



Governance Committee Report

Report of: Director of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Date: 30 November 2021

Subject: Transition to a Committee System Inquiry Session 1

Author of Report: Alexander Polak, Assistant Director (Governance)

Summary:

The purpose of this report is:

1. To provide an update on progress since the Committee's last meeting on 20 September 2021
 2. To commence the committee's inquiry into the future governance model by collating, summarising and contextualising information, opinion and evidence which the Council has gathered in recent weeks, months and years which should inform Members' decisions about the future governance model of the Council. This information is organised using the governance framework previously agreed by the Committee for this purpose.
 3. To present a series of design questions and some limited options relating to each facet of the governance framework which have been directly informed by the feedback received by the public and stakeholders.
 4. To set the context within which members will hear new evidence at their inquiry sessions on 7th and 8th December – allowing members to focus on any specific areas about which they need further information in order to reach a decision.
 5. To act as a 'first draft' of the report which the Committee will receive again on 22 December. At that time it will include a recommendation to refer the committee's preferred options on to Full Council at the 12 January Full Council meeting. This report, or one building on it, will be updated between now and then in light of the Committee's findings and decisions.
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Recommendations:

1. *That progress in the five weeks since the committee's last meeting be noted.*
2. *That the volume of evidence so far gathered by the Council over the past few years and months, summarised in this report and its appendices, be given full consideration with a view to informing the Committee's views on the Council's future governance model,*
3. *That members identify any key gaps in the evidence available which could be addressed within the remainder of this inquiry process; and*
4. *That the questions and early options presented throughout the paper are considered with a view to whether the committee can provide any degree of steer in order to progress the inquiry towards recommendations to Council by the end of December.*

Background Papers: N/A

Category of Report: OPEN

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial Implications
NO - Cleared by: Kayleigh Inman
Legal Implications
NO - Cleared by: Andrea Simpson
Equality of Opportunity Implications
NO
Tackling Health Inequalities Implications
NO
Human rights Implications
NO:
Environmental and Sustainability implications
NO
Economic impact
NO
Community safety implications
NO
Human resources implications
NO
Property implications
NO
Area(s) affected
None
Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Member
Councillor Julie Grocutt, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Community Engagement and Governance
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?
NO
Press release
NO

TRANSITION TO A COMMITTEE SYSTEM INQUIRY SESSION 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Governance Committee has been appointed by Sheffield City Council to lead the work which will take the Council from a 'Leader and Cabinet' model of Governance to a 'Committee' model. This report commences the 'inquiry' process which is designed to get the committee to a recommended draft model by the end of December. It does this by summarising all of the information on this topic which the Council has collated to date. Further forthcoming inquiry sessions will explore new information on top of this. The recommendations to Council will be debated by all members on 12 January, and whatever they endorse will be used to steer wider public engagement and development of the final recommendations and revised Constitution during January-March 2022.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 On [20th September 2021](#) and [27 October 2021](#) the Governance Committee met and considered papers which set out the background for this work. In summary the Committee has agreed:

- Draft design principles for use when weighing up options before May 2022 and when measuring the degree of success after May 2022
- A draft governance framework for public use to support conversations with stakeholders, the public, councillors and officers about the future model of the Council's governance
- Commencement of stakeholder engagement about these principles and about the various aspects of the governance framework
- A plan for a several-stage process with simultaneous design and engagement informing each other as they proceed
- Commencement of that stakeholder engagement activity in a two main stages:
 - Proportionate, topic-by-topic engagement with internal and external stakeholders on technical questions as they arise, including an open public invitation for participants to contribute via a stakeholder group made up of interested parties;
 - A city-wide, facilitated, representative, discursive engagement exercise in the new year, by which time more citizens' input could be more impactfully applied to the emerging model, and to shaping future ways of working within it.
- Commencement of design of the new committee governance model, via a whole-committee inquiry to be conducted between 27 October and Christmas, with the goal of recommending a draft committee governance model to Full Council for endorsement in January

- That the model which Council endorses in January will be used as the starting point for the 2022 phase of public engagement as well as the basis for agreeing the final model and associated Constitution in March 2022

