



Report to Governance Committee

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Report of: *David Hollis, Interim Director of Legal & Governance, James Henderson, Director of Policy & Performance*

Report to: *Governance Committee*

Date of Decision: *9th February 2023*

Subject: *Governance Review – Engagement Findings and Next Steps*

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? <i>(Insert reference number)</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"/>

Purpose of Report:

This report provides Governance Committee with an update on the 6 month review of new governance arrangements.

It sets out the activity carried out during the 'Engagement' Phase of the review, details the findings from the Engagement, identifies key areas for action in the next, 'Action Planning' Phase of the review.

Recommendations:

Governance Committee is asked to:

- Consider and note the findings from the Engagement Phase of the review.
- Note that findings related to Full Council have been passed to the Full Council working group for consideration as part of their work.
- Consider whether the issues identified for the Action Planning Phase of the Review are the right ones and;
 - Agree that those requiring a change to the system are taken forward to Governance Committee Action Planning Workshops
 - Agree that those requiring improvements to how we explain, communicate and support the system are actioned by officers, with progress reports back to Governance Committee at the appropriate time
 - Identify which issues can be actioned prior to the Council's AGM in May 2023, and which will be actioned in the longer term
 - Consider how issues relating to the wider system, beyond the scope of this review are taken forwards.

Background Papers:

[Report to Governance Committee, 10th November 2022, Planning for the 6 Month Review of New Governance Arrangements](#)

1. Governance Review – Background to the Review.

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.”

At the point the review was to commence, the Committee System was in the very early stages of its operation. Policy Committees were into their 3rd round of meetings, and new ways of working were 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.

1.2 During October 2022, the Governance Committee carried out a scoping exercise, and at its meeting on November 10th 2022 agreed that the review would be structured around 6 themes and 15 questions:

Overall Structure

- Do the Policy Committees have clear remits, are they the right remits and are the links to other Committee remits working?
- Are the roles within the Committee System clear and working as intended?

Decision Making and Delegation

- Are decisions being made effectively and efficiently?

Capacity and Resource

- Are Policy Committees adequately supported?
- Is the preparation for Policy Committees reasonable and proportionate?
- Do Members and Officers have the tools and time to support, deliver and develop in the committee system?

Working Practices

- Are pre-meets and briefings working effectively for all members of a committee?
- What do members, officers, organisations and the public think has changed between the old system and new?
- Are Policy Committees undertaking the type of activities pertaining to policy and decision making that they intended to do?

- Are Local Area Committees and Policy Committees working well together? Is there anything that could be improved?

Citizen & Community Engagement and Formal Participation

- What is working well in terms of engagement for the public and are there any gaps?
- What is the volume and nature of public questions?
- How effective are we at responding to questions and petitions?

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Communication & Information Availability.

- How well are we mitigating the risks identified in the Equalities Impact Assessment?
- How accessible are the Policy Committees and their outputs?

The Engagement Phase of the review was structured around these themes, and launched in November 2022. The activity undertaken, and the findings of the engagement are set out below.

2. Engagement Activity

Governance Committee identified 3 groups of key stakeholders to seek feedback from during the review – Members, Officers and Citizens.

2.1 Member Engagement

- The three main Political Groups submitted group responses to the review.
- We engaged with over 50 Members individually. This took place predominantly through ‘drop-in’ sessions held after the December round of Policy Committees, with some Members emailing submissions in directly, and some opting to fill in the online survey, which ran between 25th November 2022 and 2nd January 2023. The relatively low response rate to the survey means it is difficult to draw firm conclusions from the quantitative responses, but we have used the information as insight where appropriate.
- We also attended the LAC Chairs meeting to get views on the relationship between LACs and Policy Committees.

2.2 Officer Engagement

- An online survey ran between the 25th November 2022 and the 2nd January 2023. We received 41 responses.
- The Review Team attended a range of officer forums including, Portfolio Leadership Teams, Service Leadership Teams, Heads of Service Network, Performance Leads Group, Committee Launch Group, Transition to Committees Equalities Sub-group, Sustainability Team and LAC staff.

2.3 Citizen Engagement

- An online survey ran between 25th November 2022 and the 2nd January 2023. This was sent to people who had subscribed to the 'Transition to Committees' Gov Delivery mailing list; people who had attended meetings to ask public questions; LAC mailing lists; Sheffield City Partnership Board mailing list; Sheffield Equality Partnerships mailing list. We received 50 responses.
- The survey email asked people to contact us if they would like to be involved in workshops or engagement activity related to the review. There was limited uptake to this, but it did lead to conversations with interested stakeholders including Disability Sheffield and HealthWatch Sheffield.
- We received a small number of submissions from Citizens via email.

