11Equality Impact Assessment Number 1153

PART A
Introductory Information

Proposal name

> Sheffield's Committee System

Brief aim(s) of the proposal and the outcome(s) you want to achieve

> When it comes to the way it makes decisions, Sheffield City Council aims to…
> - **Be democratic.** Sheffield City Council is committed to local democracy.
> - **Be open and trustworthy.** Make decisions publicly, so people can tell who is responsible for what.
> - **Include all Councillors.** Show what decisions everyone's local councillors are involved in.
> - **Listen to everyone.** Have the voice of residents at the heart of our decisions.
> - **Be cutting edge and keep improving.** Respond to the fast-changing world by trying new things and checking often whether it's working.
>
> This EIA is a live document and will be updated as the programme develop. Through the course of the programme, we will ensure that we consider the impact of the new LACs, the devolution of decision making to communities and the new Committee System. However as with any decision there may be unintended consequences of any changes that result from these decisions. We will try to ensure any negative impacts are mitigated.

Proposal type

- Budget   ▪ Non-Budget

If Budget, is it Entered on Q Tier?

- Yes   ▪ No

If yes what is the Q Tier reference

Year of proposal (s)

▪ 21/22	▪ 23/23	▪ 23/24	▪ 24/25	▪ other

Decision Type

- Coop Exec
- Committee (e.g., Health Committee) which committee
- Leader
- Individual Coop Exec Member
- Executive Director/Director
- Officer Decisions (Non-Key)
- Council (e.g., Budget and Housing Revenue Account)
- Regulatory Committees (e.g., Licensing Committee)

Lead Committee Member

> Governance Committee

Lead Director for Proposal

> Dawn Shaw and Gillian Duckworth

Person filling in this EIA form

Hannah Matheau-Raven

EIA start date

01/10/2021

Equality Lead Officer

- Adele Robinson
- Annemarie Johnston
- Bashir Khan

- Beverley Law
- Ed Sexton
- Louise Nunn

Lead Equality Objective (see for detail)

▪ Understanding Communities	▪ Workforce Diversity	▪ Leading the city in celebrating & promoting inclusion	▪ Break the cycle and improve life chances

Portfolio, Service and Team

Is this Cross-Portfolio   **Portfolio**
- Yes   ▪ No

All

Is the EIA joint with another organisation (eg NHS)?
- Yes   ▪ No   Please specify

N/A

Consultation

Is consultation required (Read the guidance in relation to this area)
- Yes   ▪ No

If consultation is not required please state why

The referendum in 2021 was a democratic choice about how the city council of Sheffield is governed with considerations as to what is wanted from a democratic system which led to the vote for a move from a Cabinet way of working to a Committee system; a clear public opinion. We have followed this referendum result with number public engagement opportunities specifically about the new shape of the system and how it might work, as well as opportunities to participate in consultation at a local level with the LAC meetings.

Moving forward, we aim to proactively engage and consult with partners such as the Equality Partnership to ensure that equalities runs through the system to ensure the best outcomes and decisions made with Sheffielders at the centre.

Staff Consultation- The Democratic Services Team have commenced an MER to meet the needs of the new Committee system. This work is well underway and will have been completed by the time that the system launches on 18th May 2022. As part of this, staff consultation will have been completed and concluded.

Are Staff who may be affected by these proposals aware of them
- Yes
- No

Are Customers who may be affected by these proposals aware of them
- Yes
- No

If you have said no to either please say why

We have actively engaged with the public and been open to feedback to develop the proposals as well as ongoing feedback throughout the process. However, we do accept that not everyone in Sheffield will be aware of the democratic changes, nor can we assume that everyone who will have wanted to participate will have been able to.

This EIA outlines our learning and considerations so far as well as actions to take to ensure that we keep moving in a positive direction. It is a live EIA and we will continue to develop it as the new Committee System is implemented and we learn from and listen to citizens, Members and staff about how it works for them and mitigations/changes we need to make to ensure that our Committee System model is accessible to all.

The channels that we have used include but are not limited to:
- The SCC webpage- https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/your-city-council/moving-to-committee-system-of-governance including updated progress plans
- Stories in Sheff News- https://sheffnews.com/news/sheffield-city-council-governance-referendum-results-2021
- A variety of social media
- Employee updates
- Face to face (where legally and safely able to do so) in local venues
- Remote engagement sessions on Zoom
- An inbox set up to receive and answer questions- transitiontocommittees@sheffield.gov.uk
- An aspiration to use hybrid technology to enable people to webcast committee meetings https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=

We have also invited parties with a vested interest in the system to feedback to us any considerations or learning we should take as part of the December 2021 Inquiry Sessions on 7th and 8th - https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=632

Further and ongoing comms are being reviewed with requirements being established.

Initial Impact

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty we have to pay due regard to the need to:
• eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
• advance equality of opportunity
• foster good relations

For a range of people who share protected characteristics, more information is available on the Council website including the Community Knowledge Profiles.

Identify Impacts

Identify which characteristic the proposal has an impact on tick all that apply

Health	Transgender

▪ Age	▪ Carers
▪ Disability	▪ Voluntary/Community & Faith Sectors
▪ Pregnancy/Maternity	▪ Cohesion
▪ Race	▪ Partners
▪ Religion/Belief	▪ Poverty & Financial Inclusion
▪ Sex	▪ Armed Forces
▪ Sexual Orientation	▪ Other
▪ Cumulative	

Cumulative Impact

Does the Proposal have a cumulative impact
- ▪ Yes
- ▪ No

▪ Year on Year	▪ Across a Community of Identity/Interest
▪ Geographical Area	▪ Other

If yes, details of impact

There are different stages to the introduction of the Modern Committees System, with each building on and learning from the last as outlined below:

- Local Area Committees – The LACs were implemented first, prior to the referendum and were successfully stood up during the pandemic in 2021. During implementation, there were many lessons in terms of how to engage with Members early in the process, keeping relevant services informed and how best to engage with the public in a localised bespoke way. We are still learning from the LACs as they continue and will see a cumulative impact through changes and improvements to services as a result. Predominantly, the impact of LACs has been understanding the needs of local communities at a characteristic level, engaging with a variety of communities, with differing needs all to support their influence and enablement to voice issues and opinions. This can be evidenced through the Local Community Plans. Additionally, LACs are geographical in nature with a variety of communities within them that cross over LAC boundaries and are intersectional in nature. As such, we are working with the Sheffield Equality Partnership to ensure that LACs are inclusive for all Sheffielders and recognise that communities of identify and interest are citywide.

- Transitional Committees - The transitional committees were set up as a learning opportunity between the referendum result and the implementation of the modern committee system in May 2022, and also were an opportunity to explore links to LACs and ways of working. The cumulative impact from this process is using the learning to inform the Policy Committees by instilling best practice discovered as well as understanding pitfalls. The Transitional Committees have needed to understand how we then translate the findings from LACs at a localised view and then use this information and the equalities considerations at a citywide and strategic level.

- Policy Committees- From both the LACs and the Transitional Committees, we have taken learning that has had a direct and cumulative impact on the design of the Policy Committees as we have progressed through the design phases. We understand the need to consider equalities at the citywide and strategic level and our processes need to connect the local view to the citywide view. As a result of this learning, we will strive to embed this consideration into our ways of working within the committee system. Getting this right will have a cumulative impact on equalities as the relationship should be symbiotic and

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create opportunities for positive outcomes. The LACs can gather information on equalities and perspectives locally, define actions, refer these actions to the committee system for a holistic review, this system can then drive citywide change which will filter back through the LACs.

We will continue to engage citizens and stakeholders at each stage of the committee system, recognising that everyone (including Members and officers) will take time to adjust to new ways of working and new ways of democratic decision-making, and are aware that we need to continue to learn and evolve.

As the committee system was voted for in a result from a referendum, legally it must be in place for 10 years before another referendum could be cast. The opportunities for review during the delivery of the system are:

- Post Implementation Review at 6 months- as proposed to Governance Committee; and
- Yearly as part of the elections process
- We are also committing to reviewing the system with particular scope on equalities, diversity and inclusion 6 monthly/annually as part of the work for the Equalities Sub-Group.

We hope that with these opportunities and behaviours enabling us to learn as we go, we will have a positive cumulative impact on Sheffield and our residents; across all characteristics. Additionally, we will engage and involve the Sheffield Equality Partnership in the review and work with them regularly to ensure that we connect people with protected characteristics to policy making.

Proposal has geographical impact across Sheffield
- Yes ■ No

If Yes, details of geographical impact across Sheffield

The geographical impact will be locally felt by, with and as a result of the LACs. Each LAC is made up of 4 Sheffield wards, totally 7 LACs citywide. Their aim is to understand local communities, what they want, need, feel and how they want to progress. This will be captured in a consistent template, but the content will be bespoke according to what is reported by residents as part of the local engagement exercises led in 2021 and 2022. This will be repeated annually to measure progress and to keep assuring that the right things are being considered.

The Committee system will have a geographical impact but from a city-wide lens. Policy and strategy will be formed, using intel from the LACs, guided by equality input, and will work with LACs to understand how to roll out, how to action and how to drive policy forward.