- 2.2 Progress has been made in the weeks between the 27 October 2021 Committee meeting and the time of writing this report, including:
1. Collation, analysis and drafting of the information contained in this report and its appendices
 2. Continuing the fortnightly series of workshops and briefings ('drop-ins') for stakeholders and the public in the form of an in-person workshop on 8 November and an online workshop on 24 November (after the publication of this report), both focused on the detail of aspects of the governance framework as agreed by the Governance Committee in October;
 3. Ongoing briefings and Q&As for Councillors in various settings including the Chairs of Transitional Committees, Chairs of Local Area Committees, members of the Co-Operative Executive, Members of the Governance Committee itself and each individual Political Group's own meetings;
 4. Further briefings with senior officers and key manager groups (such as HR and Finance Business Partners) and associated planning of training and development for Officers;
 5. Development of a draft Member Development Strategy and Member Development Plan (including induction) in light of the transition to a committee system, including initial engagement with the new Member Development Steering Group;
 6. Continuing to work with key outside bodies which will support the Council with aspects of this process, including the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, the Local Government Association, and Involve on various aspects of the programme including current and future public engagement, early research and design, member and officer briefings and development of the above member development programme;
 7. Commencement of the redrafting of the Constitution in readiness for Members' decisions about key aspects of this in the new year
 8. Continuing work with member support teams in order to understand their 'as-is' position and the scale and character of the pressures on current ways of working, from which a 'to-be' model of member support can be developed in time for May 2022. This has included ensuring that Trade Unions are briefed.

- 2.3 The Governance Committee has previously endorsed an iterative approach to developing Sheffield City Council's new governance model, whereby design takes place alongside engagement. To support the first stages of this process it was considered helpful to agree a framework, representing a reasonably generic committee system, for use in conversations over the coming weeks. Appendix 1 is a framework which has been developed for this purpose. This report is structured using that framework. The public and stakeholder engagement which has taken

place since the framework was agreed was also structured using this framework.

2.4 This framework was *not a proposed governance model for Sheffield*, it is a descriptive list of the main areas which will need discussion in order to design a Sheffield-specific model. It is based on the experiences of other committee-led councils and expert advice from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. Most of the words included reflect either the necessities of the legal position or a reasonably standard approach to dealing with the problems which councils need to solve to run an effective committee system. Inevitably a level of judgement has been applied in order to produce this model but the Council has been keen that this not be seen as representing a proposal except in the loosest sense in which it is helpful to have a ‘starter for ten’ in order to have useful conversations about governance design. However in the coming weeks it will be necessary for this to transition into a proposed governance model.

2.5 The primary question which should be asked about this model is:

‘what changes, if any, would make this framework into a model that is right for Sheffield?’

3.0 COMMENCING THE INQUIRY

3.1 The inquiry commencing today has been designed to follow on from, and somewhat mirror in form, the exercise undertaken by the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in 2019 when it looked at what should be achieved through changing the Council’s decision-making model. The committee used a ‘select committee’ approach to this work, holding a series of evidence gathering sessions to hear from a range of witnesses. They also invited contributions from citizens through an online call for evidence and attendance at meetings, and undertook site visits and conversations with other local authorities to learn from their experiences of operating different governance models. A full list of witnesses, links to the evidence they considered and webcasts of their meetings can be found that committee’s final report, [‘Principles for Governance at Sheffield City Council’](#).

3.2 This inquiry is not designed to re-do that 2019 committee’s work, which is generally well-regarded. Evidence from this activity is readily available (including via hyperlinks and a light summary in Appendix 2) and should still be largely relevant. Today’s meeting is primarily for the purpose of ensuring that all the valuable insights gained during that process and other exercises since on this topic are fresh in the minds of Councillors who are making decisions about Sheffield City Council’s future governance model over the coming weeks and months, and possibly to gain an early steer from Councillors.

3.3 The plan for this inquiry has been worked up in consultation with the

Chair and Vice chair and engagement with the whole committee including an inquiry planning workshop on 8 November.

