



## Report to Governance Committee

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**Report of:** *David Hollis, Interim Director of Legal and Governance*

**Report to:** *Governance Committee*

**Date of Decision:** *10<sup>th</sup> November 2022*

**Subject:** *6 Month Review of New Governance Arrangements*

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? ( <i>EIA1153</i> )				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-				
<i>“The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”</i>				

### Purpose of Report:

*This report continues the process of planning for the Governance Committee’s 6-month review of new governance arrangements. It:*

- *Sets out the background to the 6-month review of new governance arrangements.*
- *Sets out activity undertaken since the last Governance Committee meeting, to further define the scope and approach to the review.*
- *Proposes a draft scope and research framework for the Governance Committee to consider.*

**Recommendations:**

*This report asks the Governance Committee to:*

*approve the scope and research framework for the review – subject to any amendments agreed by the Committee.*

*Formally launch the 6 month review of governance and commission officers to put in place the necessary arrangements to carry out the review.*

**Background Papers:**

[Planning for the 6 Month Review – Presentation to Governance Committee on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022](#)

<b>Lead Officer to complete:-</b>	
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.
	Finance: <i>Kayleigh Inman</i>
	Legal: <i>David Hollis</i>
	Equalities & Consultation: <i>Adele Robinson</i>
	Climate: <i>N/A</i>
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>
2	<b>SLB member who approved submission:</b> <i>Dave Hollis</i>
3	<b>Committee Chair consulted:</b> <i>Cllr Julie Grocutt</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.
	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b> <i>Laurie Brennan</i>
	<b>Job Title:</b> <i>Head of Policy and Partnerships</i>
	<b>Date:</b> <i>3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022</i>

## 1. Background and context

1.1 As part of our transition to a committee system of governance in May 2022, Full Council agreed that:

“The Governance Committee shall conduct a review of the effectiveness of the new system, commencing six months after implementation (November 2022) with a view to provide Full Council with insight into what has worked well and alongside any recommendations. This review will:

- Take account of any changes to the local and national context
- Include the previously agreed ‘strategic aims’ and ‘design principles’ in its assessment criteria
- Actively seek and use feedback from residents, stakeholders, councillors, and officers to inform its judgements against those criteria”

1.2 The Committee System is in the very early stages of its operation. Policy Committees are into their 3<sup>rd</sup> round of meetings, and new ways of working are still bedding in. Taking an early look at the effectiveness of the new system gives us an opportunity to address any issues before they become longstanding or ‘normed’ in the new system and also enables us to identify good practice to share more widely.

We are not however looking at a wholesale redesign of the system – the review is about continuous improvement, using collective insight and experience of how the governance model has worked to date to make it better for citizens, Members and officers.

1.3 Building on the design principles and framework developed in the Transition to Committees programme, at its meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> October, Governance Committee started to look at the possible scope for the review. Two key aims for the review were identified:

1. How the transitional and initial period of the committee system has “enabled the Council to begin to work within a system where all parties’ views are taken into consideration when making decisions or setting policy for the Council...” as was originally intended
2. Looking to review how well community participation, liaison with other organisations and analysis of policy is undertaken.

A third aim – to consider how the new governance arrangements interact with any changes to the local and national landscape – was discussed, but the Governance Committee felt that there had been limited change in the 6 months since the inception of the new system and should not be a part of the review at this point.

1.4 The Governance Committee discussed a range of potential focus areas:

Review aim 1: to consider how the transitional and initial period of the committee system has "enabled the Council to begin to work within a system where all parties' views are taken into consideration when making decisions or setting policy for the Council..." as was originally intended.		Review aim 2: to consider how well community participation and liaison organisations is being undertaken. Proposed areas of focus:	
Proposed areas of focus:			
Overall structure	Policy Committee areas of responsibility (any need clarifying, in the wrong place or identified as missing?); number of policy committees; management of complex, crosscutting policy issues, relationship and interconnection with Local Area and Regulatory Committees.	Citizen engagement in the work of committees	Practice to date (good and bad); what is out and planned by Committees; how is involved in Committee work (inc. as co the relationship between LACs and Cor
Committee working practice	Committee workloads and agendas (amount of content, focus); balance of decisions, policy development, review; task and finish groups, Urgent Decision Making process and volume of urgent decisions (may link to delegations section); Pre-meets and briefings (and consistency across committees); Chairing and co-chairing arrangements; involvement of group spokespeople and deputies	Formal participation routes	Public questions, petitions
Capacity and resource	Impacts on Member capacity, workload and wellbeing; officer capacity – team around committee, professional support, wider service impacts, cost.	Equality, diversity and inclusion	Accessibility of committee content and citizen voice in decision making
Decision making and delegations	Effectiveness of scheme of delegations – is the balance right; Clarity of which decisions should be taken where ('route maps')	Communication and information availability	Availability of open, accessible information meetings; accessibility of information decisions
Constitution	Legal and constitutional matters that need to be addressed and considered through the review		

and asked officers to carry out some pre-work with councillors, citizens, and officers involved in the operational running of the committee system to test whether these felt like the right areas for the review to look at, and to help us shape the questions that the review will aim to answer. We received over 50 pieces of feedback which has been gathered, analysed, and then grouped by theme and consolidated down into a scope and research framework, set out below.