The LACs can then cascade this out locally and seek further feedback. The impact should be positive as everyone has an equal opportunity to feed into this process, regardless of where they live, with due consideration to the fact that equalities override geographical boundaries and communities may be prevalent across the city.

Local Area Committee Area(s) impacted
- All ■ Specific

If Specific, name of Local Committee Area(s) impacted

N/A

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Initial Impact Overview

Based on the information about the proposal what will the overall equality impact?

Overview

Briefly describe how the proposal helps to meet the Public Sector Duty outlined above

This Duty means we need to understand the effect that the Programmes and enduring Committee system have on inequality. To do this we will examine the available evidence and work with staff, residents and people who use services to consider the impact of these proposals on the people who share protected characteristics enabling a rigorous analysis of decision making and identifying any negative and positive impact on people with protected characteristics. This enables us to meet our duties as outlined above and we have committed as a Council to undertake this process

Local Area Committees

The Empowering Communities Programme (ECP) established 7 Local Area Committees (LACs) in May 2021. The new LACs will engage, enable, and help empower communities across the city with increasing control over decision, marking a major shift in power to communities with a rolling programme of devolution over the next 12 to 18 months.

EIA 916, Local Area Committee Programme, provides an initial assessment of equality impacts of LACs in greater detail. In addition, each LAC continues to develop its own local equality analysis and impact assessment.

Policy Committees

Furthermore, as a result of the referendum in May 2021, SCC is working to also implement Policy Committees alongside LACs, to replace the Leader/Cabinet democratic model of decision making. This Committee system will be launched from 18th May 2022 from the point of sign off at AGM.

Of note, at the time of writing and between the referendum result and the launch of the committee system in May 2022, SCC implemented transitional committees, with the aim of trying out different approaches to take this learning into the new model. This learning has been captured throughout this document and has been considered throughout the design phase.

Both the central Committee systems and LACs will involve people who share characteristics under the Equality Act, so it is intended that the new approach will help us meet our PSED. Each new LAC area will be asked to consider equality and diversity in their local plan and the new Policy Committees will be asked to consider the EDI as part of their work forward plans. However, with any decision there maybe unintended impacts especially as at this stage we are still unsure of all the changes that will happen.

We are especially mindful of the different demographics that make up Sheffield and ensuring smaller communities in each area are represented, such as people with a sight impairment, learning disability, the LGBTQIA+ community etc. Some people may be less likely to feel comfortable getting involved, so we have taken actions to ensure that we listen to a range of voices not just the loudest, including holding engagement events in local accessible spaces, hosting remote sessions throughout the pandemic with controls in place to create a safe environment for

all. We have also worked with the Sheffield Equality Partnership and other VCF organisations to ensure this diversity of voice and influence.

Now that the Local Area Committees are in place, we will continue to ensure that all LACs make the required reasonable adjustments, meet accessibility standards, champion diversity and inclusion, ensure that they are participative and collaborative and finally ensure that LACs seek out representative voices from lesser heard from groups. This is a fundamentally positive change for all residents of Sheffield regardless of protected characteristic. The Local Area Committees are to develop local plans of which Equality and Diversity will be at the heart of each plan. However, there may be unintended consequences especially as we are not yet sure about the demographic makeup of each area.

Given the disparities and inequalities that we know exist across the city and between different groups of people in relation to health, education, housing, income, crime etc, we will also ensure that tackling inequalities are considered as a central part of these plans. The LACs will use data available for each area and group of people to inform the plans and actions. This will include engaging with people of different ages and taking into account the needs of people of different ages within each area.

With the Policy Committee system launch scheduled for May 2022, and the LACs already established, we are keen to review, instil and embed our commitments to:

Transparency – we want to provide relevant information that demonstrates our intentions and decision-making to citizens in a way that is accessible and understandable

Diversity – we recognise that the city of Sheffield is made up of a broad and diverse group of people encompassing different ethnicities, gender, age, socio-economic backgrounds, values and physical and mental ability. We have a wide range of languages, cultures, digital, literacy and numeracy skills represented across the city and all backgrounds, interests and needs should be considered.

Inclusive participation – provide all citizens with clear routes and opportunities to contribute to and influence outcomes that will directly affect their lives. Schedule meetings at times and in places that are convenient for as many people as possible and provide parallel ways for people to take part in a way that suits them.

Equality – encourage open discussion so that no sections of the community are left out and all ideas are treated with respect. Decisions should not be controlled be one particular section of a community.

It is clear that decision making must be informed by equality considerations – the new committee system must ensure that equality impacts and interests form part of evidence gathering that informs decisions. Sources of information would need to include Equality Impact Assessments; equality implications identified in decision reports; equality analysis of stakeholder feedback and as part of the new system, there is the expectation that Committees will analyse agendas/submissions for EIAs to embed a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion as good practice.

This EIA aims to identify equality impacts and recommendations that consider the Duty to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, to inform Elected Members and the decision to approve the new committee system.

> This EIA is a live document and will be updated as the programmes develop, ensuring that we consider the impact of the new LACs and the devolution of decision making to communities as well as the new Policy Committees, how they engage, operate and behave.

Is a Full impact Assessment required at this stage? ▪ Yes   ▪ No

If the impact is more than minor, in that it will impact on a particular protected characteristic, you must complete a full impact assessment below.

Initial Impact Sign Off

EIAs must be agreed and signed off by the Equality lead Officer in your Portfolio or corporately. Has this been signed off?

▪ Yes   ▪ No

Date agreed | 25/02/2022 | Name of EIA lead officer | Ed Sexton

Part B

Full Impact Assessment

Health

Does the Proposal have a significant impact on health and well-being (including effects on the wider determinants of health)?

- Yes   ▪ No   *if Yes, complete section below*

Members/Officers   **Customers**
▪ Yes   ▪ No   ▪ Yes   ▪ No

Details of impact

Whilst Health is an important consideration for the Committee System, we do not currently believe that the implementation will have an evident impact on the health of staff, Members or citizens of Sheffield. As the Council is committed to becoming a public health organisation, consideration to health will always be given when making decisions and implementing changes throughout the duration of the Modern Committee System. Should any medium/high health be identified, a detailed Health Impact Assessment will be completed, and appropriate actions and changes will be taken.

Engagement

- *Access -* We have a responsibility in terms of our engagement, with staff, Members and citizens, to ensure that we understand and cater to different and a variety of health-related needs to best support people to participate in the new Modern Committee System. As such, we need to be mindful of how we gather this data, and the response we will be able to provide. We will need to engage stakeholders early to ensure that they have everything needed, reasonable adjustments, different technology, assessed the needs for breaks etc. for the launch and to test our ways of working.

- *Partners -* The new governance model also has clear links and commitments to other committees which can have an impact on the health of the citizens of Sheffield, such as the Sheffield Health & Wellbeing Board, Join Commissioning Committee SCC & NHS CCG, South Yorkshire, Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Mechanics of Meetings

There are several ways in which the Committee meetings will operate that may have an impact upon health of those involved or in attendance:

Time spent in meetings - The current recommendations include a guillotine clause for committee and council meetings, of 2.5hrs and 3.5hrs respectively which will cap meetings and ensure a commitment to purposeful conversation with a timely close. However, there is a consideration required of the notable increase in meetings that both Members and Officers will be required to attend and the impact of this on health. There is a risk that if there is consideration increases, that this will increase pressure on time that individuals have to undertake their work outside of meetings, managing workloads and work/life balance. This will need to be monitored and receive feedback on as part of the

6 month review to understand any changes required to make this more practical and feasible.

- **Remote working -** Due practices have been in place throughout the covid-19 pandemic to ensure that staff are operating safely and responsibility, including a move to facilitating engagement sessions and meetings online as opposed to face to face. Current national legal requirements ensure that formal democratic meetings must take place in person but we also aspire to develop more hybrid options where possible to enable people to participate remotely where they wish to.

- **Reasonable adjustments -** If we have made every effort to engage with those participating in meetings, remotely or face to face, we should be able to accommodate adjustments if required. For example, for those with chronic pain conditions, there may be a need for pacing breaks to allow for management of those conditions. We may also consider screen breaks for remote sessions to support eyesight and posture complications.

- **Considerations of Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) -** As we will see an increase in the numbers of meetings that Members and staff will attend, there will be additional papers to prepare, minutes to type up and communication to issue. As such we must recognise the impact on staff responsible for this and ensure that they are adequately supported with appropriate and feasible timescales for production. Effective line management will also help to mitigate this.

- **Co-Chairing/Job Share -** Members can also be supported through the use of co-Chairs, which may allow the additional responsibility of Chairing a committee to be shared to accommodate for health impacts.

- **Benchmarking other Local Authorities -** SCC has been committed to gathering evidence from other LAs who have moved to a Modern Committee System to inform our own system design work. As part of this, we also plan to gather information on any health impacts they have experienced. The LAs included in this work have so far been: Hartlepool, Wirral, Cheshire East, Kingston, Reading, Bright & Hove and Newark & Sherwood. Whilst we recognise that these authorities are not directly comparable to Sheffield in terms of demographics, size, core city status, deprivation levels or wealth, it was pertinent to seek advice and guidance on the practical questions and issues they experienced. When it comes to Health impact, we will seek to engage with authorities with the closest models to our proposals and also closest to Sheffield in terms of measurables for a realistic view on what impact we may see.