3. Engagement Findings

The Review Team have synthesised the findings from the engagement activity under each of the review questions, and from that pulled out the key actions to undertake in the next 'Action Planning' phase of the review.

Overall Structure

3.1 Do the Policy Committees have clear remits, are they the right remits and are the links to other Committee remits working?

Members and officers were clear that the current Policy Committee remits are unbalanced – with some having overly large remits. This was most often mentioned in relation to the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Change (TRCC) Policy Committee, where people told us that too much agenda time is spent on local and operational transport issues, leaving inadequate time for the Committee to consider important strategic and policy issues – including Climate Change. Some Members and officers felt that more decisions could be delegated to LACs or a sub-committee to help remedy this.

Some Members and citizens feel that the Licensing Committee, rather than the Waste and Streetscene Policy Committee, should be the place where Licensing Policy is decided.

How cross-cutting issues are dealt with in the Committee System has come up a lot in our conversations. Officers have told us that it can be very difficult to navigate the system and know where to go for decisions and who to brief – especially when the issue is time sensitive. Several Members have questioned whether the role of the Strategy & Resources Policy Committee in cross-cutting issues is working effectively – and feel that S&R has tended to make the decisions itself, rather than determine the appropriate Policy Committee to make the decision. Some citizens told us that it can be hard to keep track of an issue when it is being discussed in more than one Committee.

Proposed Issues for Action Planning Phase:

- Consider whether the current process for cross-cutting issues could be improved, and how we can improve advice and guidance to officers on how to navigate decisions through the system.
- Consider whether current delegations are appropriate, particularly in relation to transport and highways issues.
- Consider whether current Committee remits are appropriately balanced
- Consider whether changes are needed in relation to where decisions on Licensing Policy are taken.

3.2 Are the roles within the Committee System clear and working as intended?

Of the roles within the Committee system, the role of co-chair is the least understood. 50% of members who responded to the survey said that the role was not clear to them, compared to 33% who said that the role was clear (17% did not answer this question). Some Members and officers told us that they weren't clear how responsibilities were split between co-chairs, and that this could be confusing, and risks issues falling through the gaps. Whilst some people welcomed the opportunity co-chairing brings to lighten the load on one individual, others observed that co-chairs attend all briefings and seems to be a duplication of the roles, rather than sharing.

A recurring theme from Members was that the roles of deputy chair and group spokesperson are essentially the same in terms of workload, and therefore that the group spokesperson role should be remunerated. This issue was recently considered by the Independent Remuneration Panel, whose recommendation was the role should not be remunerated but did suggest it ought to be looked at again after this review. Some Members also raised concern that the Chair of the Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee is currently unremunerated, and that this should be considered.

Some officers have found that multiple committee leadership roles have led to confusion about how and who to brief and when, and would appreciate a clearer articulation of the roles, and what the expectations are between officers and members. What's the right forum for an early steer on policy development? Is it appropriate to brief only the Chair?

Some issues were raised in relation to the Strategy & Resources Committee. One political group submission suggested that the role of substitute members should be the same for Strategy & Resources Committee as for others, and should therefore be permitted – to retain proportionality. It was also suggested that Deputy Leader have an automatic place on the Strategy & Resources Committee – without having to also chair a Policy Committee. The role as is currently stands feels too big.

The focus of our engagement here was on the roles in the Committee System, however one political group submission suggested that the review should look at redefining the role of the Leader in the Committee System. This was out of scope, however may be something the Governance Committee would like to pick up in future pieces of work.

Proposed Issues for Action Planning Phase:

- Develop clearer guidance on the roles and responsibilities for Chairs, Co-Chairs, Deputy Chairs and Group Spokespeople and how officers are expected to brief and interact with these roles.
- Develop clearer definition and expectation of the Co-Chair role
- Follow up remuneration issues around Group Spokespeople and Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee Chair.
- Consider Deputy Leader membership and substitutions for S&R Committee.

Decision Making and Delegation

3.3 Are decisions being made effectively and efficiently?

Of those who responded to the survey, only 27% of officers and 22% of Members think that the work programme is effective in getting the right decision made at the right time. Officers told us they are sometimes given inconsistent advice about which decisions need to go to Committee, and which Committee they need to go to – and would welcome a ‘route map’ that sets out the process clearly.