## 2 PROPOSED SCOPE AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

2.1 The proposed scope is based around 7 themes and 15 core questions.

The diagram in appendix A demonstrates the question themes that will frame the review and how these link with the design principles shown in the slides at the last Governance Committee on 06<sup>th</sup> October 2022, that outline a robust framework for this review to work within.

The research framework, based on the proposed scope is set out at appendix B

### 2.1.1 Theme – Committee Working Practices

#### Question 1 - Are pre-meets and briefings working effectively for all members of a Committee?

This question aims to address feedback received regarding the sharing of information prior to meetings, the role of the Spokesperson within briefings, the purpose and attendance of briefings and the proportionality of questions asked in committee meetings following briefings.

Approach We aim to conduct surveys and interviews with Members to ascertain their experiences to provide

a qualitative analysis of whether Chairs/Deputies, Spokespeople and committee members feel engaged with and informed by the current pre-meet process.

Why are we asking this? This will support us in identifying areas of improvement in our process, opportunities for stronger communication, and may contribute towards informed decisions being made more quickly and with robust agreement.

### **Question 2 - Is the preparation for committee meetings and briefings reasonable and proportionate?**

This question aims to address feedback regarding urgent decision-making meetings and the capacity required to support these, the sign off process for committee papers, the time taken for paper preparation as well as time taken to read them prior to meetings and additionally time and capacity requirements for paper amendments/corrections.

Approach We aim to conduct a 'time in motion' study to understand the demands within the process live and support this with seeking further feedback from Members and Officers within working groups, interviews and/or surveys. This will give us the data required to demonstrate the amount of preparation. We then aim to validate this with members and officers to determine if this feels reasonable and proportionate.

Why are we asking this? We may find opportunities to streamline processes, provide members and officers with greater capacity and provide recommendations to benefit accessibility.

### **Question 3 - Are the committees adequately supported?**

This question aims to address feedback received regarding resourcing of the 'Team Around the Committee' and practices of this team. There was an ask to understand if we have put in place the right type of work, the right service links and if we are providing the right type of support as well as the impact working at a resource deficit.

Approach We aim to conduct surveys and interviews with Members as well as Officers involved to gain insight into what is thought to work well and where there might be opportunities to change and try something different. We also intend to shadow the teams working to support the committees to gain real life insight as well as focus groups with the in-scope officers.

Why are we asking this? The initial implementation and embedding of the system caused a short-term increase in work pressures while adjustments were and are being made, and this may affect the results of this question. In answering this question, we will be able to understand pressures and support gaps, potentially re-distributing workloads and demands, to ensure our Members receive the support that they need for this system, and also ensure that our Officers are enabled to provide the level and type of support required safely and achievably.

**Question 4 – Have the changes that you can see so far in the committee system delivered on your expectations?**

This question aims to address feedback that we should look at what demonstrable changes have happened in the way we conduct democracy in Sheffield. If we consider the design principles of the transition to a committee system, both before and after, can we demonstrate change in the way the system operates, feels and delivers.

Approach We aim to conduct surveys and interviews with Members and Officers, as well as surveys with the public. In addition, we believe offering a face-to-face option to get involved and provide more detailed feedback would be beneficial for everyone, and as such, we will be offering drop-in sessions, open to the public, to hear directly what the expectations were and to what extent we have met them.

Why are we asking this? By answering this question, we will be able to understand the wider perception of how successfully we moved to a committee system aligning with our intentions set out at the start. We will be able to understand the most impactful changes and opportunities to showcase more clearly, the different ways of working and positive impacts for Sheffield.

**Question 5: Are committees undertaking the type of activities pertaining to policy and decision making that they were intended to do?**

This question aims to address the actual activities of the committees and if the balance is right between commissioning investigative research, consideration, check and challenge, decision making and policy development as well as roles in these activities, with all members of the committee feeling that they have the right level of involvement and

influence.

Approach	We aim to work with the committees to run sessions, where able, to discuss this balance qualitatively. We will also follow this up with surveys and opportunities for interviews to add further detail.
Why are we asking this?	We aim to understand if we have the committees leading on policy development for Sheffield City Council as intended, and if not, understand ways in which we can change to better enable them to.

**Question 6 - Are LACs and committees working well together? Is there anything that can be improved?**

Feedback broadly, received from both the public and from our Members, has been that we should examine the working relationships between committees, particularly the LACs. This may include communication, processes as well as clarity of roles and remit.

Approach	We aim to interview the LAC Chairs, as representatives of their LACs respectively. We will review the processes that support the interconnectedness of the committees and conduct a gap analysis to understand any areas for improvement. Additionally, we may build this question into the survey and conduct wider Member interviews; or alternatively, provide drop-in sessions.
Why are we asking this?	We aim to understand how things work now and if it feels that Policy Committees and LACs act cohesively as a wider committee system, identifying any areas for improvement.