Decision Making

- **Health related decisions -** As part of the new model, we have considered where health related decisions may be made, most likely within the Adult, Health and Social Care committee and the Education, Children and Families Committee. However, where there is a cross-cutting implication, it may refer to the Strategic and Resources Committee as a coordinating function. Governance Committee Members have also been considered how to best continue a robust approach to delivering our health scrutiny duties as part of the new Committee System.

- **Urgent Decisions (e.g., pandemic response) -** Additionally we recognise, particularly after the past 2 years of the covid-19 pandemic, the need for urgent decisions to be made in relation to health. In these cases, an urgency sub-committee may be called for the above committees to ensure a timely response to crisis.

- *Efficient working -* While having a place for these decisions to be made, we also need to support quick and effective decision making as if a delay is caused in either meeting or the decision being made, this may cause a negative or greater negative health impact and we must be aware of the cost of this delay or 'doing nothing'. Our mitigation for this is investing in Chairing and Co-Chairing training to facilitate discussion to reach timely and quality decisions, robust planning of meetings to ensure appropriate and manageable agenda items and adequate preparation in terms of time and support.

- *Robust, quality decisions -* We must understand, as part of our decision making that there may be disbenefits to a decision made in terms of health. For example, if a decision is made to remove 20 mile an hour speed limit signs and replace with 30 miles an hour signs, this may cause an increase in speeding and accidents. We must also endeavour to understand the opportunity costs of opting to not chose something better than what is decided. This may be due to resource, capacity, funding etc. but mut be considered to ensure that the decision is correct and the risk manageable.

- *Consideration of subject matter experts -* If the right people are not consulted ahead of the meetings or available to provide evidence, guidance or advice in the formal of written submissions or physical presentation, we risk making the wrong decision or a worse decision that we could have. In cases pertaining to health, we must consider inviting representatives from health to advise in a more robust way that commenting on a paper; Finally

- *Controversial decisions -* Where a controversial decision is being made in any capacity, with health impacts large or small, positive or negative, we must consider working with Health colleagues to complete a Health Impact Assessment to support our decision making and understanding the impact we are making.

There are some additional methods of monitoring the impact of the Modern Committee System that could be indicators of an impact on health:
- Decrease in participation numbers may indicate a decline in health or discomfort
- Staff including Members exceeding the expected numbers of hours to be involved in the system which may demonstrate an impact on health in terms of stress
- An increase in staff including Member sickness
- Attendance of Members decreasing and an inability to meet quorum
- Vacant posts within the Committee Support Team

Comprehensive Health Impact Assessment being completed

▪ Yes   ▪ No

Please attach health impact assessment as a supporting document below.

Public Health Leads has signed off the health impact(s) of this EIA

▪ Yes   ▪ No

Health Lead   **Magda Boo**

Age

Impact on Members/Officers
■ Yes   ■ No

Impact on Citizens
■ Yes   ■ No

Details of impact

The Modern Committee System will have an impact on members of staff, Members and citizens within varying age groups with unique needs. However, we do not currently believe that the implementation of this programme has a direct or clear impact on or discriminates against any age groups. However, consideration to age will be given at all opportunities and appropriate decisions or actions will be taken if any age-related risk and/or need are identified.

We know there is a high proportion of staff over the age of 46 with some in the higher age brackets and closer to retirement.

Sheffield is one of the 8 core cities in England and its population has grown above the national average and the City Region, rising from 513,000 in 2001 to 584,000 by 2019. This has resulted from increases in births, net inward migration and longer life expectancy. There are around 60,000 under-graduate and post-graduate students studying at Sheffield's two universities, 25% of whom are overseas students.

Sheffield has a higher proportion of its population aged 65 years or over (16%, or 93,600 people) than the other English Core Cities. This is projected to increase to 19.2% by 2034, with the largest increase in the number of people aged over 85

Life Expectancy in the city is 78.4 years for men and 82.1 years for women and there are greater numbers of women than men in the city, due to higher life expectancy for women.

The age group that has increased the most from 2011 to 2018 is 25-34 year olds, with 15.5% of our population being in this group. 18.1% of the population is under 16. The factors which are having the most impact on this changing city profile are increasing numbers of university students and the inward migration of households with young families.

Engagement

- *Proactive Participation -* It is clear that the Council and Members will need to do proactive participation in terms of communications and engagement to ensure that citizens of all ages are sighted on the Modern Committee System and are aware of how to get involved digitally abled or not. We must use exercises such as this to understand the correct mechanisms for engagement that suit all ages and not assume that an 'all age' approach is the right or best approach to take. We will need to think creatively about the range of engagement channels and how best we can meet the needs of our citizens.

- *Links to Youth Cabinet -* As part of our commitment to working with the Equality Partnership, we will also seek to improve links with the Youth Cabinet to ensure that we provide equal opportunity for young people to get involved in the system as well as older populations, who have admittedly appeared to be more proactively engaged. This may be due to our methods of engagement, and we are seeking feedback on this.

Mechanics of Meetings

- ***Timings of meetings -*** while we are keen not to assume any age group would be less keen on evening or early meetings, we can safely assume that younger age groups may have conflicts with schooling/learning hours early on in the day, those of working age may work a multitude of hours in various shifts and those who are retired may not be keen for evening meetings while they have the day free. Our current proposal is for LAC meetings to take place on weekdays in the evenings at 6pm and 10am weekdays for Policy Committee meetings. This may not be standard and we will need to challenge this in practice with consideration to room availability, Member needs etc. We recognise the work of the Age Partnership who identified that older members of the partnership did not want to attend later meetings while younger people did, this will need to be balanced with a practical approach. This initial spread is our starting point and we will continue to monitor attendance to establish if this works. We commit to monitoring the success of these arrangements and review as part of the post-implantation review period.

- **Length of Meetings** - The current recommendations include a guillotine clause for committee and council meetings, of 2.5hrs and 3.5hrs respectively. This may help Elected Members, Officers and members of the public who are limited in time due to home commitments, learning, school, work, childcare etc.

Decision Making

- ***Democratic decision making must be in person -*** This may impact on people with young families who wish to attend, people of working age who may be in work at the times of the meetings and older people who may not wish to make the journey into the meeting (though we also recognise this may be an unfair assumption). We aspire for decision-making meetings to have a hybrid facility if possible to enable people to attend remotely to ask public questions. However, this does then exclude those not digitally abled.

Disability

Impact on Members/Officers
- Yes   - No

Impact on Citizens
- Yes   - No

Details of impact

Disability is an important consideration for the Modern Committee System, as it may present a range of complexities that we need to understand and plan to mitigate such as physical access to buildings, provision of information in different formats and provision of services so disabled people are encouraged and empowered to be independent. We recognise that we will need to consider demonstrable action to ensure these systems and processes are accessible, inclusive and bias free, both remotely and in person, for the people of Sheffield. Where applicable, we have listed below the ways in which this characteristic has been considered.

The 2011 census told us that there are over 103,000 disabled people in the city and over a third of all households include a disabled person. Also 29% of people with a long-term health problem or disability live in areas that are amongst the 10% most deprived in the country. This compares with 23% in Sheffield as a whole.

Engagement

- ***Accessible and Inclusive Communication -*** In order to avoid discrimination, we must understand how to ensure our communication is accessible and inclusive for those with disabilities, however these may present. As part of this, we will review our channels and methods for communication to appraise if we have the correct channels doing the right things and that our messages are understood. We will take up an offer of involvement from partners in the review, which how we make use of:
    - Plain English, EasyRead and large print
    - Interpretation, translation and British Sign Language (BSL)
    - Social media posts (including use of graphic only posts)
    - All channels in order to ensure that meeting papers/information are accessible and available at the right time.

  Action: schedule a review of communication methods and channels

- ***Our Web Offer -*** We accept that our website and associated sites are not currently meeting accessibility standards and are taking action to rectify this as a priority, including language use, interfaces with screen reading software and document readability.

  Action: schedule a review of our web content accessibility

- ***Role Opportunities -*** So as to not discourage disabled people from considering being Elected Members, suitable allowances & expenses schemes and co-Chair arrangements can be promoted.

Mechanics of Meetings

- ***Accessible meeting papers -*** We currently provide documentation in paper form for Members and, should it be necessary, could provide these packs in public places to support access and remove the technological barrier some may experience. Papers are printed on request for Elected Members attending committee meetings and certain accessibility requests, such as large print, can be accommodated but this is not done as standard. Papers are available in a single format but should comply with accessibility standards. Part of the transition to a new committee system will include the review of the format of papers issued to committees, so there is an opportunity for accessibility to be part of that.

  Action: as above, schedule a review of communication methods and channels

- ***Accessible -*** We promote the use of AccessAble Accessibility Guides to determine suitable locations for in-person events, which has been particularly useful for LAC meetings held in communities. However, this may be considered for Policy Committee Meetings should the Town Hall become inappropriate due to size, accessibility needs etc. AccessAble allowed us to consider available facilities including ramped/sloped access, manual doors, ambulant toilets, assistive listening, mobility impaired walkers, accessible toilets, step-free standard toilets and large print.

- ***IT Support –*** we have worked to provide support with a range of disability needs from a technical perspective which is a self-serve process, so that staff, including Members, do not need to disclose a disability unless they so wish and do have the option to remain private if they prefer. We will keep under continual review the accessibility of digital channels that enable people to access council meetings.