Members told us that they need access to information far enough in advance of meetings to facilitate discussions with their group in order to be able to make decisions. This includes appropriate briefing, and timely publication of reports.

46% of officers said that too many decisions are being taken by Policy Committees that could be taken by officers, and some feel the financial threshold for Committee decisions is too low. Some Members and officers feel that decisions are currently being made in the wrong forum – for example local and operational transport issues could be made at LACs or a sub-committee – freeing up TRCC agendas for strategic decisions and policy development.

One political group submission suggested that a ‘call-in’ mechanism for decisions should be adopted – so that a decision can be sent back for Committee consideration where it contradicts other Council policy.

Proposed Issues for Action Planning Phase:

- Consider how we can develop our approach to work programming so that it becomes an effective tool for Members and officers in getting the right decisions made at the right time and in line with the Council’s strategic ambitions.
- Consider how we provide officers with clear and consistent advice about how to navigate decisions through the Committee System.
- Consider whether current delegations are appropriate and enabling Policy Committees to focus on the right issues
- Consider options around ‘call-in’ of decisions.

Capacity and Resource

3.4 Are Policy Committees adequately supported?

59% of officers and 61% of Members who responded to the survey said they are satisfied or very satisfied with the support they receive, with 17% of officers and 11% of Members saying they were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied and 22% of officers and 28% of Members saying that they were unsure.

Officers involved in the administration of Committees, and the 'sign off' process (eg. assessing the legal, financial, equalities or climate implications of reports and decisions) for committee reports have found that their workloads have increased significantly since the Committee System was introduced. They have reported that an increase in the number of papers being submitted at the last minute creates 'pinch points' where workload becomes unmanageable. This also results in late publication of committee papers – which Members and citizens have told us is problematic.

Officers in portfolios also reported that servicing the Committee System is using more resource – with 56% of officers who responded to the survey saying that the Committee System has negatively impacted their ability to carry out other parts of their role. Officers told us that they would like clear and consistent advice and support on which decisions need to go to Committee, and clear routes for how to get there. This would help to get reports in a timely fashion.

Proposed Issues for Action Planning Phase:

- Develop clear and consistent advice for officers about how to navigate decisions through the Committee System
- Develop mechanisms for Portfolio Officers to share best practise in resourcing the Committee System

3.5 Is the preparation for Policy Committees reasonable and proportionate?

67% of members, and 49% of officers who responded to the survey said that preparation time for Policy Committee meetings is reasonable, compared to 10% and 11% who said it was not reasonable.

A frequent issue raised in our discussions with Members was that they are required to do a huge amount of pre-reading to prepare for Committee meetings. Overly lengthy reports, and late publication of papers makes this difficult and is a key frustration for Members. Of the 42 meetings that took place before 7th December 2022, 12 agendas were published with at least 1 report 'to follow'. One member reported having over 1,000 pages of reports to read over a week.

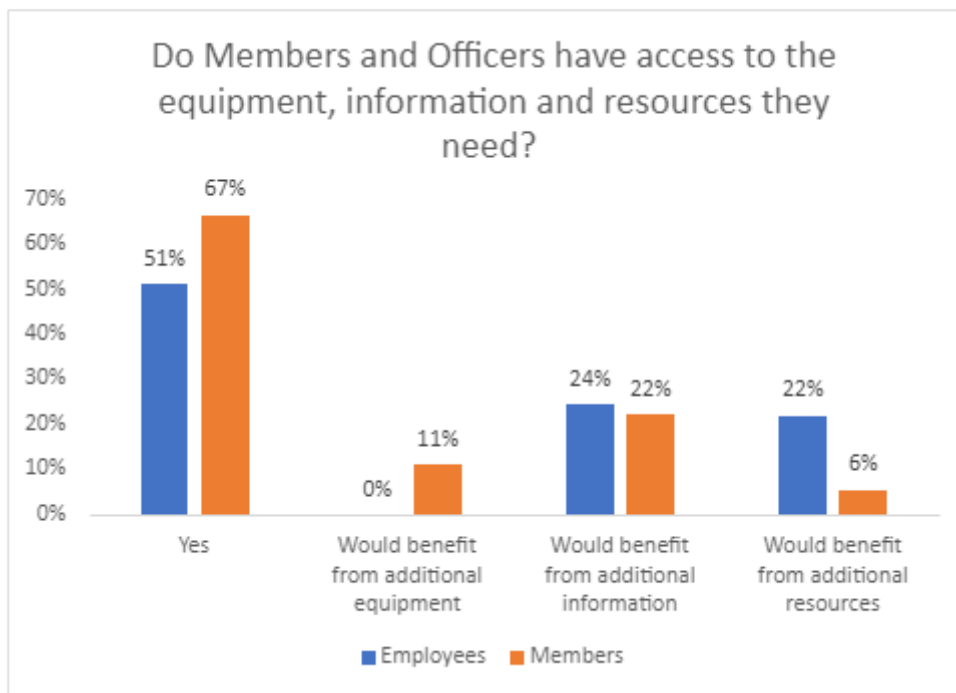
We know from conversations with officers involved in writing reports for committees, and those involved in signing them off, that last minute changes can lead to late publication of papers. Officers need to understand the process for getting a report to a committee, seek engagement from