**2.1.2 Theme – Capacity and Resource**

**Question 7 - Do members and officers have the tools to support, deliver and develop in this system?**

It was suggested that we review the roles within the committee system to establish if those roles are supported with the right types of tools in order to operate effectively. These tools might be physical in terms of kit, they might be clear remits or clarity of officer links etc. The feedback also sought to ask if officers and members have enough time to reflect on governance arrangements and practices. While this was suggested

primarily for Spokespeople roles, it seemed prudent to seek views from all involved.

Approach	We aim to seek feedback from members and officers of all roles in the system; this feedback may be through interviews however we may also build this into a focus group session with the aim of this question being an agenda item to return to regularly.
Why are we asking this?	We aim to provide an opportunity to reflect and examine what is and is not working well, with support in building space for similar reflections in the future in a less formal manner. We also aim to establish and ongoing or new training requirements and build this into service development.

### **Question 8 - How well are we mitigating the risks identified in the Equalities Impact Assessment?**

We have received a variety of feedback about equality, diversity, and inclusion in terms of access to the committees but also the make up of the committees themselves and how representative these spaces are for the views and voices of Sheffield.

Working with our Equalities sub-group, we will be able to review the Equality Impact Assessment for actions and seek to answer if those actions were achieved and next steps or impact following this. We also will aim to provide a picture of the diversity make up of our committee system.

By doing this, we are holding ourselves and our democratic system to account for being representative and also identifying and removing barriers to support a move cohesive and collaborative Sheffield.

Additionally, a piece of feedback directly enquired about the impact of the system on the wellbeing of those involved in it as there are notable changes in workloads, expectations and demands on time. We have a duty of care to those employed by SCC, and it is therefore important that we ask about how our practices are impacting on wellbeing to cultivate a proactively supportive work environment.

Approach	Due to the potential sensitive nature of these conversations, we intend to offer a survey with options to follow up with interviews or focus groups. This survey will likely use 5-point scales to add quantifiable intel with the option to add
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qualitative experiential information too.

Why are we asking this? We aim to understand if there are any health and safety concerns, any EDI impacts and anything we can do to best support individuals better which may feed into a wellbeing plan in the interim while we make changes to get things right, if there are areas for improvement identified.

### 2.1.3 Theme – Overall Structure

#### **Question 9 - Do the Policy committees have clear remits, are they the right remits and are the links to other committee remits working?**

There is work to be done around clearly outlining roles, remit, and scope of the individual committees as well as the types of committees. There were points raised about any potential amendments to remits for consideration, the difference between LACs and Policy Committees and, importantly, clarity on how cross-cutting issues are engaged with and addressed.

Approach We intend to undertake qualitative assessment of understanding remits via survey and interviews to better understand the challenges in clarity and how we might address them.

Why are we asking this? We aim to make recommendations about ongoing communication and public engagement to support greater understanding as well as channels to access and engagement with the system and process clarification for cross-cutting issues.

#### **Question 10 - Are the roles within the committee system clear and working as intended?**

The feedback received outlined specific roles for consideration; The Chair and how it differs from a Cabinet member and the spokesperson, seeking to understand what the roles are, how they are understood and how they operate in practice.

Approach We aim to interview the individuals holding these roles to understand how they are experiencing them.

Why are we asking this? We aim to provide greater clarity about what these roles are, how they add value and how they are different from the previous way of working in a Cabinet model.

#### 2.1.4 Theme- Decision Making & Delegation

##### **Question 11 - Are decisions being made effectively and efficiently?**

Feedback for this area was split between urgent decision making; seeking information on how many decisions are being made urgently and in what setting, if they are in urgent meetings or outside of a meeting format. The other half of the feedback sought review of if the committees have the resources and tools to make decisions on both simple and complex matters.

Approach	We will undertake a desktop research exercise to establish the quantifiable data and then use these findings as the basis for additional qualitative feedback which may be part of working groups or interviews.
Why are we asking this?	We will establish the pattern of action around urgency and understand if we have the best ways of working for these types of decisions as well as understanding how equipped members feel to make decisions on complex matters. This may result in further development of support, training or tools.

#### 2.1.5 Theme- Citizen and Community Engagement in the Work of Committees & Formal Participation Routes

##### **Question 12 - What is working well in terms of engagement for the public with the committee system and are there any gaps?**

This question aims to address feedback that enquired about what is and is not working well for engagement, seek to understand opportunities for alternative methods, understand the breath of engagement with committees and to understand the demographics of those who do engage.

Approach	We aim to hold drop-in sessions for the public to speak to us about their experience of engagement, offer a public survey, review attendance at committees where possible and work with publicly interested groups as well as equalities groups to understand any barriers we have inadvertently put in place. There will also be opportunities to present evidence.
Why are we asking this?	We aim to review how successful our engagement methods are currently, and if we can do anything different, additional, or better to encourage Sheffielders to get involved in their democratic

system. We also are keen to understand any EDI implications and ensure equal opportunities to engagement with the committees across all characteristics.

**Question 13- What is the volume and nature of public questions and petitions?**

We received a number of items of feedback regarding the number of questions received each committee cycle, the types of questions, where these questions are directed and the number of and types of petitions.