- 3.4 As agreed by members, today's report includes:
- a. Collation of opinion, ideas and feedback gathered through council-led engagement with stakeholders, the public, members and council officers as described above
 - b. Desktop research including review of relevant material received in the 2019 Scrutiny exercise and since, including the Big City Conversation
 - c. Research into comparator authorities' experiences and recognised best practice
 - d. The main questions which Members will need to address under each of the facets of the framework
- 3.5 At the time of writing this report, contributors to the inquiry sessions on 7 and/or 8 December are not confirmed and these sessions are under development in consultation with Members as above. However these are expected to include:
- e. Lessons learnt from the first few months of the active experimentation taking place within the Council's democratic arena via the Transitional Committees, Local Area Committees, Co-Chairing pilot and other Members' experiences of decision-making during the 2021/22 transitional year
 - f. Updated written or verbal submissions from a range of other contributors including an open invite to the witnesses from the 2019 Scrutiny exercise to update their submissions with any new or changed information. This includes eg representatives from the business community, officers, academics, local campaign groups etc
 - g. We hope to hear directly from Councillors and Officers from other authorities which have moved to operate a Committee System in the modern era.
- 3.6 The Governance Committee has decided to follow a principle of inviting back previous contributors to the 2019 Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee's review if they wish to give a written or verbal update to their previous submission. Only new or updated information is to be accepted. An open public call for evidence has not been repeated in light of the open public engagement sessions recently undertaken and still underway, and in light of the engagement work to be undertaken with the support of Involve early in the new year, which will be explicitly aimed at ensuring a diversity of voices from across the communities of Sheffield.

- 3.7 A few additional key names have been added to the list of invited witnesses, which is currently as below. It remains to be seen how the committee's time on the 7th and 8th December can be most usefully stretched across whatever number of witnesses agree or request to attend (virtually or in person).

Judith Hurcombe	LGA
John Cade	INLOGOV
Ian Parry Jacqui McKinlay	CfGS
Vicky Seddon	Sheffield for Democracy
Nigel Slack	N/A
Helen Steers Helen Sims	Voluntary Action Sheffield
Alexis Krachai Louisa Harrison- Walker	Chamber of Commerce
Emma Hinchliffe	Sheffield Youth Cabinet (Sheffield Futures)
Dr Karen Ford	
Kevin Poppelwell	
Robin Hughes	Joined Up Heritage Sheffield
Colin Copus	Local Governance Research Centre - De Montfort Uni
Kate Josephs	SSC CEO
Ruth Hubbard	It's Our City
Clr Dale and Clr Naz	Co-chairing pilot
Transitional Cttee Chairs and VCs	Transitional Committee lessons learnt so far
Clive Betts MP	
Lord David Blunkett	
Ian Thomas	CEO Kingston-upon-Thames
Clr Andreas Kirsch	Leader Kingston-upon-Thames
Clr Phélim Mac Cafferty	Leader Brighton & Hove City Council
Geoff Raw (Brighton officer option 1)	CEO Brighton & Hove City Council
Abraham Ghebre Ghiorghis (Brighton officer option 2)	Executive Lead for Strategy, Governance & Law Brighton & Hove City Council
Lorraine O'Donnell (Cheshire East officer option 1)	Chief Executive Cheshire East Council
David Brown (Cheshire East officer option 2)	Director of Governance and Compliance – Monitoring Officer Cheshire East
Sam Corcoran	Leader Cheshire East Council
Amanda Whitaker	Democratic Services Hartlepool Borough Council
Cameron Stockell	Deputy Leader of Hartlepool Borough Council
Matthew Wood	University of Sheffield

- 3.8 The resources and submissions from 2019 are summarised in Appendix 2.

4.0 ISSUES AND OPTIONS – THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 At this starting point in the enquiry, a series of key design questions are presented against each facet of the governance framework, rather than

explicit options or proposals, although in some cases the questions proposed amount to a series of options.

4.2 The following appendices have been organised and analysed under the headings of the governance framework in order that they can be reviewed alongside the main body of this report and inform discussion:

- Appendix 1 – Diagram of the whole Governance Framework. Some additional headings which do not appear on that framework (such as ‘committee chairs’) have been added in the report below where there are enough key questions, or enough learning points from sources, to warrant it.
- Appendix 2 – Summary of key points from the 2019 Overview and Scrutiny exercise, and the early parts of the Big City Conversation which took place pre-pandemic
- Appendix 3 – Case studies of seven other committee-led local authorities, labelled A-G. These include structure diagrams and analysis of their working arrangements under each of the headings of the governance framework.
- Appendix 6 and 7 – Collated and summarised public and stakeholder feedback about all the aspects of the governance framework, arising from the series of events as described within that appendix (and in the report elsewhere on this agenda).

4.3 The following sections of this report can be expected to return to the committee, with further information and options included, as the inquiry proceeds.

4.4 The draft design principles which were previously agreed by this committee are under review elsewhere on today’s agenda to reflect the feedback received through the engagement sessions. Once their next iteration is confirmed, members can expect to see them incorporated into the next iteration of this report in order to support the evaluation of emerging options.