- ***Locations –*** Our intention is for Council and Committee meetings, with the exception of LAC meetings, to be held in the Town Hall. The central location

means it has good transport links, but due to the age of the building, access into and around it is limited. Improvements have been made to make the building more accessible but as these are retrofitted, there are still limitations and impacts, such as longer access routes to certain areas for Elected Members, officers and citizens.
Action: ensure up to date information about the accessibility of available town hall rooms

- *Public Questions -* Questions from the public should be submitted prior to a committee and facilities are available to support individuals to do so. While the Chair of a committee always retains the discretion to allow questions which are submitted immediately before the meeting, there is no requirement for an individual to be present in order to be able to ask a question, therefore this does not exclude people who are unable to attend in person from submitting a question.
Action: review the accessibility of the formats and options for submitting public questions

- *Length of Meetings -* The current recommendations include a guillotine clause for committee and council meetings, of 2.5hrs and 3.5hrs respectively. This may help Elected Members or Officers who have a disability by limiting the time required to attend or support a meeting in a single sitting.

- *Physical accessibility -* We promote the use of AccessAble Accessibility Guides to determine suitable locations for in-person events, which has been particularly useful for LAC meetings held in communities. However, this may be considered for Policy Committee Meetings should the Town Hall become inappropriate due to size, accessibility needs etc. AccessAble allowed us to consider available facilities including ramped/sloped access, manual doors, ambulant toilets, assistive listening, mobility impaired walkers, accessible toilets, step-free standard toilets and large print. We recognise the value of AccessAble but will not rely on it as the sole measure of accessibility and will aim to be responsive to changing circumstances and feedback.
Action: involve partners to review the accessibility and suitability of meeting spaces for the deaf community, including:
    - **Use of hearing loop systems**
    - **Use of BSL interpreting**
    - **Alternative engagement methods**

Decision Making

- *Hybrid tech -* Currently decision-making committees must be attended in person. We hope that legislative changes may better enable the use of emerging technologies in light of the response to the pandemic, and we aspire to enable hybrid access where possible. Hybrid technology would be more likely to support accessibility to anyone who had the required technology. It would however not be inclusive for people suffering from technological or digital exclusion rather than disability. Hybrid tech may also enable Members with access difficulties to participate remotely.

Pregnancy/Maternity

Appendix 4

Impact on Members/Officers	Impact on Citizens
▪ Yes ▪ No	▪ Yes ▪ No

Details of impact

Pregnancy, parental leave and parental responsibilities of any kind are important considerations for the Modern Committee System, as they may present a range of complexities that we need to understand and plan to mitigate such as safety and physical access to buildings (pushchairs), childcare and appointments are worked around where possible. We recognise that the system in addition to the wider Council governance will need to consider demonstrable action to make these systems and processes as accessible as possible, both remotely and in person. Where applicable, we have listed below the ways in which this characteristic has been considered.

Engagement

- **Promotion of the System -** Particularly for this cohort who may have less available time due to domestic commitments, there may be opportunities to promote engagement activities, updates and events through relevant touchpoints such as schools, GPs, health clinics, VCF groups etc. so that we can involve them in a way that suits their needs. This will need exploring in more detail as we progress through implementation and define what future engagement and communication requirements there may be.

Mechanics of Meetings

- *Financial Aid -* Elected Members can claim Childcare and Dependant Carers Allowance for specific reasons set out in part 6, schedule 2 of the Constitution. This is limited to ½ day up to 4hrs. As the new committee system is likely to increase the time commitment required from Elected Members, there's an opportunity to review this allowance to ensure it's still suitable.

- *Length of Meetings -* The current recommendations include a guillotine clause for committee and council meetings, of 2.5hrs and 3.5hrs respectively. This may help Elected Members or Officers who are pregnant or parents by limiting the time required to attend or support a meeting in a single sitting.

- *Timings of Meetings -* Where possible, we have tried to consider domestic responsibilities as part of booking the meetings for both LAC and Policy Committees. However, we are aware that we may not have been entirely successful with this consideration. We were keen to avoid school drop off times and bed times, though accept these may differ across different households.

- *Accessible -* We promote the use of AccessAble Accessibility Guides to determine suitable locations for in-person events which has been particularly useful for LAC meetings held in communities. However, this may be considered for Policy Committee Meetings should the Town Hall become inappropriate due to size, accessibility needs etc. AccessAble allowed us to consider available facilities including ramped/sloped access, manual doors, baby changing facilities, breast feeding facilities and seating.

Decision Making

- *Linkages with Children and Families -* Alignment of the proposed Policy Committees to areas within the corporate structure should enable the

Governance model to work more effectively, ensuring that meaningful policy is developed and decisions taken. The Children & Families policy committee will have a clear commitment and focus to support pregnancy and parental leave/issues of Sheffield citizens. Additionally, this committee will also be chaired by the Member with statutory responsibilities for Children.

Race

Impact on Members/Officers
- Yes   - No

Impact on Citizens
- Yes   - No

Details of impact

Race is an important consideration for the Modern Committee System, as it may present a range of complexities that we need to understand and plan to mitigate such as language barriers, cultural differences, lack of visible representation and institutional fear. We recognise that the LACs as well as Policy Committees in addition to the wider Council governance will need to take into account demonstrable action to ensure these systems and processes are accessible, inclusive and bias free, both remotely and in person, for the people of Sheffield. Where applicable, we have listed below the ways in which this characteristic has been considered.

The 2011 census told us that there are over 105,000 people who are Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) in the city, this is likely to have increased over the past 10 years. Also 38% of the BAME population live in areas that are amongst the 10% most deprived in the country. This compares with 23% in Sheffield as a whole.

We know the age profile of BAME people in the city according to the 2011 census differs considerably, If we look at primary, secondary, and special school pupils we see that around 35.5% of all primary school pupils are from a Black, Asian and /or Minority Ethnic (BAME) background and 29.1% of pupils in secondary schools but just 7% of over 50's and 6% of over 65s. Also, wards have very different BAME populations from for example 40% of Burngreave residents are BAME but only 4% of west and east Ecclesfield and 3% of Stocksbridge and Upper Don.

Engagement

- *LAC Surveys-* As part of the work of the LACs, we issued surveys to understand our communities more so, which did contain demographic information. One of our learnings from this was that individuals from BAME communities were more likely to engage in a survey by a paper copy than online. In response to low online return rates, we undertook an exercise to establish action that could be taken to attain more parity in responses. Also of note, once the submissions were received, there was very little different between races of what the answers were, just a difference in preference for returning the information to us.

- *Understanding our Communities*- We have made efforts to engage with communities across Sheffield with the understanding that they may well have different perspectives and different needs from the system as well as different requirements for engagement. We will commit to continuing to engage with the public across all racial boundaries, learning as we go with the aim to understand what they feel that the impact of this system may be and any changes that may be required.

- **_Understanding the system_ -** We have a big undertaking ahead of us to ensure that the Modern Committee System is communicable to a variety of audiences which includes audiences of different races with different needs relating to race. We will continue our work in understanding the scope of this exercise and update this document with clear actions once defined.

- **_Review of Race Equality Commission findings-_** evidence heard by the REC demonstrated that we have work to do to ensure our data is of good quality, which may effect how we understand our communities. This data issue also outlines how we have not been specific enough in terms of ethnicity. We aim to stop using BAME as a blanket term, and instead cleanse our data to provide more racial nuance and evidence of intersectionality that will in turn provide us with clearer insights and understanding into the ethnic make up of Sheffield.

- **_Lack of trust_ -** There has been a history to acknowledge that has led to a lack of trust in the Council and other institutions in terms of race. We are committed to doing more to gain this trust back and hope that over time, in demonstrating that commitment, we can move forward. As part of this, we commit to doing better monitoring of our data to ensure quality which will also help us understand the responses and actions required.

- **_Equal voices_ -** As seen by engagement with the LACs, people from the more affluent South West of the city – which has a lower percentage of people from a BAME background than other parts of the city – are more likely to engage. The LAC survey results also showed a lower percentage of BAME people responded compared to their percentage of overall demographics in all LAC areas. Through ongoing development of the Engagement strategy, mechanisms may be put in place to ensure all communities and individuals have the opportunity to engage with the democratic processes once more clearly defined.

- **_Representation_ -** Policy committees will be composed of Members to ensure political proportionality. This proportionality could be applied across other demographics, such as race to ensure a more balanced viewpoint. As the current race demographics of Elected Members don't match the demographics of the city, a degree of proportionality may be achieved by ensuring Members representing wards (LAC areas) with a high number of people from a BAME background are involved in all policy committees.

- **_Improved Member Monitoring_**- In a similar vein with representation, we aim to improve our practices in terms of Member demographic monitoring. With this, we would be able to better understand our communities by working to ensure fair and balance proportionality in terms of visible and non-visible characteristics.

- **_Community Plans_ -** Some but not all BAME communities are much more likely to live in poverty, have poor health, poor educational outcomes, poor housing, and be victims of crime etc. as evidenced within key poverty statistics including BME statistics on poverty and housing and employment via the Institution of Race Relations and also UK Poverty Statistics held by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The LACs will use data available for each area and group of people to inform the plans and actions. This will include engaging with different BAME communities and considering the needs of people of different ethnicities within each area.