legal/finance/equalities/climate sign off colleagues at an early stage, and produce a report in good time for the deadline.

Proposed Issues for Action Planning Phase:

- Consider how we can help officers to better understand the process for getting a Committee report prepared, signed off and published in a timely way.
- Develop training for officers on effective, accessible report writing

3.6 Do Members and Officers have the tools and time to support, deliver and develop in the committee system?



When asked what would be helpful in terms of tools and support, Members suggested that more briefings, and PA support would be useful, and suggested that more a more frequent, regular (same time, same day) meeting schedule would help to manage workloads.

Officers gave a range of suggestions including, more staff, clearer guidance on navigating the system, earlier engagement with ‘sign off’ services, opportunities to share experiences and best practice with officers across different areas, report templates that are appropriate for ‘non-decision’ reports, more officer support for the new Climate Impact Assessment, and training.

Proposed Issues for Action Planning Phase:

- Consider the meeting cycle and schedule
- Consider how we can provide Members and officers with ‘quick wins’ in terms of tools and support.

Working Practices

3.7 Are pre-meets and briefings working effectively for all Members of a committee?

Members have told us that they value briefings, and would like more of them, but have observed that there is a variety of practice across Committees in terms of how frequent they are and who attends them.

It is not clear that the intended process, of Chairs, Deputy Chairs and Group Spokespeople attending briefings and pre-meetings and taking that information back to their Groups is working consistently. Officers are required to brief party groups more than they had anticipated in the new system, and are unsure what expectations of this are.

Officers have reported that preparation for briefings is labour intensive, and difficult to organise across many diaries, but that briefings are helping to develop relationships with Committees and grow knowledge.

Officers and Members have reported that some briefings have been poorly attended by Members, but recognise the diary pressures that many members have. Some Members told us they would prefer to have a regular schedule of briefings, happening on the same day and time each week, to help with caring/work responsibilities etc.

Proposed Issues for Action Planning Phase:

- Establish a consistent set of expectations around briefings, including who should be involved, how often they should happen, the role of group briefings and how they interact with pre-agenda and pre-meetings.