Approach                      This question can likely be answered in full via a desktop research exercise

Why are we asking this?      The findings of this research may offer recommendations on engagement types, engagement themes and help us to understand the areas that the public demonstrate the most interest in.

**Question 14 - How effective are we at responding to questions and petitions?**

We received a few pieces of feedback enquiring about how responses to question and petitions work, from queries around how LAC escalations are responded to, how we can demonstrate that engagement has been reflected in decisions and how communicate feedback has directly shaped packages of work for progress.

Approach                      This question can likely be partially answered via a desktop research exercise in terms of the turnaround from raising the question, forum it was raised in, response time and where the response came from. However, there will need to be further qualitative examination to understand how we accept the feedback and what is done next with it, likely in a process review alongside feedback from members of the public who have asked questions.

Why are we asking this?      The findings of this work may offer process clarity improvement, greater allocation of responses to roles and improve our communication.

2.1.6 **Theme- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Communication & Information Availability**

**Question 15 - How accessible are the committees and the committee outputs?**

The feedback received had a few different elements, including; if committee content and meetings meet accessibility standards, how quickly the outputs from committees are publicly available and if we are considerate of non-digitally abled citizens and how to remove barriers to their engagement in the system.

**Approach** We are able to establish some of the answers to this question through desktop research, however, we aim to work with equality groups and our own Equalities Sub-Group to review progress and measures to ensure accessibility.

**Why are we asking this?** By answering this question, we will understand what the communicable need is post-meeting, strengthen our engagement offer and continue our commitment to ensuring that this system is representative of all Sheffielders.

### 2.1.7 Theme – The Constitution

No questions were specifically raised regarding the Constitution; however, it is expected that further work will be undertaken to clarify and simplify the Constitution as well as consider any potential constitutional impact from the findings of this review.

## 2.2 Feedback out of Scope

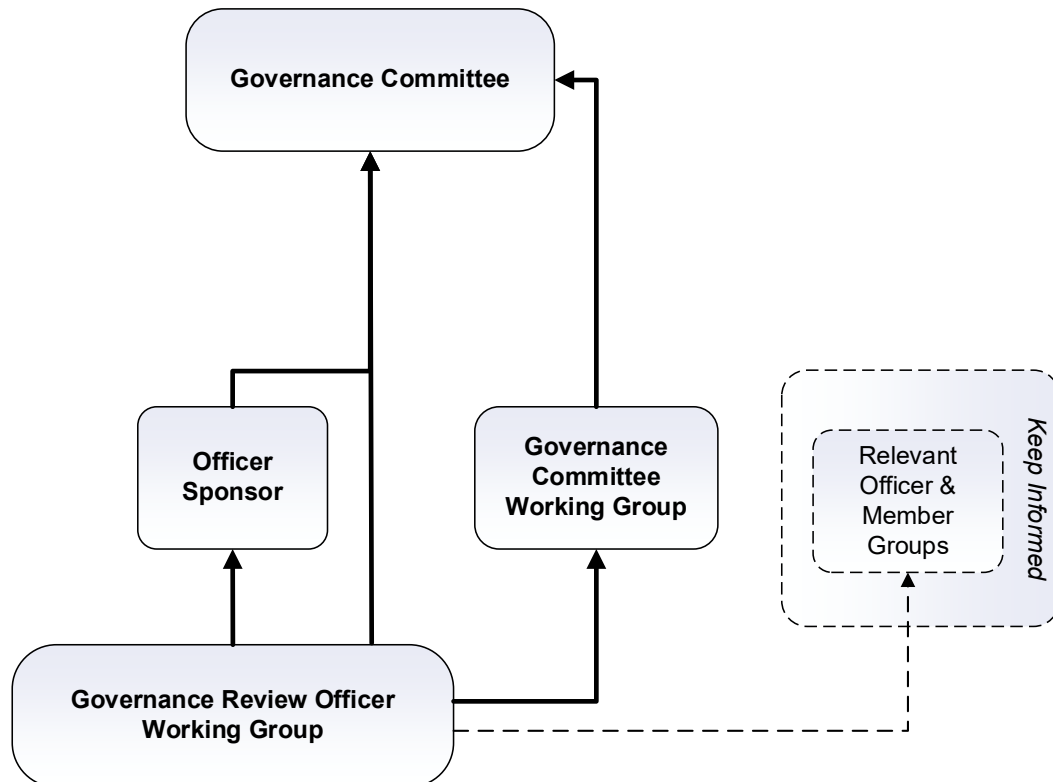
Some suggested areas of interest, set out in the table below, were beyond the scope of this initial review but may be areas we need to consider as part of our continuous improvement in the coming years.

