield programme • Connect to Member Development Programme					
Standing items	• *Public Questions/ Petitions* • *Work Programme* • *Governance Review Implementation Plan*					

Meeting 4	**14th December 2023**	Time				
Topic	**Description**	**Lead Officer/s**	**Type of item** *Decision/Referral to decision-maker/Pre-decision (policy development)/Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)*	**Prior member engagement/ development required** *(with reference to options in Appendix 1)*	**Public Participation/ Engagement approach** *(with reference to toolkit in Appendix 2)*	**Final decision-maker (& date)** This Cttee/Another Cttee (eg S&R)/Full Council/Officer
TBC	Could be space for citizen engagement / workshops					

Standing items	• *Public Questions/ Petitions* • *Work Programme* • *Governance Review Implementation Plan*					

Meeting 5	**17th January 2024**	Time				
Topic	**Description**	**Lead Officer/s**	**Type of item** *Decision/Referral to decision-maker/Pre-decision (policy development)/Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)*	**Prior member engagement/ development required** *(with reference to options in Appendix 1)*	**Public Participation/ Engagement approach** *(with reference to toolkit in Appendix 2)*	**Final decision-maker (& date)** This Cttee/Another Cttee (eg S&R)/Full Council/Officer
Committee Remits and LACs	To consider possible changes to decision making in Local Area Committees, and how this will impact on our overall governance arrangements. Taking a holistic approach to reviewing committee remits, taking into account experience of 2023/24 workloads, any changes that have happened as a result of the development of Local Area Committees, and any changes to the council's	James Henderson David Hollis Lorraine Wood	Policy Development	For Committee to scope	Yes – to be developed	Full Council (AGM 2024)

	operating/management structures.					
Standing items	• *Public Questions/ Petitions* • *Work Programme* • *Governance Review Implementation Plan*					

Meeting 6	**28th February 2024**	Time				
Topic	**Description**	**Lead Officer/s**	**Type of item** *Decision/Referral to decision-maker/Pre-decision (policy development)/Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)*	**Prior member engagement/ development required** *(with reference to options in Appendix 1)*	**Public Participation/ Engagement approach** *(with reference to toolkit in Appendix 2)*	**Final decision-maker (& date)** This Cttee/Another Cttee (eg S&R)/Full Council/Officer
Urgent Decisions	To review the use of urgent decisions to date, understand whether the process is working as intended, and whether changes are required					
Standing items	• *Public Questions/ Petitions* • *Work Programme* • *Governance Review Implementation Plan*					

Meeting 8	27th March 2024	Time				
Topic	**Description**	**Lead Officer/s**	**Type of item** *Decision/Referral to decision-maker/Pre-decision (policy development)/Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)*	**Prior member engagement/ development required** *(with reference to options in Appendix 1)*	**Public Participation/ Engagement approach** *(with reference to toolkit in Appendix 2)*	**Final decision-maker (& date)** This Cttee/Another Cttee (eg S&R)/Full Council/Officer
Charity Sub Committee and SCC role as a charitable trustee.	To consider, and recommend to Full Council, the most appropriate way for the Council to discharge its role as Charitable Trustee	David Hollis	Referral to decision maker		To be defined	Full Council (AGM 2024)
Standing items	• *Public Questions/ Petitions* • *Work Programme* • *Governance Review Implementation Plan*					

Appendix 2 – Menu of options for member engagement, learning and development prior to formal Committee consideration

Members should give early consideration to the degree of pre-work needed before an item appears on a formal agenda.

All agenda items will anyway be supported by the following:

- Discussion well in advance as part of the work programme item at Pre-agenda meetings. These take place in advance of each formal meeting, before the agenda is published and they consider the full work programme, not just the immediate forthcoming meeting. They include the Chair, Vice Chair and all Group Spokespersons from the committee, with officers
- Discussion and, where required, briefing by officers at pre-committee meetings in advance of each formal meeting, after the agenda is published. These include the Chair, Vice Chair and all Group Spokespersons from the committee, with officers.
- Work Programming items on each formal agenda, as part of an annual and ongoing work programming exercise
- Full officer report on a public agenda, with time for a public discussion in committee
- Officer meetings with Chair & VC as representatives of the committee, to consider addition to the draft work programme, and later to inform the overall development of the issue and report, for the committee's consideration.

The following are examples of some of the optional ways in which the committee may wish to ensure that they are sufficiently engaged and informed prior to taking a public decision on a matter. In all cases the presumption is that these will take place in private, however some meetings could happen in public or eg be reported to the public committee at a later date.

These options are presented in approximately ascending order of the amount of resources needed to deliver them. Members must prioritise carefully, in consultation with officers, which items require what degree of involvement and information in advance of committee meetings, in order that this can be delivered within the officer capacity available.

The majority of items cannot be subject to the more involved options on this list, for reasons of officer capacity.

- Written briefing for the committee or all members (email)
- All-member newsletter (email)
- Requests for information from specific outside bodies etc.
- All-committee briefings (private or, in exceptional cases, in-committee)
- All-member briefing (virtual meeting)
- Facilitated policy development workshop (potential to invite external experts / public, see appendix 3)
- Site visits (including to services of the council)
- Task and Finish group (one at a time, one per cttee)

Furthermore, a range of public participation and engagement options are available to inform Councillors, see appendix 3.

Appendix 3 – Public engagement and participation toolkit

Public Engagement Toolkit

On 23 March 2022 Full Council agreed the following:

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. The toolkit includes (but is 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.

This public engagement toolkit is intended to be a quick 'how-to' guide for Members and officers to use when undertaking participatory activity through committees.

It will provide an overview of the options available, including the above list, and cover:

- How to focus on purpose and who we are trying to reach
- When to use and when not to use different methods
- How to plan well and be clear to citizens what impact their voice will have
- How to manage costs, timescales, scale.

There is an expectation that Members and Officers will be giving strong consideration to the public participation and engagement options for each item on a committee's work programme, with reference to the above list a-k.