3.8 What do Members, officers, organisations and the public think has changed between the old system and new?

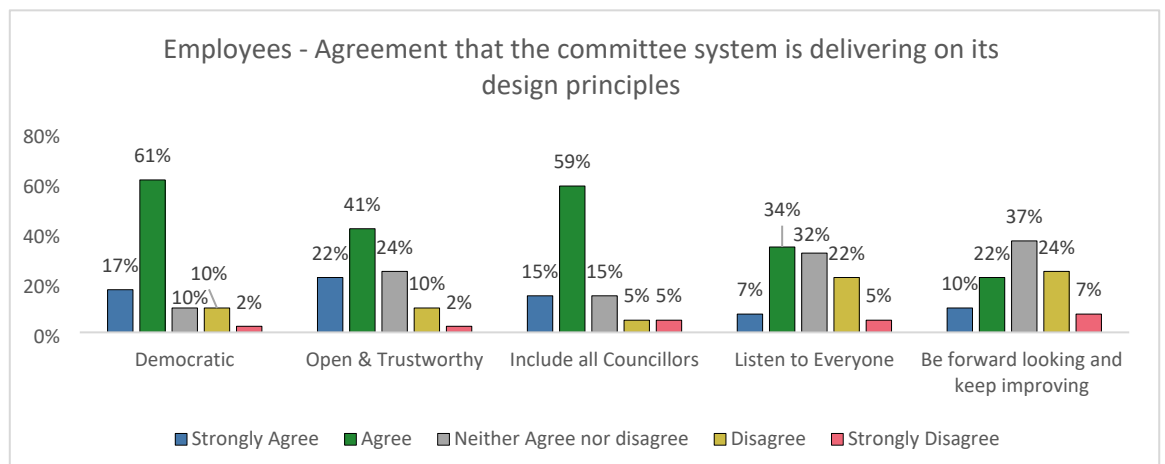
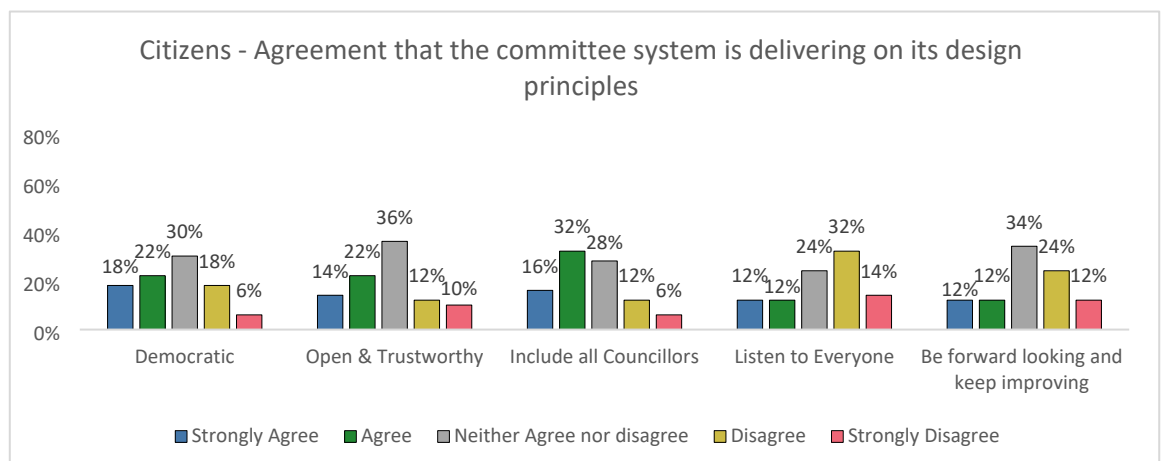
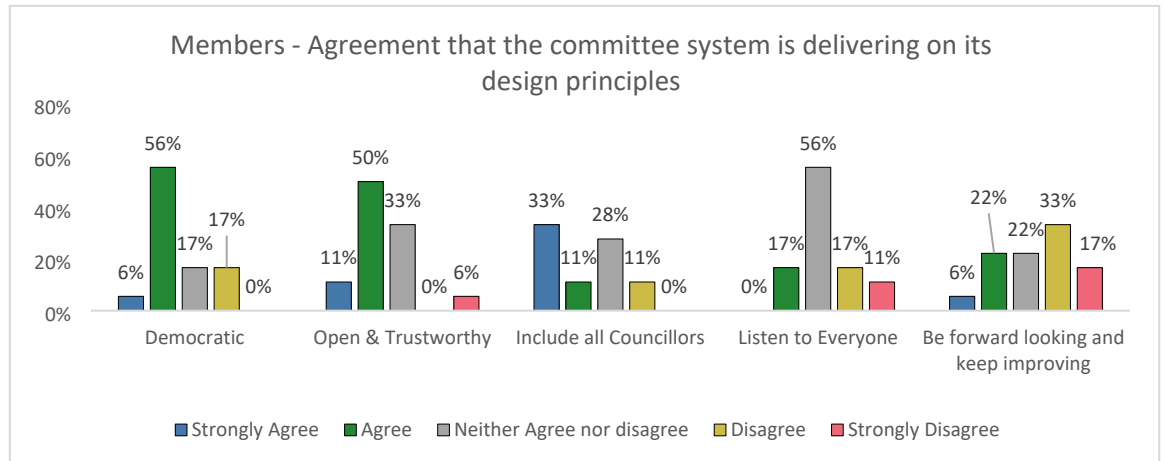
A key message to come through conversations with Members was that cross-party working is working well in the new system, recognising that this may be aided by the Council being in 'no overall control.' There was a recognition that the system is still in its early days and that we are still learning and bedding in.

Officers have found it positive to have input from, and engage with a wider group of members through committees, although some have found the new system more complex to navigate – particularly the informal briefings which previously would have involved one cabinet member.

The results from the survey around whether the new system has delivered on our key design principles to be democratic, open and trustworthy, include all Councillors, listen to everyone and be forward looking and keep improving are mixed – and difficult to draw meaningful conclusions from. Officers are more

likely to agree or strongly agree that the new system is delivering on the key design principles than citizens or members.

In terms of being forward looking and keep improving, Governance Committee is keen that the review identifies mechanisms for continuous improvement beyond the review itself.