- **_Technology_ -** We have taken efforts to understand how people of different races use technology as part of engagement and communication within their communities. Our learning is that while language may be a barrier, as may financial access, communities often use a variety of social media applications

and platforms to communicate whether this be with their own devices, family devices or publicly available devices such as those found in libraries and schools. However, the issue may be, instead of access, how the Council generates interests within those online communities in the Modern Committee System.

- **Public Questions -** Where a person wishes to raise a public question but experiences a language barrier, we can also introduce Language Line translator services to ensure that their voice is equally heard. We also accept that asking a question directly, particularly in a face to face setting or on camera can feel intimidating, particularly when the attendees in the meeting might not look like you or share your perspective. In these cases, we also think that hybrid options – if possible – might help as questions can be asked on behalf of people, you can ask while off camera and the distance may support some confidence. We aspire enable hybrid access. Additionally, this raises another area of work around the importance of stakeholders, visibility and representative community organisations.

- **LAC Meetings in Community Spaces** - It has been important to establish LAC meetings in community spaces so that people can feel engaged in the democratic system from within their neighbourhoods, where there if a degree of familiarity, safety and representation between citizens.

Mechanics of Meetings

- **Language Barriers -** Information on the council website and committee reports are only published in English, with the exception of specific targeted messages which may be translated into different languages which are commonly spoken across Sheffield. The ability for non-English speakers, or those with limited English language skills, to translate or access this information can be hampered by the format of the report and the use of excessive technocratic jargon. This can limit the engagement of different communities. Part of the transition to a new committee system will include the review of the format of papers issued to committees and training for Officers in report writing. As such, there's an opportunity to ensure the format and type of language used in the reports is as accessible as possible. Officers will also be undertaking training on report writing to support keeping things simple and understandable.

- **Virtual meetings -** Virtual meetings held so far, while unable to be decision making meetings, were accessible to anyone who had the required technology and were therefore more likely to exclude people suffering from technological or digital exclusion rather than a particular protected characteristic. As we know that the BAME community as a whole are more likely to have lower household income, it is possible that they were adversely impacted by this engagement method and thus not been able to participate fully. With the rising cost of living crisis it is essential that the Council thinks of creative and inclusive ways in which BAME people who do not have access to technology or the internet are given access to more digital channels. Only when these barriers are broken down will all BAME people be able to engage in future digital engagement events.

Decision Making

- **Hybrid Technology Barriers**- We must consider access to decision making early on in the process to ensure that the right decisions are made. There are risks where barriers to the hybrid technology exists for example, we know statistically, BAME communities experience lower income and therefore may not have the technology required. We understand the need to attain

widespread engagement and will pledge to undertake understanding of networks that already exist, that are meaningful to communities and are active. We do not expect everyone to come to us, particularly in the case of race where there may be fear of the institution or distrust, so it is important for us to be proactive and go out to people to enable a two-way conversation. If we can do this ahead of decision making, we should enable these communities to exercise their influence.

Religion/Belief

Impact on Members/Officers
- Yes   - No

Impact on Citizens
- Yes   - No

Details of impact

The Modern Committee System will have an impact on the people of Sheffield who inevitably have different religious beliefs. However, we do not currently believe that the implementation of this programme has a direct and clear impact on or discriminates against any particular religion/s. That said, consideration to religious beliefs will be given at all stages of this programme and appropriate decisions or actions will be taken if any religion-related risk and/or need are identified until the completion of this programme.

According to the 2011 census 53% of Sheffield people stated in the Census they had a Christian religion, 31% no religion and 8% Muslim. This will be different across the new LACs.

Engagement

- ***Considerate timings of meetings -*** In devising the schedule for council meetings, different religious observances could be considered, as these may limit Elected Members or Officers to attend or support the committee meetings as well as the public being available and able to engage. Examples could be avoiding holding meetings on specific days such as Christmas, Eid-Al-Adha, Hanukkah etc. As well as avoiding times of day that may conflict with prayer.

Mechanics of Meetings

- ***Length of meetings in relation to worship practices -*** additional consideration may need to be given during times of worship. Examples may include instances of fasting over Ramadan that may affect abilities to concentrate, focus and listen for long periods of time. If meetings were to occur on dates featuring such practices, due thought will be given to arrangements to support the meetings being accessible and practical without excluding anyone based on religious needs or practices they are observing.

- ***Reports -*** Reports will be written with cultural sensitivity and awareness to ensure that no parties feel excluded or discriminated against within reports or the intention of the reports.

Decision Making

- ***Co-Optees -*** The views and perspective of people of different religions could be heard through the use of co-optees on committees, representing religion aligned networks.

Sex

Impact on Members/Officers
- Yes   - No

Impact on Citizens
- Yes   - No

Details of impact

Sex is an important consideration for the Modern Committee System, as it may present a range of complexities that we need to understand and plan to mitigate such as under representation, engaging in stereotypes and challenging perspective issues. The programme recognises that the LACs as well as Policy Committees in addition to the wider Council governance will need to consider demonstrable action to ensure these systems and processes are inclusive, bias free and safe for the people of Sheffield. Where applicable, we have listed below the ways in which this characteristic has been considered.

Sheffield had a total of 287,391 men and boys in 2017. This was slightly lower than the 290,398 women and girls during the same period. This is similar to the national figures. There is very little difference in terms of numbers between men and women at any age apart from when we look at older people. The difference between the sexes in the 65+ age group is 9,086 more women than men. This may be different across the new LACs.

Also, in 2019, median gross weekly earnings of full-time workers were £572.70 for males, and £485.10 for females. For all males, median annual pay was £27,922 compared with £18,865 for all females, a pay gap of £9,057.

For all males, median annual pay was £27,922, compared with £18,865 for all females; a pay gap of £9,057.

Single female pensioners tend to have a lower income than male pensioners. Other issues which cannot be separated from experiences of financial exclusion and poverty include age, ethnicity, sexuality, disability and domestic abuse etc.

As women are more likely to be impacted by pregnancy, maternity and as carers, the impacts and considerations in these sections will apply more so to them than men, though it is imperative that we also consider trans men and women as part of this conversation.

Engagement

- *Financial Barriers -* we know that women are more likely to have lower household income, it is possible that they were adversely impacted by the remote engagement methods as well as the potential costs of travel to meetings and thus not been able to participate fully.

Mechanics of Meetings

- *Representation -* Policy committees will be composed of Members to ensure political proportionality. This proportionality could be applied across other demographics, such as sex to ensure a more balanced viewpoint.

- *Co-Chairing/Job Share/Part time -* Members can also be supported through the use of co-Chairs, which may allow the additional responsibility of Chairing a committee to be shared to accommodate for family commitments, appointments, caring responsibilities etc. regardless of gender.

- *Meeting times -* Though an assumption, it is believed that women are often the household leads in childcare and domestic commitments, rightly or

wrongly, and this may need to be a consideration in terms of availability and booking meetings times that enable women to attend without putting them at a disadvantage.

- *Monitoring -* We propose that it may be useful to follow the practice of Cooperative Executive and request that citizens sign up to attend Committee Meetings. The benefits of this would be; increased visibility on numbers likely to attend and support in ensuring we've adequately prepared the facilitates, gather anonymised information about attendance so that we can better understand who is engaging in the process and where we may have gaps. In this consideration, this would be particularly useful to establish if we've considered the meeting timings suitable and also if they're demonstrating enough representation so that women feel able to engage.

Decision Making

-

Sexual Orientation

Impact on Members/Officers
- Yes   - No

Impact on Citizens
- Yes   - No

Details of impact

Sexual orientation is an important consideration for the Modern Committee System, as it may present a range of complexities that we need to understand and plan to mitigate such as under representation, safety and confidence issues. The programme recognises that the LACs as well as Policy Committees in addition to the wider Council governance will need to take into account demonstrable action to ensure these systems and processes are inclusive, bias free and safe for the people of Sheffield. Where applicable, we have listed below the ways in which this characteristic has been considered.

Although there is no detailed local data, based on national government estimates there are approximately 5 to 7% of people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual - 28,000 to 39,000 LGB people in the city, if the national estimates were applied to Sheffield's population. See the LGBT Community Knowledge Profile. This is likely to be very different across different ages with more younger people identifying as LGB+ than older people. We expect that the Census data for 2021, shortly available in summer 2022 will help us to build a better picture of LGBT+ communities within Sheffield.

Engagement

- *Key messages -* The key principles of engagement which are often implicitly assumed should be very clearly communicated at all engagement events to ensure all participants are comfortable and confident to participate. This will include messages around tolerance, respecting the views of others, using language that is respectful, inclusive and non-discriminatory. It should also be stated that any explicit or implied hate speech or behaviour will not be tolerated.

- *Community Plans -* The LACs will use data available for each area and group of people to inform the plans and actions. This will include engaging with people of different sexual orientations, taking into account their needs within each area. In particular, LGBTQIA+ people are not always out or comfortable being open with everyone about their sexual orientation and numbers of

LGBTQIA+ people may be smaller in some areas so we will ensure we work with city wide organisations such as the Equality Partnership as well.

