



Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee 28th November 2019

Evidence Session E – 6pm-8pm

Groups and Individuals who have requested to give evidence in person

Written Evidence From:

Cllr Douglas Johnson for Sheffield Green Party

Sheffield Green Party response to Governance Review

This is Sheffield Green Party's initial response to the Call for Evidence in the Governance Review 2019.

We would be pleased to give further oral evidence in support of these written submissions.

The new system should be based on two overall aims:

- Improving the wellbeing of everyone in the city, including tackling inequalities; and
- Trying to ensure that the new system encourages and enables all citizens to influence decision-making affecting their lives.

We believe it is wrong in principle, where the people of Sheffield elect 84 councillors, to allow just one of those councillors to be able to make all the decisions. This creates unfairness and inequality.

A committee system should be based on the following principles:

1. Every elected councillor should be involved in decision-making on at least one committee
2. Committees for various policy areas should make decisions and will be provided with officer reports to inform them (as happens at present)

3. Committees may have sub-committees to further delegate decisions
4. Committee chairs should be appointed on a cross-party proportional basis
5. The most important decisions should be reserved for full council
6. Council should agree which decisions are delegated to committees, sub-committees, and different levels of officers. In principle, the level of delegation should match the importance of the decision.
7. There should be a written scheme of delegation (very similar to the present Leader's Scheme of Delegation).
8. Operational decisions should generally be delegated to officers
9. Where decisions are delegated, there must be a process for councillors to challenge decisions and bring them to a higher level committee or full council; provided there are checks to make sure that minor decisions don't clog up the system. This could require a minimum number of councillors to request a review of a decision and / or the approval of the committee it was brought to before it was discussed fully.
10. There should be delegation for urgent decision-making, possibly to chairs of committees. However, urgent decision-making should be confined to the minimum extent necessary and with additional safeguards to report back fully to the normal decision-maker.
11. Public engagement should be fostered as much as possible, through an accessible website, meaningful consultations and an improvement in the quality of written officers' reports.
12. Critically, elected councillors should be encouraged to find out about problems in their areas, feed them into the council, be listened to and be able to influence policy decisions based on knowledge.

Cllr Douglas Johnson
Sheffield Green Party
17 November 2019