Proposed Issues for Action Planning Phase

Consider mechanisms for continuous improvement of our governance arrangements.

3.9 Are Policy Committees undertaking the type of activities pertaining to policy and decision making that they intended to do?

Of Members who responded to the survey, 61% think that committees are not doing enough policy development work, and 56% think they are not doing enough pre-decision scrutiny and evaluation.

Members and officers told us that there have not been enough opportunities for early policy development work, and use of workshops, working groups and task and finish groups – limiting the ability for committee's to meaningfully engage with citizens and stakeholders. One political group submission suggested that Policy Committee meetings should meet monthly to create space for policy development work, alternating between formal business and policy development.

Members and officers told us that work programmes feel officer led, and that we need to enable Members to shape the work programme and find space to carry out work on policy priorities

Proposed Issues for Action Planning Phase:

- Consider how we can create capacity in the system for Policy Committees to undertake more policy development and pre-decision scrutiny.
- Develop a partnership approach to work programming with Members and officers, that results in balanced programme of decision making, policy development and scrutiny and evaluation.

3.10 Are Local Area Committees and Policy Committees working well together? Is there anything that could be improved?

The results from the survey suggest that there is a lack of clarity around the relationship between LACs and Policy Committees, with 50% of members, 56% of officers and 44% of citizens saying that remits of LACs and Policy Committees is not clear; and 67% of Members, 80% of officers and 66% of citizens saying that it is not clear how and when matters can be referred between LACs and Policy Committees.

Members and officers told us that this lack of clarity means that issues can be 'bounced' between committees, which is frustrating for all.

Some citizens and Members feel that some decisions currently being taken by Policy Committees would be more appropriately taken by LACs, and would free up policy committee capacity.

Proposed Issues for Action Planning Phase:

- Consider whether we need to develop a clearer framework on the balance of decisions between Policy Committees and LACs.
- Develop clearer guidance and communications on the roles of LACs and Policy Committees, describing the process for referring issues between them.

Citizen & Community Engagement and Formal Participation**3.11 What is working well in terms of engagement for the public and are there any gaps?**

Public engagement is the area that people feel we've made least progress on as part of the transition to the Committee System. Of those who responded to the survey, only 17% of Members, 24% of citizens and 41% of officers agree or strongly agree we are delivering the design principle of 'Listening to Everyone'.

We heard some examples of engagement working well – Business Advisor involvement in Economic Development and Skills Committee discussions, and the Co-opted HealthWatch member on the Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee feeding in views from diverse communities – but feedback from Members indicates that the 'Engagement Toolkit', introduced as part of the transition, is not being used.

Members and officers told us that there have not been enough opportunities for policy development work and 'task and finish groups' in the new system – which is where early engagement with citizens and stakeholders can add most value. Citizen survey responses suggest that many people don't feel connected to, or aware of, Policy Committees and their work, and those that do find it difficult to know how to navigate the system and influence decisions.

Officers and citizens questioned whether there is adequate support, resource and expertise for engagement within the Council. As part of the transition to the Committee System, the Council started working with an organisation called 'Involve' to improve how the whole Council engages across the board and this is more fundamental to SCC's ambitions for community involvement and engagement and the quality and consistency of practice across SCC. As discussed previously with Governance Committee, this needs to be progressed by SCC but progress has been constrained by SCC capacity and not through any fault of Involve.

Proposed Issues for Action Planning Phase:

- Consider how we can create capacity in the system for Committees to undertake policy development work, making use of the 'Engagement Toolkit'.
- Consider how we can make it easier for citizens to know what is happening in Policy Committees and how they can get involved.
- Consider how we will address the recommendations from the 'Involve' report.

3.12 What is the volume and nature of public questions?

Between May and December 2022, 67 public questions were asked and 13 petitions were presented. The distribution of public questions across Committees is uneven, with Adult Health and Social Care, and Education, Children and Families Policy Committees receiving none.

3.13 How effective are we at responding to questions and petitions?

Of those who responded to the survey, 44% of citizens were either dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with speed of their response to a public question, and 56% were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the manner of the response received.

There is a sense that public questions are not always directed to the most appropriate forum, there is duplication of questions at Policy Committees, Full Council and LACs, and sometimes questions are 'bounced' between committees – causing confusion and delays to responses. Public Questions to LACs are not triaged centrally, so there is the potential for duplication and inconsistent responses where questions are asked at multiple committees.

Some Members felt that the process in place for responding to questions – with responses formulated by officers and the Chair, is not appropriate in the new system, where the question is addressed to the Committee.

