



Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee 28th November 2019

Evidence Session A – 10am – 12.30pm

Local organisations with an interest in governance and decision making

Written Evidence From:

Vicky Seddon – Co-ordinator, Sheffield for Democracy.

Documents attached

- Response to Online Call for Evidence
 - Sheffield for Democracy Improvements we seek to local democracy in Sheffield City Council
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Sheffield for Democracy response to Call for Evidence – Governance Review 2019

What does good decision making look like to you?

Timely, well informed, taking account of differing perspectives and different effects on individuals and communities, clear explanation of why taken.

What is important to you or your organisation about the way Sheffield City Council makes decisions?

That there has been opportunity for different perspectives to be heard and debated and in a respectful manner. That the people the most affected have a voice and that voice is heard. That there is sufficient time scale for decisions to be put into practice and problems ironed out before they are put to the test in an election. One year between elections means this is not possible, meaning that difficult decisions are put off. We need to change the time cycle of elections.

What do you like about the way in which Sheffield City Council makes decisions at the moment?

Not sure how to answer this.

What don't you like about the way in which Sheffield City Council makes decisions at the moment?

Some very poor decisions have been made; Mount Pleasant for example. Budget cuts mean there are not enough staff to service decision making: community assemblies were shut down partly, I believe, because there were not enough staff to service them. So input from communities was reduced. The process that supposedly replaced them have never worked. Scrutiny processes have limited effectiveness.

What features would you like to see in any new decision making structure in Sheffield?

They must be efficient and effective.
Longer operational timescales so that problems can be sorted before facing the test of an election
More resources allocated for decisions made by local communities
More cross party consultation and working together

Is there anything to avoid in any new decision making structure in Sheffield?

Don't make it look as if there are small concessions that act to buy people off. Must be a genuine cross party process with a built in review of how any changes are working out

Would you like to add any further information regarding Sheffield City Council's decision making processes?

A move to a 4 year all-out election process would assist in making cross party working more constructive.