<b>Feedback</b>	<b>Justification</b>
Recruitment specific practices	Review of the job descriptions and recruitment practices can be undertaken as part of BAU, as with any service.
Role of the Leader of the Council	Not appropriate for this review.
LAC meeting practices	This review is primarily focused on the Policy Committees, which are newer in implementation than the LACs. LACs are able to receive and review service feedback separately.
Local change requests	Local change requests should be directed to the LACs and are out of scope for Policy Committees in terms of remit and are therefore out of scope for this review. Any such feedback received has been forwarded to the appropriate LAC service team(s) to review.
Deputising practice	As somewhat of an outlier, unable to dedicate additional resource at this time, however, may be reviewed at a later date.
Consistency review	As Policy Committees are still so new, it is unclear, longer term, how consistent or inconsistent their working practices

	may be until they are more deeply embedded. As such, it does not feel like the right time to review this.
Election Cycles	Not appropriate for this review specifically, however, may be part of future considerations in another forum.
Term Limits	Cannot be locally determined – not appropriate for this review.

### 2.3 Governance

The review will be led and owned by the Governance Committee. At its meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022, the Governance Committee agreed to set up a working group of the whole committee to drive the review in between formal meetings. Governance Committee will be supported by an officer working group involving Democratic Services, Legal Services, Business Change and Information Solutions and Policy and Partnerships:

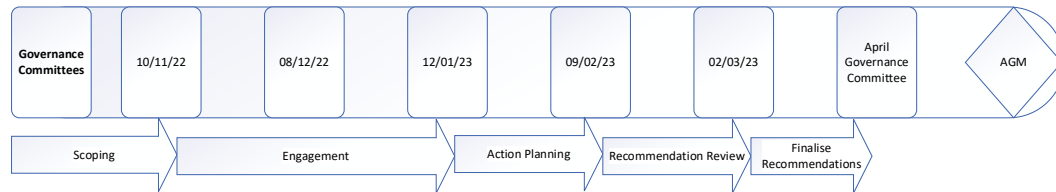


### 2.4 Timescales

We aim to have our final review recommendations evaluated and accepted at the Annual Governance Meeting in May 2023. As such, we have a limited time to deliver the review and must consider this when defining the scope, to ensure that we do not try to address everything at once which may be unachievable. Instead, we must focus on core areas and do this well.

As we have Governance Committee as our governing body, we will deliver

progress updates to this forum, in 5 stages as demonstrated below. Once this scope is finalised and approved, we aim to commence delivery immediately until approximately the middle of January 2023. At which point, we will undertake analysis of our findings to provide a summary of potential actions, which will then go on to be formed into recommendations and finalised.



## 2.5 Key Services Affected

Key services affected by undertaking the review may be different from those affected by the review; it is, at this time, unclear on how this might be until we start our analysis and reach recommendations. However, it is anticipated that the services most likely to be initially impacted on are the services involved in the 'Team Around the Committee':

- Democratic Services
- Policy & Partnerships; and
- includes individuals from Legal, the Senior Management team and Finance.

As part of the review, if we work with a specific service area committee, such as Housing Policy Committee, it may also result in co-produced recommendations that could impact on teams within housing, though most likely the officers who support the committee directly.

## 3. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

### 3.1 Design Principles

We set out 5 key 'Design Principles' for the transition to the committee system. Reviewing the new governance arrangements at this early stage gives us an opportunity to reflect on how well we are delivering against these principles, and where we need to make improvements: When it comes to the way it makes decisions, Sheffield City Council aims to...

1. **Be democratic.** Sheffield City Council is committed to democracy.
2. **Be open and trustworthy.** Make decisions publicly, so people can tell who is responsible for what.
3. **Include all Councillors.** Show what decisions everyone's local

councillors are involved in.

4. **Listen to everyone.** Have the voice of residents at the heart of our decisions.
5. **Be forward looking and keep improving.** Respond to the fast-changing world by trying new things and checking often whether it is working.

### 3.2 Values

We have recently set out a new set of values for our organisation which have been developed by our employees for employees. They guide how we do things each day, individually and together, irrespective of our role or location, helping to make our organisation a positive and productive place to work. These values are:

- People are at the heart of what we do
- Openness and honesty are important to us
- Together we get things done

Our values are central to the review of our governance model and are a chance to ensure that we are working to continuously improve how we work, getting things right and about learning from Sheffields. We publicly committed to this review and will be upholding this promise, openly, with published findings at the end. We also aim to deliver this review collaboratively, seeking engagement and further feedback from the Public, Members and staff, to provide a holistic view on experience of the system in its current way of working.

### 3.3 Strategic Goals

In summer 2022, Members agreed a new set of strategic goals which provide a clear statement what we want to achieve for and with the city. The six goals are underpinned by our ambition to be a good council that delivers high quality services for all. The strategic goals provide the framework for our [2022/23 Delivery Plan](#) and the four-year improvement journey that we are on as an organisation.



Effective, open, engaging and democratic decision making is fundamental to us being a good council and that improvement journey. The six-month review gives us an important opportunity to check how we're performing at an early stage, look for improvements that can make to continuously improve our approach for citizens, Members and the people that work at SCC to put us in the best position to achieve our strategic goals.

#### 4. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

4.1 In developing the scope for the review which is based on the Design Principles for the Committee System (developed with Members and stakeholders), we have sought the views of Councillors, interested members of the public who engaged and contributed to the Transition to Committee System programme, and officers involved in the operation and running of Policy Committees. These views have been incorporated into the proposed scope as set out in section 2 with further exploration of how we plan to interact with these stakeholder groups as part of the review outlined in the research framework at appendix B.