Mechanics of Meetings

- ***Safe spaces and expectations -*** We will strive for an atmosphere of acceptance within all meetings, decision making or otherwise. Any negative behaviours, language or actions may lead to people being removed from meetings.

- ***No presumptions -*** Ensuring that we avoid making assumptions about people or using language that may make someone feel forced into disclosing their sexuality is a behavioural consideration that will be in place. We will not put anyone in a position where they fear for their safety, feel as if they have to make disclosures in any case but particularly where it is not relevant. Members and Officers will have undertaken EDI training to support this as well as received Committee specific training to support with chairing and facilitation skills.

Transgender

Impact on Members/Officers
- Yes   - No

Impact on Citizens
- Yes   - No

Details of impact

Trans people are an important consideration for the ECTC Programme, as it may present a range of complexities that we need to understand and plan to mitigate such as under representation, sensitivity issues, cultivation of safe spaces and use of transphobic language. The programme recognises that the LACs as well as Policy Committees in addition to the wider Council governance will need to take into account demonstrable action to ensure these systems and processes are inclusive, bias free and safe for the people of Sheffield. Where applicable, we have listed below the ways in which this characteristic has been considered.

Although there is no specific local data, the Gender Identity Research and Education Society estimates that 0.6% of people are Transgender, that's approximately 3000 people in the city if the national estimates were applied to Sheffield.

Engagement

- ***Pronouns -*** We will endeavour at every opportunity to use the correct pronouns for individuals, once informed or corrected we will strive to use the preferred terms.

- ***Key messages -*** The key principles of engagement which are often implicitly assumed should be very clearly communicated at all engagement events to ensure all participants are comfortable and confident to participate. This will include messages around tolerance, respecting the views of others, using language that is respectful, inclusive and non-discriminatory. It should also be stated that any explicit or implied hate speech or behaviour will not be tolerated.

- ***Community Plans -*** The LACs will use data available for each area and group of people to inform the plans and actions. This will include engaging with people of different gender identities, taking into account their needs within

each area. In particular, LGBTQIA+ people are not always out or comfortable being open with everyone about their sexual orientation and numbers of LGBTQIA+ people may be smaller in some areas so we will ensure we work with city wide organisations such as the Equality Partnership as well.

Mechanics of Meetings

- *Safe spaces and expectations* **-** We will strive for an atmosphere of acceptance within all meetings, decision making or otherwise. Any negative behaviours, language or actions may lead to people being removed from meetings.

- *No presumptions* **-** Ensuring that we avoid making assumptions about people or using language that may make someone feel forced into disclosing their birth gender is a behavioural consideration that will be in place. We will not put anyone in a position where they fear for their safety, feel as if they have to make disclosures in any case but particularly where it is not relevant.

- *Public Questions* **-** Where a person wishes to raise a public question but experiences a lack of confidence, fear or feels unsafe, we can also introduce questions can be submitted before the meeting and raised on an individual's behalf to ensure that their voice is equally heard.

Carers

Impact on Members/Officers
- Yes   - No

Impact on Citizens
- Yes   - No

Details of impact

Carers are an important consideration for the Modern Committee System, as it may present a range of complexities that we need to understand and plan to mitigate such as barriers in accessing service (financial and time constraints) and under representation. The programme recognises that the LACs as well as Policy Committees in addition to the wider Council governance will need to take into account demonstrable action to make these systems and processes as accessible as possible, both remotely and in person for the people of Sheffield. Where applicable, we have listed below the ways in which this characteristic has been considered.

While Census data provides us with a good indication of the number of carers in Sheffield, it is likely that there are considerably more than the statistics suggest. The Sheffield Carer's Strategy estimates that only around 1 in 4 carers are known to statutory and voluntary organisations.

The 2011 census told us that there are over 57,000 carers in the city about 10% of people in the city of those 4,559 are young people under age 25 and 58% of carers are women. However, identifying the number of carers both locally and nationally can be a challenge. There are many 'hidden carers' who do not identify themselves as such, not viewing their responsibilities as anything separate from the relationship, they have with the person they are caring for.

Carers are also an ever-changing group with an estimated 2.3 million people, nationally, moving in and out of caring situations each year. Therefore, the number of carers will be different every day.

Engagement

- *Member Engagement -* Engagement material should also be communicated to Members and Officers using different channels that they can access at more convenient times. For example, information can be emailed or made available on the Intranet. There is also an inbox which Members and Officers can use to ask questions and receive feedback.

- *Respecting and promoting remote and flexible working -* We will continue to implement and recognise flexible working, which should also assist those with caring responsibilities to engage better. These working practices provide additional capacity and remove the obstacles of travel time.

- *Advocacy-* As part of the Carer role, advocacy is a key part of day to day life. The Carer may want to be involved in the democratic position directly and feed in their opinions and issues however they may also have a responsibility to act on behalf of the person that they care for. We do not have enough information to understand how these scenarios may present differently but are aware that it is a consideration and that there is a responsibility to fairly advocate for Sheffield residents.

- *Individuals out of area-* We also accept that Sheffield may have residents that are from Sheffield but currently reside out of area; for example, may have been detained under the mental health act outside of Sheffield and are in receipt of care etc. For these individuals, there will be significant barriers to engaging in the committee system, however we feel that we have taken proportionate action to clarify how to engage publicly, including on our website, social medias, campaigns and local area committees. We do accept that there may be further action we could take and are keen to understand any feedback provided on this.

- *Individuals in area who do not live in Sheffield-* As part of the carer role, there may be people who work as carers in Sheffield who do not necessarily live here themselves. However, in working here, they spend a significant amount of time in and around Sheffield and may have views, and wish to engage. In these cases, we have provided opportunities to feed in around caring responsibilities that do not have a pre-requisite to be available to attend meetings or live in Sheffield such as public questions, watching the webcasts of meetings etc. We do accept that there may be further action we could take and are keen to understand any feedback provided on this.

Mechanisms of Meetings

- *Remote access -* People with carer commitments may not be able to access council or committee meetings in person, so the use of web casting, access to online reports and opportunity to submit questions prior to meetings is important. This assumes access to suitable technology which may not be the case for all people but does remove the barrier of travel time and cost and the need for respite care.

- *Length of meetings -* The current recommendations include a guillotine clause for committee and council meetings, of 2.5hrs and 3.5hrs respectively. This may help Elected Members or Officers who are carers by limiting the time required to attend or support a meeting in a single sitting.

- *Urgency -* Carers may find short notice changes harder to accommodate as there may be less flexibility in their carer cover arrangements. This should be considered in the meeting procedurals, including urgency rules.

- *Time demands* - The move to a new committee system will potentially lead to a greater time commitment from Elected Members, not just within the committee meeting, but in preparing for these, reviewing reports etc. This may apply additional pressure on carers, for which they are not compensated for. Elected Members can claim Childcare and Dependant Carers Allowance for specific reasons set out in part 6, schedule 2 of the Constitution. This is limited to ½ day up to 4hrs. As the new committee system is likely to increase the time commitment required from Elected Members, there's an opportunity to review this allowance to ensure it's still suitable and not disadvantaging those fulfilling caring responsibilities.

Decision Making

-

Voluntary/Community & Faith Sectors

Impact on Members/Officers
- Yes   - No

Impact on Citizens
- Yes   - No

Details of impact

The voluntary/community and faith sectors (VCF) are important partners for the Council, as they are linked in with citizens that are often less heard, under-represented and harder to reach. It is pivotal that the VCF sector is able to thrive under the new committee system in Sheffield and is able to facilitate integration of different people with different experiences, challenge stereotypes and negative attitudes and create spaces for a variety of people to collaborate to achieve common goals with a foundation of understanding and respect. We recognise that the LACs as well as Policy Committees in addition to the wider Council governance will need to take into account demonstrable action to ensure that the social value of these organisations is recognised continuously and any impact on funding, access, change is assessed to ensure the continued viability of the sector.

Engagement

- *LAC Community Plans* - The LACs will use VCF data available for each area and local VCF organisations will inform the plans and actions.

- *Relationships* - We recognise that the VCF Sector in Sheffield is uniquely qualified in and practiced in knowing their local communities. It is vital that we maintain strong working relationships with the VCF sector and enable clear mechanisms for them to be involved in LACs at a local level and also influence agendas at a strategic level.

Mechanics for Meetings

- *Attendance* - The VCF could be invited or opt to attend Committee meetings in order to ensure that they are actively participating in the system and that they can present the voices of those heard from less-so. We foresee the VCF playing a great role in working with LACs and helping us to establish which are city-wide issues or which may have the largest implications even if it is for a small minority of people.

- *Links between LACs and Policy Committees* - work is being undertaken to establish working links to ensure clarity and effective communication.

Decision Making

- *Ward Pots* - Ward pots in each area will increase significantly and each of the 7 LACs will have £100k funding for them to spend in line with local community

plan. Areas will also have money allocated in relation to deprivation. The LACs are able to spend this money differently across Sheffield depending upon what is highlighted in their boundaries as local concerns/actions. As such, the prioritisation of these issues could help to ensure different equality interests benefit and provide a bespoke plan for specific cohorts and support a better overall outcome for the LAC areas.

- *Monitoring of Ward Pots-* We will also undertake rigorous monitoring of ward pot proposals and expenditure including who receives it, what is it spent on and how it benefits equalities etc. We will monitor this proportionately, but aim to establish clear improvements/benefits and good outcomes for residents of different characteristics without a detriment to any particular group.