Some citizens felt that 30 minutes is inadequate for dealing with public questions when significant decisions are being made; some felt the process is too formal and rigid, there is no scope for asking supplementary questions, and isn't a meaningful tool for engagement and influencing decision making. Some citizens would like to be able to submit questions anonymously or attend the meeting virtually to ask a question. Some citizens were concerned that where written responses are provided, they are not published with the minutes, so they are not on the public record.

Issues for Action Planning Phase:

- Ensure the process for asking public questions is clear, that citizens are directed to the most appropriate forum and that those forums are easy to access.
- Review the process for responding to public questions, to ensure it is fit for purpose in a Committee System

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Communication & Information Availability.

3.14 How well are we mitigating the risks identified in the Equalities Impact Assessment?

Wellbeing – Of the officers and Members that responded to the survey, 34% of officers and 22% of Members reported that their wellbeing had deteriorated in the Committee system. Feedback from officers and Members indicates that for

some, the increased workload, time commitments and pressure around deadlines has increased stress and impacted wellbeing.

Some Members have expressed concern that time commitment required – particularly for Members with lead roles, or multiple roles, will disproportionately affect those with caring and work responsibilities and deter some people from standing for election.

Quality, accessibility and timely publication of reports is important in ensuring Members and citizens are able to appropriately engage with policy committees – and can have a greater impact on those with accessibility requirements.

Equality Impact Assessments - there is a lack of consistency in EIAs being attached to Committee reports. This varies by committee from 71% of Waste and Streetscene Policy Committee papers having the cited EIAs attached, to 6% at Finance Sub-Committee.

Proposed Issues for Action Planning Phase:

- Consider how we can improve the quality of reports to Policy Committees, including accessibility, and timely publication.
- Ensure the Equality Impact Assessment process is robust, transparent, and applied consistently.
- Ensure Members and Officers are signposted to wellbeing support services that are available through the Council.

3.15 How accessible are the Policy Committees and their outputs?

Of citizens who responded to the survey, 42% said that Policy Committees aren't always held in locations and at times that accommodate their needs. Some people said that formal meetings could be an intimidating forum to attend, and several citizens suggested hybrid/virtual options for attending formal meetings to increase access.

Webcasting of meetings has made observing Policy Committee meetings more accessible – meetings between June and the end of November 2022 had an average of 74 webcast views, with the minimum being 11, and the maximum being 164.

20% of citizens who responded to the survey said the format papers are published in is not accessible to them, and several citizens said that Policy Committee reports are often too long, and use inaccessible language. We analysed 8 Policy Committee reports for reading ease using the Flesch Readability Scale (which measures readability based on average sentence length and average syllables per word – where 100 is the most accessible). The results ranged from 27 to 37.7.

Several citizens mentioned that it was hard to find information about Policy Committees and their meetings on the Sheffield City Council website, although 42% of citizen respondents knew where to find published draft minutes and webcasts on the website.

Issues for Action Planning Phase:

- Consider how we can improve the accessibility and readability of reports to policy committees, and ensure they are published in a timely and accessible way.
- Consider how we can make it easier for citizens to a) know what is happening in Policy Committees and b) get involved.

4 Full Council

The operation of Full Council was not included in the scope of the review, however during our engagement we received submissions relevant to it.

One political group submission suggested that Full Council should be held every other month, at a fixed date and time on the 1st Wednesday of the month (except the AGM) – May, July, September, November, December, Feb, March/Budget; and that minutes of Committee meetings should come to Full Council in place of Members Questions.

One political group submission suggested that the overall number of council meetings should stay at 6 plus AGM plus Budget; the order of the agenda should be changed to move business items up; longer time limits for important items; Members Questions to continue at Full Council, but also introduced at Policy Committee meetings; that whether electronic voting is required on so many votes; and that voting in parts is kept as an option.

There is currently a parallel piece of work being carried out by the Whips on the operation of Full Council. The information we received as part of the 6 month review will be passed to the relevant officers to inform the work on Full Council.

5 PROPOSED ACTION PLANNING PHASE

5.1 Issues and next steps

The proposed issues for the 'Action Planning Phase' of the review, highlighted in section 4, fall into 3 broad categories:

- 1) Those that would require a **change** to the system, or how we work within the system. These issues would require consideration by Governance Committee and recommendations to Full Council to change the Constitution, processes or procedures. We are proposing that these issues are taken forward to Action Planning workshops, where Governance Committee will develop recommendations for its final report to full council.