#### 5. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

##### 5.1 Dependencies

- Governance Committee agreeing a final scope within the timelines outlined in the section below
- Officer capacity to undertake the review alongside BAU
- Officer and Member capacity during a time of seasonal absence
- Public interest in engagement during a seasonal time period, especially during a time of rising costs of living
- Engagement of stakeholders to ensure that we are able to understand their views and experiences



- Adequate time to analyse the findings and provide meaningful results
- Buy-in from leadership to own the recommendations and any resultant decisions

## 5.2 Risks

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Mitigations</b>
If the review is not adequately resourced, then we risk being unable to fulfil this scope or do enough work to establish meaningful findings; which in turn will not help us improve the committee system and lead to reputational damage, ongoing stressors and shifts in morale.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support from Business Change outside of BAU staff</li> <li>• Early planning to determine next steps and ascertain resource needs/risks</li> <li>• Limited scope to ensure achievability</li> <li>• Multiple opportunities and methods for engagement to ensure face to face time is appropriate and proportionate</li> </ul>
If the timescale is too short to investigate root causes and provide holistic recommendations, we will miss the opportunity to present the recommendations to AGM and provide positive influence over any changes made at that point. As well as this, it may cause delays in resolving any issues.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited scope to ensure achievability</li> <li>• Planning around the festive period to ensure purposeful and well-timed engagement activities</li> <li>• Implementing an ongoing review/continuous improvement approach</li> </ul>
With the amount of significant change politically and also economically for Sheffield, there is a risk that the public and stakeholder groups have other issues that may require their attention than this review and therefore limit engagement or trust in the Council at this time.	Med	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committing to our public promise to review will support trust built so far</li> <li>• Implementing an ongoing review/continuous improvement approach</li> <li>• Asking purposeful questions, taking up time on things that add value and not needless engagement</li> <li>• Making engagement in the review accessible and meaningful to those who wish to participate.</li> </ul>

## 5.3 Equality Implications

- 5.3.1 As part of the transition to a committee system of governance, a full Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken (EIA 1153). This will be a key source of information in the evidence gathering stages of the review, helping us to identify and mitigate any barriers or discrimination that the committee system may have created, and ensure that we are meeting our equality duties and objectives.
- 5.3.2 The Council developed a set of principles for engagement as part of the transition to committees, that have equality and diversity at their core. The approach to the review will be designed with these principles in mind –

that when we engage with people through this process we will value:

- Transparency - we will communicate in a way that easy for everyone to understand
- Diversity – We will consider everyone’s backgrounds, interests and needs
- Inclusive participation – We will provide lots of opportunities for people to get involved in a way that suits them
- Equality – Everyone’s ideas will be equally encouraged and treated with respect
- Responsiveness – We will listen, and use what we hear to help us take decisions

5.3.3 Alongside the Engagement Principles, the following considerations have been identified that, when applied to the review’s engagement, should help to ensure engagement is inclusive of all communities and citizens within Sheffield:

- We will provide both face-to-face and virtual methods of engagement
- We will make sure that any face-to-face engagement takes place in accessible buildings with adequate facilities
- We will ensure that engagement material is published in accessible formats, using accessible language
- We will endeavour to accommodate any reasonable adjustments Members, Officers, or Citizens require in order to participate in engagement sessions
- We will use a range of engagement channels to maximise the reach of our engagement in terms of demographics
- We will provide opportunities for people to feed back to us at times that suit them, so that carers, and people with educational or employment commitments have an equal opportunity to feed back
- We will avoid holding any face-to-face engagement sessions on days of worship or religious festivals
- We will ensure that principles of engagement are clearly laid out at the start of each engagement session
- We will ensure that anyone who does not feel confident to ask their question publicly has an opportunity to submit questions for consideration

#### 5.4 Financial and Commercial Implications

There are no direct financial and commercial implications arising from the

recommendations in this report. The review will be carried out within existing resources, supported by officers from Legal & Governance, Policy, Performance & Communications and Business Change & Information Solutions. The scale of the review will be designed within the available capacity of these teams.

#### 5.5 Legal Implications

There is no legal requirement for a six-month review of the Council's governance environment although there is an imperative to ensure that the Council's governance is effective overall. There are no direct legal or financial implications of this report. Recommendations in this paper are consistent with the legal framework within which the Council must operate from the date of its AGM in May 2022.