5.0 LEADERSHIP - FULL COUNCIL

1. Full Council

Statements-

- Is made up of all the City Councillors elected by the people of Sheffield to listen to and represent their wards and the people who live within them
- Agrees the Constitution (i.e. how the Council operates)
- Sets the Scheme of Delegations (i.e. who can make which decisions)
- Is the forum where all Members steer the overall direction of the Council, set the boundaries within which all the themed committees have to operate (known as the 'budget and policy framework'), and keep oversight of decisions made across the whole system. In exceptional circumstances, can overturn decisions made by Committees.
- Appoints councillors to individual committees and elects the Leader of the Council and the ceremonial Lord Mayor.

5.1 Key design questions:

- Do we need a mechanism for calling issues in to Full Council (taking them out of the hands of a committee) in extremis?
- If so, what criteria must be fulfilled?
 - Number of councillors agreeing?
 - Checklist in constitution eg not vexatious, repetitious, irrelevant etc
- If the agenda of full Council might be going to get busier (as per testimony from other committee-led authorities), should the meeting be more frequent or just more efficient?
 - What aspects of the meeting could be changed/curtailed/redirected elsewhere in order to use members' time as effectively as possible?

6.0 LEADERSHIP - LEADER'S ROLE

2. Leader's Role

Statements

- Advocate for the city and represents the Council in regional and national networks and with Government
- Acts as the Council's nominee at South Yorkshire City Region (SYCR) and has voting rights when taking SYCR decisions
- Lead Spokesperson for the Council as a whole
- Chair of Overarching Committee (see elsewhere on page)

3. Lord Mayor's Role

Statements

- Ceremonial 'First Citizen' representing the Council as a civic body in formal and informal public settings and promoting local causes
- Chairs Full Council (has a casting vote if votes are tied)

- 6.1 Key Design Questions:
- What should be written into the newly defined role of the Leader?
 - Examples exist from eg Wirral and Cheshire East
 - Does anything need to change about the role of the Lord Mayor?
 - Should the council encourage or facilitate the sharing of roles such as ‘Leader’ or ‘Lord Mayor’ between more than one Councillor?
 - If so, how?

7.0 LEADERSHIP – ROLE OF POLICY COMMITTEE CHAIRS

- 7.1 Key design questions:
- What should be written into the newly defined role of Policy Committee Chair?
 - Should there be any constitutional requirements constraining who Full Council can elect as Chairs or Vice Chairs of policy committees?
 - Eg with regard to whether they are in the administration, opposition, or some other Group?
 - Should the council encourage or facilitate the sharing of roles such as ‘committee chair’ between more than one Councillor?
 - If so, how?

8.0 COMMITTEES - POLICY COMMITTEES

4. Themed Committees

Statements

- Decision-making Committees organised by theme (Full Council sets exact number, titles and remits – which may be reviewed and changed at each year’s Annual Meeting)
- Work within the Budget, Policy and Strategy Frameworks set by the Full Council & any Overarching Committee
- Make up of all Themed Committees is proportionate to the size of each party group on Full Council
- In certain conditions Committees may establish a limited number of temporary, time-limited Sub-Committees for specific purposes, such as to develop policy on a specific issue.

- 8.1 As the creation of themed committees is the definitive aspect of change in the new governance system for the Council to effectively and efficiently manage the decision-making, it is considered prudent to begin consideration of real options soonest with regard to this facet of

the governance framework

- 8.2 Appendix 4 contains a series of hypothetical models showing a very similar structure of committees to the current model but with various amounts of Policy Committees replacing the Co-Operative Executive and all Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 8.3 Appendix 5 contains certain statistics which it is important to view alongside these models:
- Analysis of the workload on members of various numbers of committees (the number of members on each committee has been proportionally reduced for the models with more committees)
 - Analysis of the frequency with which any of those Policy Committees could meet within the bounds of broadly the amount of democratic and member support officers we have in place (ie less frequently, if there are more separate committees)

8.4

Mini Case Study: Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council

Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council has recently moved to a committee system. They are one of the example authorities examined in Appendix 4. On 30 June the Secretary of State announced an [external assurance review](#) of Wirral Borough Council's financial position and the strength of its wider governance arrangements. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) led on the financial aspects of the review. [Ada Burns](#), former Chief Executive of Darlington Borough Council, led on governance.