Cohesion

Impact on Members/Officers
- Yes   ▪ No

Impact on Citizens
- Yes   ▪ No

Details of impact

Cohesion and the Cohesion strategy are important considerations for the Modern Committee System as it may present a range of complexities that we need to understand and plan to mitigate such as supporting diversity across Sheffield, facilitating integration of different people with different experiences, challenging stereotypes and negative attitudes and create spaces for a variety of people to collaborate to achieve common goals with a foundation of understanding and respect. The programme recognises that the LACs as well as Policy Committees in addition to the wider Council governance will need to take into account demonstrable action to make these systems and processes as accessible as possible, both remotely and in person for our the people of Sheffield. Where applicable, we have listed below the ways in which this characteristic has been considered.

Engagement

- *Accessibility -* As outlined in the Race section of this EIA, we intend to do further work to ensure that our reports and published information online and otherwise improves in accessibility to ensure that language needs are met as well as being generally understandable to the citizens of Sheffield.

- *Cross-Characteristic Collaboration*- We understand that cohesion cannot simple be about one characteristic or way of working, but a holistic behavioural and cultural approach to engagement and partnerships. We endeavour to create spaces for discussion and engagement through our LACs and Committee System where people can share ideas without exclusion and share these with people from different background, histories, areas and perspectives; regardless of being older/young, richer/poorer etc. In our committee meetings, everyone is considered equal with equally valid perspectives, even where there are disagreements and differences. We aim to see this in practice and learn as we go to ensure that we have the right enablers in place to support this.

- **Promotion to improve parity**- much like our learning from the LAC surveys, we aim to monitor engagement in our committee system and identify any gaps where a particular cohort may not be engaging or participating. If we do this, we can start to evaluate alternative methods of engagement or bespoke enablers for participation to improve parity and encourage further cohesion.

Mechanics for Meetings

- *Agenda Management-* There may be scope as part of defining our ways of working in the Committee meetings to allocate time for agenda items to enable parity in interests/perspectives, particularly where an item has been identified as potentially controversial or impactful. We are aiming to keep agendas limited to ensure that this supports discussion and decision making with enough time on the items for a considered and robust decision, and as part of this, we would encourage people with different points of view to have been involved in discussions before and during these opportunities.

- *Tone and Behaviours*- The proposed structure has now been to Governance Committee and published publicly for reference, however, the 'how' is still in development and design phase. As part of this, we foresee work on changing cultures, behaviours and working practices to enable engagement and cohesion. Ton and behaviours within the meetings themselves will be part of this scene setting, environment setting and securing a feeling of safety in terms of physicality and also mentally. To support this, we aim to agree behavioural principles for the committee meetings that will support mutual understanding, trust, enable cohesion and ensure voices are given equal weighting.

- *Chairing*- The role of the chair and/or vice chairs and/or co-chairs will be to facilitate the discussions in the committee meetings, and a large part of this will be to ensure that adequate time and consideration is given to different perspectives and views, enabling parties to inputs where they chose to. As well as this, they will also be responsible for upholding the behavioural principles.

- *Funding Allocation*- In both LACs and Policy Committees, agenda items may cover community-based issues (e.g. decisions about how to allocate funding) to city-wide action and it is important at any level, local or city-wide that we consider equalities when agreeing to allocate funding. In order to appraise if there is an impact on equalities or protected characteristics specifically, consideration should be taken prior to the decision being made so that the decision can be informed and educated. There are many ways of ensuring due diligence is taken, including linking in with the City of Sanctuary, proactive engagement with people from different cultures living/working/studying in Sheffield, reviewing the Cohesion Strategy, discussing proposals with the Equality Partnership and many more. This should be built into action plans for committees to ensure a robust approach.

- *Acknowledging dissent*- part of the decision-making process is to engage with the people of Sheffield to shape proposals and seek feedback on proposals. We understand and acknowledge that part of this process is to be open to receiving feedback that we as Members, officers and fellow members of the public may not necessarily like or agree with. In cases where there is a clear issue such as hate speech or unlawful views; these will not be tolerated. However, where lawful, this is simply part of the process. We aim to, as a minimum, acknowledge those views, record the dissent presented and where clear, consider the root of the concern as part of decision making where it may be decided to investigate further. We also need to consider that decisions, as informed and as appropriately as possible, may not please all parties. In these cases, we must facilitate a system whereby disagreements in opinion can safely and pragmatically co-exist with each other and decisions taken.

Decision Making
-

Partners

Impact on Members/Officers
- Yes   ■ No

Impact on Citizens
- Yes   ■ No

Details of impact

Shaping, seeking feedback on and embedding the Committee system has been a partnership approach so far and we aim to continue to work in partnership with those who have a vested interest, are impacted by or are simply curious about the new system.

We have engaged with other local authorities with committee systems including but not limited to; Hartlepool, Wirral, Cheshire East, Kingston, Reading, Bright & Hove and Newark & Sherwood to understand how they went about implementing a committee system. We received, via webcast and written submissions, lessons learned, tips, suggestions in structures, ways of working and more. All of which was considered throughout the design phase but most notably and publicly within the two Governance Committee Inquiry Sessions 07th and 08th December 2021. https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=632&MId=8147&Ver=4

We also appreciate that there may be an impact on fellow authorities and institutions that occupy similar space as SCC such as NHS Sheffield, universities, schools, police, big employers, developers, housing providers and more. We are keen to better understand these links where they may not currently be clear. However we have already maintained links that were previously in place within the Cabinet model for example:
- Police- partnership working through crime and disorder scrutiny
- NHS- Sheffield Health and Wellbeing Board, Joint Commissioning Committee SCC & NHS CCG, South Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Nottingham Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Smaller employers/organisations and businesses can also be involved in the committee system by participating at a local level in the LACs if appropriate. Recent engagement sessions organised through the LACs saw business owners attend to raise their views about green proposals to remove on street parking and replace with bus lanes. This was a good opportunity to discuss impacts on small businesses and raise any concerns. Where concerns were raised, these were able to be documented, signposted to petitions and public questions as well as referred to the appropriate Transitional Committee, which we will carry through as process to the new Policy Committees.

Additionally, when allocating Councillors to partnership boards such as the Sheffield Health and Wellbeing Board, we could work to provide clarity on a way of allocating that considers equality and representation on the board itself and being careful not to send the same few Councillors each time but provide a variety of perspectives to get involved. We may need to consult with those bodies directly to investigate how this could be done.

We have more work to do with ensuring a robust approach to partnership working in terms of equality issues, boards being representative and driving forward cultural change; and this cannot all happen solely as a result of the committee system. We acknowledge a larger scale cultural change in the Council needs to happen so that we can drive wider change. We will be working with the Equality Partnership Board to support our own learning and seek advice.

Poverty/Financial Inclusion

Impact on Members/Officers
- Yes
- No

Impact on Citizens
- Yes
- No

Details of impact

As alluded to throughout this document, particularly as Sheffield emerges from the pandemic, poverty and financial inclusion are core factors and must be considered in terms of ways of working for the committee system for both staff and citizens.

Around 1 in 5 Sheffield people live in poverty at any one time, almost a third of all children under 10 in Sheffield, currently living in poverty. Almost two thirds of the financial impact of the Government's welfare reforms will be felt by families with children. There are very different rates of poverty in different Wards of the city.

Sheffield's Child Poverty report in 2017 shows the proportion of children living in families in receipt of out of work benefits, or in receipt of tax credits where their reported income is less than 60% of UK median, has increased.

In line with other Core Cities and national trends, the most up-to-date data shows 31.3% (35,820) children are living in poverty in Sheffield after housing costs (AHC). However, the figure masks the wide and well-documented variation between different parts of Sheffield. In Ecclesall ward, 7.8% (AHC) of children were living in poverty, whilst in Burngreave the figure was much higher at 51.19% and Central and Firth Park at 49% in poverty.

In 2017, 17 of the Sheffield's 28 wards had more than 20% of children living in relative poverty (AHC). There are clearly multiple causes of child poverty; however, it is likely that national welfare reforms are a significant driver of changes seen.

Joseph Roundtree Foundation (JRF) research (Monitoring poverty and social exclusion 2016 report) notes 'While overall levels of poverty have remained fairly static over the last 25 years, risks for particular groups have changed. Income poverty among pensioners fell from 40% to 13%, while child poverty rates remain high at 29%, and poverty among working-age adults without dependent children has risen from 14% to around 20%. The number of people in poverty in a working family is 55%. Four-fifths of the adults in these families are themselves working, some 3.8 million workers. Those adults that are not working are predominantly looking after children.

Since then, welfare changes and Universal Credit (UC) is having significant implications for communities in Sheffield, particularly people with more complex lives or who have vulnerabilities that make managing the system harder. This is more likely to include people from BAMER communities, care leavers, people experiencing domestic abuse, tenants in private-rented accommodation, disabled people or health conditions, and carers.