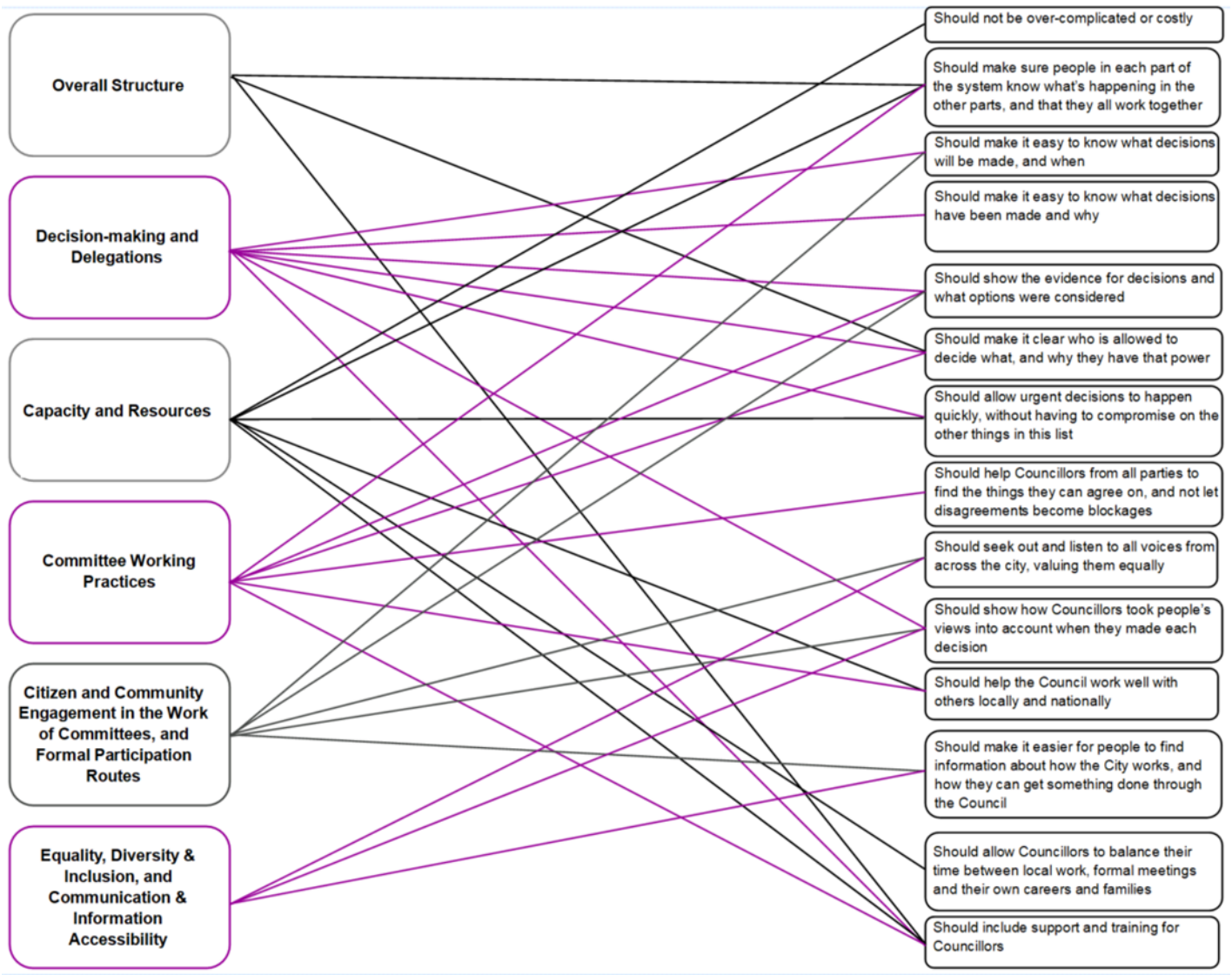
#### 5.6 Climate Implications

We do not believe there to be any climate related impact on or caused by the work we aim to undertake but will keep this consideration throughout our delivery.

### **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### 6.1 Governance Committee is asked to:

- approve the scope and research framework for the review – subject to any amendments agreed by the Committee.
- formally launch the 6-month review of governance and commission officers to put in place the necessary arrangements to carry out the review.



Summary Question	Who will we need to speak to?	Where will it come from?	What do we want to output?	What impact will this have?
<b>Are pre-meets and briefings working effectively for all members of a committee?</b>	Members of all policy committees, in all roles	Questions asked as part of a survey or interview	A qualitative analysis of whether Chairs / Deputies, Spokespeople and Committee members feel engaged with and informed by the current pre-meeting process	Identifying areas for improved communication between officers and all committee members prior to committee meetings, so that informed decisions can be made efficiently and effectively
<b>Are Committees adequately supported?</b>	Members of policy committees	Questions asked as part of a survey or interview	A qualitative analysis of whether members and officers feel that committees are adequately supported to achieve their objectives, and the reasons for this.	Identify areas where increased support for committee members and / or officers involved in the committee process could have a positive impact on communication and decision making.
	Officers involved in supporting policy committees			
<b>What do members, officers, organisations and the public think has changed between old system and new?</b>	Members of policy committees	Questions asked as part of a survey or interview Drop ins	A qualitative analysis of how members, officers and citizens view the changes between old and new system. The identification of any areas where experiences in the new committee system are different from the intended changes	Identify the extent to which the intended changes are being realised and experienced by those involved in the committee system, and whether there are any unintended changes that were not identified as part of the transition project
	Elected members who do not sit on committees			
	Sheffield City Council Officers			
	Members of the public & organisations			