CIPFA's financial review and Ada Burn's governance review set out detailed findings, including conclusions, evidence and methodology used, and include the following statements:

"The move to a Committee system, implemented in the middle of the pandemic has clearly improved Member engagement but poses a further risk to the improvement journey because of its immaturity, its over-elaborate design, and the administrative burden its placing on Officers..."

"Potentially [the committee system] has a valuable role to play in allowing space for deep Member involvement and consensus building, and transparency and engagement have been cited in every interview as a positive benefit of the move. This is particularly valuable in an environment of No Overall Control with five political groupings and elections in thirds.

"However, there are significant risks to the ability of the system to support swift and sustained progress on finances. The risks sit with the division of responsibility and resources into seven Policy Committees, with the retention in addition of a Decision Review

Committee. This poses a risk of fragmentation and delay, for example where corporate and service savings strategies need sign up from all Committees. The risks of fragmentation could be mitigated where there is a comprehensive Council financial strategy (as above) which Policy and Resources would lead and delegate to the Committees to drive forward. I've seen no evidence that this is in place and indeed the budget development process agreed by Policy and Resources Committee on 17th March 2021 revolves around a consideration by each Committee of only the budgets relevant to their responsibilities..."

"The number of Committees and requirements to ensure appropriate briefing of all the five Political Groups in the lead up to each meeting is posing a significant resource burden on the Council. The volume of papers and length of agendas is both an administrative burden and a likely distraction from a necessary focus on key decisions..."

"Further, the existence and procedures of the Decision Review Committee poses a risk to swift decision making, and it is difficult to understand the rationale for retaining a feature of the strong Leader and Cabinet model in a Committee system..."

"It is the case that Officers who have risen in seniority during the years of the strong leader and executive model will have had less exposure to politicians than within a committee system, and it may be that more training is necessary to ensure that they make their input appropriately and effectively..."

"Members [should] work with the Director of Law and Governance to review the Committee system to reduce the number of Committees, assign authority to the Policy and Resources Committee in respect of financial recovery, and significantly reduce the related administrative burden"

8.4 Key Design Questions:

- How many committees should there be?
 - Based on cost
 - Based on efficiency/bureaucracy/pace
 - Based on volume of decisions to be made
 - Based on capacity of members
 - Based on capacity of officers
 - Based on how many members need or want to be on a policy committee (in addition to roles on other pre-existing committees such as Planning, Audit etc)
 - Based on number of key member roles (and associated Special Responsibility Allowances)
- What should their remits be?
 - Based on thematic areas (such as previous scrutiny remits)
 - Eg Children, Young People and Family Support;

- Healthier Communities and Adult Social Care; Management Committee (3 cttees)
 - Eg Children, Young People & Family Support; Healthier Communities & Adult Social Care; Economic & Environmental Wellbeing; Safer & Stronger communities; Strategy & Resources (5 cttees)
 - Based on alignment to the corporate structure
 - Eg Resources, Place, People (3 cttees)
 - Eg Children, young people and education; adult social care and health; Housing and neighbourhood services; Environment, climate and transport; Economy, regeneration and culture; policy, finance and resources (6 cttees)
 - Based on Functions of Council
 - eg Local Housing Authority, Highways Authority, Social Services or Children's Services Authority etc
- How do we avoid policy committees becoming siloed in their ways of thinking?
- What should they be called?
 - Eg Service Committees
 - Eg Policy Committees
 - Eg Themed Committees
- How often will they meet, at what time of day, for how long?
 - Eg agree a minimum likely frequency and use that to calculate how many committees can be serviced within current capacity
 - Eg stick with broadly status quo for now
 - Eg wholesale shift to afternoons or evenings (this would have major workforce implications)
- Will there be any sub-committees?
 - Will there be limits on duration/purpose/resources for sub-committees (eg task and finish groups)?
 - Will standing sub-committees be allowed and if so, on what topics?
- How will Committees ensure that they are able to move swiftly on major, complex and fast-moving issues?
 - Role of Group Spokespersons to meet regularly with Chair and officers in between meetings?
- Will committees work in the same way consistently?
- When cross-cutting issues arise, what happens?
 - Do committees negotiate between themselves over which one deals with it?
 - Does a co-ordinating committee step in?
- How will the budget setting process work? Will every committee have a role to play, or just a 'strategy and resources' committee?
- How will committees ensure that the voice of residents are at the heart of all decisions?
 - Early engagement by officers in the policy development phases?