- 2) Those that require us to **improve** the way we explain, communicate and support the system – both externally to citizens, and internally to officers and members. We are proposing that Governance Committee asks Officers to begin to work on these issues immediately, reporting back to Governance Committee on progress at an appropriate time.

- 3) Those that relate to the **wider system**, beyond the scope of the review. Governance Committee is asked to consider these, and make suggestions as to how they could be most appropriately taken forwards.

The proposed actions are set out in Appendix 1. Governance Committee is asked to consider whether these are the right actions, whether there are any gaps, and agree to take the identified actions forwards as outlined above.

6. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 This report sets out the findings from the Engagement Phase of the review, and proposes the next steps in the review process. Equality, Financial & Commercial, Legal and Climate implications of recommendations arising from the action planning phase of the review will be included in future reports to the Committee.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Governance Committee is asked to:

- Consider and note the findings from the Engagement Phase of the review.
- Note that findings related to Full Council have been passed to the Full Council working group for consideration as part of their work.
- Consider whether the issues identified for the Action Planning Phase of the Review are the right ones and;
 - Agree that those requiring a change to the system are taken forward to Governance Committee Action Planning Workshops
 - Agree that those requiring improvements to how we explain, communicate and support the system are actioned by officers, with progress reports back to Governance Committee at the appropriate time
 - Identify which issues can be actioned prior to the Council's AGM in May 2023, and which will be actioned in the longer term
 - Consider how issues relating to the wider system, beyond the scope of this review are taken forwards.

Appendix 1 – Proposed Actions

Require change – For Governance Committee Consideration

Decision Making and Delegation

1. Consider whether current delegations are appropriate and enabling Policy Committees to focus on the right issues
2. Consider whether current delegations are appropriate in relation to transport and highways issues.
3. Consider whether changes are needed in relation to where decisions on Licensing Policy are taken.
4. Consider whether current Committee remits are appropriately balanced
5. Consider options around ‘call-in’ of decisions
6. Consider Deputy Leader membership and substitutions for Strategy and Resources Policy Committee.
7. Consider whether the current process for cross cutting issues could be improved

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Develop clearer definition and expectation of the Co-Chair role
2. Follow up remuneration issues around Group Spokespeople and Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee Chair.

Meetings & Briefings

1. Consider the meeting cycle and schedule
2. Establish a consistent set of expectations around briefings, including who should be involved, how often they should happen, the role of group briefings and how they interact with pre-agenda and pre-meetings.

Committee Activity

1. Consider how we can create capacity in the system for Policy Committees to undertake more policy development and pre-decision scrutiny
2. Develop a partnership approach to work programming with members and officers, that results in balanced programme of decision making, policy development and scrutiny and evaluation.

Public Questions

1. Ensure the process for asking public questions is clear, that citizens are directed to the most appropriate forum and that those forums are easy to access.
2. Review the process for responding to public questions, to ensure it is fit for purpose in a Committee System

Continuous Improvement

1. Consider mechanisms for continuous improvement of our governance arrangements.

Require Improvement- For Officer Action

Improving how we explain the system

1. Consider how we can make it easier for citizens to know what is happening in Policy Committees and how they can get involved.
2. Ensure the process for asking public questions is clear, that citizens are directed to the most appropriate forum and that those forums are easy to access.
3. Consider how we provide officers with clear and consistent advice about how to navigate decisions through the Committee System – particularly when they are ‘cross-cutting’ issues
4. Develop clearer guidance on the roles and responsibilities for Chairs, Co-Chairs, Deputy Chairs and Group Spokespeople and how officers are expected to brief and interact with these roles.

Improving the support we provide to those working in the system

Advice, Guidance and Support

1. Develop mechanisms for Portfolio Officers to share best practise in resourcing and working in the Committee System
2. Consider how we can provide officers with ‘quick wins’ in terms of tools and support.
3. Ensure Members and Officers are signposted to wellbeing support services that are available through the Council.

Effective and timely reports

1. Consider how we can help officers to better understand the process for getting a Committee report prepared, signed off and published in a timely way.
2. Develop training for officers on effective, accessible report writing
3. Consider how we can develop training to improve the quality of reports to Policy Committees, including effectiveness, accessibility, readability and timely publication.
4. Ensure the Equality Impact Assessment process is robust, transparent, and applied consistently.

Requires further work beyond this review

- Consider whether we need to develop a clearer framework on the balance of decisions between Policy Committees and LACs.
- Consider how we will address the recommendations from the 'Involve' report.

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