<b>Are Committees undertaking the type of activities pertaining to policy and decision making that they intended to do?</b>	Committee members		A qualitative / quantitative analysis of opinions on the work carried out by committees	Indicate whether committees feel able to complete the work they feel they should be doing, and whether all members of a committee feel sufficiently empowered to take part in this work.
		Focus groups / workshops		
<b>Are LACs and committees working well together? Is there anything that could be improved?</b>	Members of policy committees	Questions asked as part of a survey or interview	A qualitative analysis of how the relationships between LACs and policy committees is viewed by members and officers, and whether this is different from the intended implementation of the 2 systems.	Indicate whether further communication and training is required on the remit of LACs and policy committees, and the relationship between the two systems.
	Members of LACs	Process Review		Discover any ways in which joined up working between the two systems could be improved
	Officers involved in supporting policy committees / LACs			
<b>Is the preparation for committee meetings reasonable and proportionate?</b>	Policy committee chairs	Questions asked as part of a survey or interview	A quantitative analysis of the time and resources required to prepare for committee meetings, and whether this is	Identify potential areas for improved efficiency in committee meeting preparation.
	Policy committee spokespeople			
	Policy committee members			
	Officers involved in supporting policy committees	Time in motion study		Assess whether preparation for committee meetings is requiring more time from members / officers than originally envisaged.
	Officers involved in submitting papers to policy committees			

<b>Do Members and Officers have the tools and time to support, deliver and develop in this system</b>	Members of policy committees	Questions asked as part of a survey or interview	A quantitative analysis of the extent to which members and officers feel able to develop in and reflect on their role	Indicate whether members and officers have the time and resources to actively develop in their roles, rather than the role being reactive in nature.
	Officers involved in supporting policy committees			
<b>How well are we mitigating the risks identified in the Equalities Impact Assessment?</b>	Members of policy committees	Questions asked as part of a survey or interview	An analysis of the extent to which the risks identified in the EIA have been addressed / mitigated to date and how, along with any areas that still need to be addressed.	Ensure that the policy committee system is inclusive for Members, officers, and members of the public, and to pick up early any potential negative impacts on wellbeing and equality.
	Officers involved in supporting policy committees	Desk-based research		
<b>Do the Policy committees have clear remits, are they the right remits and are the links to other committee remits working?</b>	Members of policy committees	Questions asked as part of a survey or interview	A quantitative analysis of the extent to which policy areas are understood, highlighting any recurring areas of concern / confusion	Identify any areas if responsibility that may need to be revisited as part of a future review, or received increase communication.
	Officers involved in supporting policy committees			
	Officers involved in submitting papers to policy committees			Clarify and improve cross-committee working
	Members of the public			
<b>Are the roles within the committee system clear and working as intended?</b>	Members of policy committees	Questions asked as part of a survey or interview	Analysis by committee and by role as to the level of understanding and perceived appropriateness of each role in the committee system	Indicate whether the roles within a committee are understood and practiced consistently, and the impact this may be having
	Officers involved in supporting policy committees			

<b>Are decisions being made effectively and efficiently?</b>	Members of policy committees	Desk-based research (committee system, minutes, emails)	Quantitative analysis of the numbers of scheduled and urgent decisions being made and in what forum, by which committee	Demonstrate whether improvements can be made to scheduling to anticipate the need for urgent decisions, and whether these are being undertaken effectively
	Officers involved in supporting policy committees	Questions asked as part of a survey or interview		Indicate whether committees have enough time and resources to dedicate to the volume of decisions being asked of them.
<b>What is working well in terms of engagement for the public and are there any gaps?</b>	Members of policy committees	Questions asked as part of a survey or interview	Types of engagement used and received per committee and in total.	Ensure that committees are continuing to encourage public engagement in efficient and effective ways
	Officers involved in supporting policy committees	Public drop-in sessions	Respondents' opinions on the effectiveness of different forms of communication, along with any feedback on concerns / ideas	
	Members of the public	Review attendance at meetings		
	Public interest groups			
<b>What is the volume and nature of public questions and petitions?</b>	N/A	Desk-based research (committee system, minutes, recordings)	Number of questions / petitions received by committee and by theme, plus in total by theme	Demonstrate whether citizens are engaging equally in all committees, and what topics / themes are eliciting the most engagement.
<b>How effective are we at responding to questions and petitions?</b>	Members of policy committees	Desk-based research (committee system, minutes, emails)	Average time to respond to public questions by participation route	Indicate whether we are providing a satisfactory response and experience to citizens in terms of both the content and reception of responses from committees
	Officers involved in supporting policy committees			



<b>How accessible are the committees and the committee outputs?</b>	Members of policy committees	Desk-based research (committee system, minutes, accessibility standards)	Evidence of good practice and any gaps in accessibility and engagement	Demonstrate whether committees are engaging with a wide range of communities and interests
	Officers involved in supporting policy committees	Questions asked as part of a survey / interview (participation routes for non-digital engagement, demographics and interests)		Indicate whether committees and information about them is accessible to as many Sheffield citizens as possible
	Members of the public			