- What direct engagement tools are available to committees and when would it be appropriate to use them?
 - Co-optees?
 - Time-limited engagement activity such as deliberative discussion, inquiries, community workshops?

9.0 COMMITTEES - OVERARCHING COMMITTEE

5. Overarching Committee

Statements

- Overarching Committee with strategic responsibilities (NB this idea was endorsed by Full Council pre-referendum)
- Develops a Corporate Plan, budget and other aspects of the Budget & Policy Framework, with input of the other Themed Committees, for agreement/endorsement by Full Council- and then can only work within those limits agreed by Council
- Takes strategic decisions and sets the overall work programme for the Themed Committees which are each responsible for delivering specific parts of a Corporate Plan
- Membership typically is Chairs of all the Themed Committees plus others to maintain political proportionality. Chaired by Leader of the Council

9.1 Key design questions:

- Will there be a committee with a strategic/cross-cutting/coordinating role?
- If so what will its functions be?
 - Financial?
 - Coordinating Policy?
 - Determining which committee will lead on cross-cutting issues?
 - Strategic Issues?
 - Urgent decisions?
 - Determining whether to 'call-in' an issue to Council?
 - Corporate Communications?
 - Holding other policy committees to account on delivery of their plans?
- If so, will its membership include the Chairs of the other committees? Vice Chairs?
- If so, how will proportionality be maintained?

10.0 COMMITTEES - LOCAL AREA COMMITTEES

6. Local Area Committees

Statements

- There are 7 LACs across the city
- Made up of all of the members from the local area (not subject to political proportionality)
- Formal Committees with some decision-making authority, but many of their important roles do not require any particular authority (e.g. facilitating, brokering, listening, amplifying)
- Take certain operational decisions with local impacts, within the scope agreed by Full Council

10.1 Key Design Questions:

[Noting that the timetable for devolution of decision-making authority to LACs is outside the scope of this project]

- How do LACs escalate issues for strategic consideration?
- What types of issues or question are appropriate for the strategic parts of the organisation to ask LACs to raise at their local meetings?

11.0 COMMITTEES - STATUTORY SCRUTINY

7. Statutory Scrutiny

Statements

- No legal requirement for separate Scrutiny Committee(s) now that cross-party check and challenge (and cross-party policy development) is built into every decision-making Committee and Full Council.
- Some statutory responsibilities remain & must be effective, including Health and Crime & Disorder. This can be made part of the remit of other existing (non-scrutiny) Committees or we could maintain a standalone Committee.

11.1 Key Design Questions:

- Which committees should cover the statutory responsibility to scrutinise the Health Service, flooding, and crime and disorder?
 - The relevant policy cttee?
 - One or more other pre-existing committees in the structure?
- Are any additional checks and balances on decision-makers required?
 - Opposition Groups within the decision-making committee itself
 - Audit Committee
 - Finance/resources committee

- Openness and transparency / elections
- Mechanism for calling issues in to Full Council in extremis?

12.0 COMMITTEES - OTHER COMMITTEES

8. Other Committees

Statements

- A range of existing Committees continue to serve their current functions e.g. Planning, Licensing, Audit and Standards
- Some Committees may need to be reshaped or rethought in order to fit within the new Committee System, such as Health & Wellbeing Board, Joint Commissioning Committee.

12.1 Key design questions:

- Will there be a need for a separate Governance Committee?
 - To review the model in due course and continue to make recommendations for improvement.
- Will there be a separate 'urgency' committee?
- How will the role of the current Joint Commissioning Committee be incorporated in the model?
- Will anything need to change about Joint Committees and Partnership Boards in the new framework?
- Can we streamline some of the other existing committees/subcommittees?
 - There must be two Licencing committees for technical legal reasons, one dealing with statutory licensing and one with other licensing functions, but the membership can be the same for both and they can meet with the same frequency between them (as now) so not much must operationally change about how this currently works
- Which Committee should oversee the development and maintenance of a member development strategy and plan which are fit for purpose to support the transition to committees?
 - Full Council?
 - Governance Committee?
 - Audit & Standards Committee?
- Who should replace the current Co-op Executive nominees on the Health and Wellbeing Board?

13.0 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATIONS

9. Public Engagement

Statements-

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

10. Communications

Statements-

- A protocol will define who can make official statements on behalf of the Council under the new Committee System. Typically each political Group will have a nominated public spokesperson for each committee, but official Council statements are likely to be in the names of the Chairs of the relevant Committee.