Engagement

- *LAC Community Plans -* The LACs will use data available for each area and group of people to inform the plans and actions. This will include engaging with people on different incomes and considering their needs. Areas may have a different profile relating to poverty and deprivation and this will inform plans and decision making and resource available. We will ensure however that even if there are a small number of people impacted, we will consider the impact on these groups. We will also work with city wide advice agencies

- *Access* – Remote delivery and digital access have a big barrier with potential financial exclusion as engaging remotely relies on people having access and money for: wifi, kit such as laptops, tablets, phones, cameras/webcams, microphones etc. However, face to face meetings also have risks attached with financial exclusion including travel costs for attendees, parking costs where applicable, time out of work to participate etc. To mitigate against some of these concerns, the public questions function can enable people to engage before the meetings themselves to raise points at a time that suits them and avoid taking time from work; they can then watch back the meeting on webcast. The kit and technology access issue is more concerning, particularly as so much has been remote delivery during the pandemic, that we have seen those with lower incomes significantly worse off as a result. Further consideration is required here to ensure that there are multiple options for participation that don't' put people at a financial loss.

- *Face to Face Decision Making*- as decision making still legally must be done in face-to-face meetings and not remotely, this limits those unable to afford travel or the opportunity to attend with the ability to influence decision making. There is the opportunity to influence beforehand, which should be considered as the key opportunity to influence, engage and put forward suggestions, ideas and concerns. However, we are aware of the limitations of face-to-face meetings.

- *Availability*- those in poverty are more likely to have multiple jobs due to shift work, zero hours contracts, low pay etc. All of which would compromise time and availability to participate, potentially during traditional hours. We have considered this as part of the system set up, with LACs taking place in the evenings and Policy Committee meetings to take place on weekday mornings. We hope that this provides enough coverage for people to attend at a local level and/or a city-wide level where able. We hope to review this at the 6 month review point in terms of volume of engagement and any unintentional barriers that we may have set in place.

Mechanics of Meetings

- *Agenda Management*- There may be scope as part of defining our ways of working in the Committee meetings to allocate time for agenda items to enable parity in interests/perspectives, particularly where an item has been identified as potentially controversial or impactful. We are aiming to keep agendas limited to ensure that this supports discussion and decision making with enough time on the items for a considered and robust decision, and as part of this, we would encourage people with different points of view to have been involved in discussions before and during these opportunities.

- *Financial Barriers -* we know that women are more likely to have lower household income, it is possible that they were adversely impacted by the remote engagement methods as well as the potential costs of travel to meetings and thus not been able to participate fully.

- *Lack of trust-* We understand that people from poorer areas in Sheffield are likely to have worse outcomes in terms of health, employment, education, income, crime etc. and as a result may experience less means to influence as demonstrated by symptoms caused by poverty including low democratic turnout, low numbers of representative decision-maker role models, low trust in institutions etc. There has been a history to acknowledge that has led to a lack of trust in the Council and other institutions in terms of ability to influence and a lack of flexibly to make the system more accessible. We are committed to doing more to gain this trust back and hope that over time, in demonstrating that commitment, we can move forward. As part of this, we commit to doing better monitoring of our data to ensure quality which will also help us understand the responses and actions required. We also will seek feedback on terminology, papers etc to ensure we are appropriately communicating and engaging. It is important to note that the committee system cannot solely resolve this paradox, however, we can set in place enablers to remove barriers to decision making that may have previously been in place.

- *Feedback not reliant upon attendance-* Questions from the public can be submitted prior to a committee. As no questions can be raised on the day of the committee, this does not exclude people who are unable to attend in person from submitting a question and therefore removes barriers for those unable to attend. We will also commit to communication channels being available to seek feedback and support our learning of how we can do things better.

Armed Forces

Impact on Members/Officers
- Yes   - No

Impact on Citizens
- Yes   - No

Details of impact

The implementation of the Modern Committee system will inevitably impact on people in the armed forces and/or their friends and families, however we expect this impact to be minimal. Therefore due consideration will be given to understand and mitigate issues that they and their families may face and ensure that their voices are heard. The programme recognises that the LACs as well as Policy Committees in addition to the wider Council governance will need to consider demonstrable action to make these systems and processes as accessible as possible, both remotely and in person. Where applicable, we have listed below the ways in which this characteristic has been considered.

Engagement

- *LAC Community Plans -* The LACs will use data available for each area and group of people to inform the plans and actions. This will include engaging with people who are serving, have served or who are families of those serving in the armed forces. Given numbers in each area may differ and be low we will work with city wide and national organisations on these issues as we consider their needs. We will work to the Community Covenant we have signed up to.

- *Individuals out of area-* We also accept that Sheffield may have residents that are from Sheffield but currently reside out of area; for example, individuals may be stationed abroad as part of their role. For these individuals, there will be significant barriers to engaging in the committee system, however we feel that we have taken proportionate action to clarify how to engage publicly, including on our website, social medias, campaigns and local

area committees. We do accept that there may be further action we could take and are keen to understand any feedback provided on this.

- **_Representative bodies-_** As part of developing the forward engagement plan, we could seek to engage with bodies who represent those in the armed forces such as RBLI as another route through to ensuring we provide knowledge and opportunities to those serving. This would rely upon organisation agreement to facilitate this communication but could provide benefits in partnership working as well as ensuring that the armed forces, their friends and families access to the information available.

Mechanics of Meetings

- **_Length of meetings-_** The current recommendations include a guillotine clause for committee and council meetings, of 2.5hrs and 3.5hrs respectively. This may help Elected Members or Officers who have are serving by limiting the time required to attend or support a meeting in a single sitting, particularly if web access is scarce. However;

- **_Hybrid technology-_** could also enable those serving to access the democratic process and meetings are available to be watched at a date and time that suits the viewer.

- **_Public Questions_**- Armed Forces individuals can also submit public questions and not have to worry about being available to attend the meeting as these can be asked on behalf of the submitter.

Decision Making

-

Other

- Yes
- No

Please specify

N/A

Impact
- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

Level
- None
- Low
- Medium
- High

Details of impact

N/A at this time. If, as we work through the embedding of the proposed structure, we identify any further considerations, we will immediately mobilise and appraise requirements with appropriate actions.

Furthermore, we are working to establish an Equalities Sub-Group that will own this EIA as a living document and commit to reviewing the system, including providing advice and guidance, actionable recommendations and holding the committees to account for consideration of EDI.

Summary of overall impact

Summary of overall impact

Summary of evidence

Changes made as a result of the EIA

Action Plan and Supporting Evidence

What actions will you take, please include an Action Plan including timescales

- Action: review the committee system continually in terms of equality, diversity and inclusion and through the Equalities Sub-Group, including 6 month and 12 month milestones

- Action: continue to work with Sheffield Equality Partnership and other partners in reviewing the committee system and helping to ensure citizens' voices are heard

- Action: ensure there are feedback mechanisms to enable citizens' views and experience to improve committee accessibility and equality performance

- Action: aim to ensure committees have appropriate equality support and challenge

- Action: seek to learn from the success of other agencies, partnerships and engagement structures (e.g. Youth Cabinet)

- Action: ensure strong links with SCC engagement strategy and other policy to support the effectiveness of the committees

- Action: work to communicate links between the committee system and other partnerships

- Action: ensure EDI training for Members and officers

- Action: facilitate Chairing and Co-Chairing training to support the running of accessible, balanced and inclusive meetings and decision-making

- Action: schedule a review of communication methods and channels (including in relation to plain English or translation)

- Action: review the accessibility of the formats and options for submitting public questions

- Action: continue to explore any potential for hybrid meetings

- Action: use the findings of Sheffield Race Equality Commissioning to develop engagement methods and committee accessibility

- Action: involve partners to review the accessibility and suitability of meeting spaces for the deaf community, including:

  - Use of hearing loop systems

  - Use of BSL interpreting

  - Alternative engagement methods

- Action: ensure up to date information about the accessibility of available town hall rooms and facilities

- Action: ensure as far as possible that the scheduling of meetings takes account of different equality interests

Action plan embedded.

This action plan is subject to review and feedback to support prioritising activity.

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mmittee%20System%

Supporting Evidence (Please detail all your evidence used to support the EIA)

- Census Data- https://www.ons.gov.uk/census
- Big City Conversation-
  https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/s43893/Appendix%204%20-
  %20Big%20City%20Conversation%20-%20summary.pdf
- Governance Committee Inquiry Session 1 (7th December 2021) -
  https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=632&MId=8147&Ver=
  4
- Governance Committee Inquiry Session 2 (8th December 2021)-
  https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=632&MId=8148&Ver=
  4
- Desktop research featured within the evidence pack submitted to Governance
  Committee 30th November 2021-
  https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=632&MId=8062&Ver=
  4
- LAC Survey- Results Summary Paper

Detail any changes made as a result of the EIA

Changes made as a result of this EIA have been outlined throughout this document. We have also embedded change as we have progressed through the design process, taking learning from the LACs and the Transitional Committees.

Further actions for change have been documented as part of the action plan to be owned moving forward by the Equality Sub-Group.

Following mitigation is there still significant risk of impact on a protected characteristic. ▪ Yes ▪ No

If yes, the EIA will need corporate escalation? Please explain below

N/A at this time

Sign Off

EIAs must be agreed and signed off by the equality lead in your Portfolio or corporately. Has this been signed off?

▪ Yes   ▪ No

Date agreed   01/03/2022

Appendix 4

| **Review Date** | 0109/2022 |