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

### Governance Committee

### Meeting held 30 November 2021

**PRESENT:**     Councillors Julie Grocutt (Chair), Penny Baker (Deputy Chair), Sue Alston, Dawn Dale, Peter Garbutt, Christine Gilligan, Mary Lea, Mike Levery, Mohammed Mahroof and Sioned-Mair Richards

....................................................

### 1.     APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1     An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mark Jones.

### 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 meeting held on 27 October 2021 be approved as a correct record.

### 5.     PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1     The Committee received the following question from a member of the public in attendance at the meeting.

Nigel Slack

The date for the submissions to the Transition Inquiry was very tight, understandably. However, can the Committee confirm the evidence sessions on the 7 and 8 December 2021, will not be the last opportunity for public to input on the design and development of the new Committee Framework or the finer grain detail still awaiting development?

In response to the public question, the Chair (Councillor Julie Grocutt) explained the importance of public engagement and mentioned that Involve intended to consult with members of the public in the upcoming months, on how they could engage with the Council on the design of the new system. The Chair mentioned that engagement with stakeholders and the wider public would be a key part to success of transitioning to a Committee System.

**6.      REVIEW OF DRAFT DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

6.1      The Committee considered a report concerning a Review of the Design Principles for a committee system. The Assistant Director (Governance), Alexander Polak, explained that the purpose of the report was to give the Committee detail on the feedback received from the public, at engagement events that had taken place over the previous months.  Appendix 1 of the report summarised feedback from members of the public in regard to the draft design principles.

6.2      The Assistant Director (Governance) informed the Committee that Appendix 2 in the report, gave the Committee options on amendments to the draft design principles. A simplified version of the draft design principles had also been produced and provided for Members to consider using either alongside, or in place of the original draft design principles.

6.3      The Committee agreed to use the simplified version of the draft design principles going forward. It was mentioned the original version would remain and serve a purpose for anyone who wished to refer to them, for additional detail.

6.4      Members of the Committee suggested amending the simplified draft design principles. Proposed amendments were as follows-

6.5      To remove 'cutting edge' from Principle E and replace it with 'forward looking' as this would reflect how the Council needed to continuously look ahead and be prepared for change. This amendment was agreed by the Committee.

6.6      To add 'be open' into Principle 18. It was mentioned this would reflect that the Council intended to be open and transparent as much as possible with the public. This amendment was agreed by the Committee.

6.7      To group together the principles that related to each other. This amendment was agreed by the Committee

6.8      To remove 'valuing them all equally' from Principle 5 and replace it with 'taking all views into consideration when decision-making'. It was mentioned that 'valuing them all equally' could lead to a future complaint, if someone felt they were not valued equally throughout the process of transitioning to a Committee System. This amendment was not agreed by the Committee.

6.9      To add 'all' to Principle 5. It was mentioned that it needed to be clear, that the Council intended to seek out and listen to all voices in the city, especially seldom heard groups. This amendment was agreed by the Committee.

6.10    The Chair thanked the Committee for their suggested amendments and all the members of the public who provided suggestions to the draft design principles.

6.11    **RESOLVED:**  That (1) the feedback from members of the public and stakeholders (Appendix 1) be noted;

(2) That the simplified draft design principles be used going forward and be amended in light of this feedback, as per Appendix 2 subject to any alterations agreed as detailed at paragraphs 6.4 to 6.9 above; and

(3) That these design principles, as amended, continue to be used for the purpose of guiding the design, and future review, of Sheffield's modern committee governance model, subject to any further review in the course of ongoing public engagement.

## 7.    TRANSITION TO A COMMITTEE SYSTEM INQUIRY SESSION 1

7.1    The Committee received a report of the Director of Legal and Governance concerning the inquiry process. The Assistant Director (Governance) explained the multiple purposes of the report.

7.2    The Assistant Director (Governance) advised it would be beneficial for Members of the Committee to give their views on the Governance Framework, taking into consideration the key design questions set out in the report.

7.3    Members were also asked if they had an immediate steer on how they wished to shape the Governance Model, in reflection of the information provided in the report.

7.4    It was also mentioned that it would be useful for the Committee to provide an insight on any key lines of inquiry to be asked at the Inquiry sessions, to make sure the Committee get the most out of that inquiry process.

7.5    The Assistant Director (Governance) stated that additional attendees had been invited to Inquiry Sessions 2 and 3 that were not listed in the report.

7.6    Members of the Committee discussed the points stated above. The main points to note were, as follows:-

7.7    To talk to other local authorities about:

- Schemes of Delegation.
- Roles/Responsibilities of Officers.
- Urgent decision-making processes.
- Holding to account function.

- Memberships/Requirements of Councillors.
- Vice/Co-chairs.
- Political proportionality of Chairs.
- Appointing Chairs/Vice Chairs of Committees.

- How to avoid pre-determined scrutiny/decisions.
- call-ins.

- Views on how many themed Committees there should be.
- How often would the Committees meet.
- How the Over-Arching Committee should operate.
- How Full Council should operate.

- How the Whip system would influence what happens.

- At what point should the Council consult with the public on new policies.

- To understand the relationship between Local Area Committees and Themed Committees.

7.8 **RESOLVED:** That (1) 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.

## 8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

8.1 The next meeting was scheduled to be held on 7 December 2021.