13.1 Key Design Questions:

- How will policy committees approve/conduct comms & engagement?
 - Can the Chair of each policy committee commission comms or is this a role for an overarching committee?
- What is the role of Group Spokespersons?
- What communication channels should committees routinely use to communicate with the public and what format should this take?
- What will the model be for public participation in committee meetings?
 - in person, remotely, both?
 - Continue with open time for public questions, or some other mechanism for ensuring residents are speaking in the most impactful setting (and keeping Full Council focused on strategic matters)?
 - Should public questions be written and submitted in advance?
 - Should public questions at committee be verbal or written only?

14.0 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES - SCHEMES OF DELEGATION

11. Schemes of Delegation

Statements-

- All decisions previously made by the Co-operative Executive will be made at the new Themed Committees. Decisions previously made by Individual Executive Members could either be made at a Thematic Committee or by Officers. Where decisions are made by Officers, the thresholds for this, and mechanisms for transparency and holding decision-makers to account, will be clear in the Constitution.

14.1 Key design questions:

- Do the current decision-making limits and delegations for Officers need to change?
- If so, how should a threshold be defined?

- Based on member capacity?
- Based on a definition of what is strategic?
- Based on efficiency/bureaucracy/pace?
- How do we ensure there is appropriate member oversight and opportunities to hold decision-makers to account?

15.0 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES - STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MEMBERS

12. Statutory Responsibilities for Members

Statements-

- It will still be a legal requirement that we have a Lead Member for Children's Services. This role is usually combined with Chairmanship of the relevant Committee(s).
- Individual Member decision making is not permitted under the Committee System.

15.1 Key Design Questions:

- What responsibilities and extra duties including various Boards should be considered necessarily associated with the Lead Member for Children's Services?
- Are these achievable alongside a chairmanship role?

16.0 MISC - STAFFING, RELATIONSHIPS, CASEWORK ETC

13. Staffing, Relationships and Casework

Statements-

- The Member Support offer will need to be reviewed in line with the new model.
- Various new relationships and ways of working between Members and Officers must be forged
- Member Casework support mechanisms may need to be reviewed

16.1 Key design questions:

- What degree of officer support will be needed by each committee and their Chairs and Vice Chairs?
 - Primarily these are operational decisions relating to the officer establishment and service offer
- What are the ambitions for digitally-enabled ways of working?
 - Online agendas/papers?
 - Hybrid meeting technology and protocols?
 - Online engagement?
- Who will define what 'Special Responsibility Allowances' need to be paid, and at what level, under the new arrangements?
 - An 'Independent Remuneration Panel' is being convened

as usual.

- Should we continue to operate a public forward plan of decisions, and the concept of 'key decisions'?

17.0 LEGAL, FINANCIAL AND EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

17.1 There are no immediate legal implications to this report. The outcome of the inquiry must result in a proposed governance model that meets the statutory requirements as set out in the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and relevant regulations, and enables lawful decision-making. The full legal implications will be set out in a future report to the Governance Committee describing the proposed model.

17.2 There are no immediate financial implications to this report.

17.3 There are no immediate equalities implications to this report. Equalities will be a key consideration in the design and implementation of the engagement programme, the detail of which is covered in a report elsewhere on today's agenda.

18.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. That progress in the five weeks since the committee's last meeting be noted.*
- 2. That the volume of evidence so far gathered by the Council over the past few years and months, summarised in this report and its appendices, be given full consideration with a view to informing the Committee's views on the Council's future governance model,*
- 3. That members identify any key gaps in the evidence available which could be addressed within the remainder of this inquiry process; and*
- 4. That the questions and early options presented throughout the paper are considered with a view to whether the committee can provide any degree of steer in order to progress the inquiry towards recommendations to Council by the end of December.*

19.0 APPENDICES

- **Appendix 1** – Draft Governance Framework
- **Appendix 2** - Summary of evidence from 2019 Scrutiny exercise and since
- **Appendix 3** – Case studies of other Committee-led Councils
- **Appendix 4** – Diagrams of potential governance structures for SCC
- **Appendix 5** – Councillor capacity requirements aligned to the

options in appendix 3

- **Appendix 6** – Public engagement feedback about the governance framework (part 1)
- **Appendix 7** – Public engagement feedback about the governance framework (part 2 – It's Our City slides)

Gillian Duckworth
Director of Legal & Governance (and Monitoring Officer)

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