# Governance Committee Report

**Report of:**        Transitional Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs

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**Date:**        18ᵗʰ November 2021

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**Subject:**        **Learning from** Transitional Committees

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Transitional Committees have been introduced to provide an early opportunity for Members to work on a cross party basis, in advance of decisions being made, as this is the way decisions will be taken once the Committee system is introduced.

Transitional Committees are:

- advisory
- temporary
- not a shadow committee
- a space to improve how cross-party engagement works in decision-making
- a conduit for consideration of local issues arising via Local Area Committees
- a space to pilot new ways of working

These ways of working are providing valuable evidence and feedback to help the Governance Committee decide on the final model, including ways of working, to recommend to Full Council prior to the transition to the Committee system of governance in May 2022.

This report sets out the initial learning to date from Transitional Committees, which began meeting formally in October 2021 – please note that at the time of writing, some Committees have only met once.

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**Recommendations:**
That the Governance Committee:

1. Notes the learning from the Transitional Committees and uses it to inform the development of the Committee System model.

**Category of Report:**      OPEN

## Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

| Financial Implications |
|---|
| NO     Cleared by: |

| Legal Implications |
|---|
| NO     Cleared by: |

| Equality of Opportunity Implications |
|---|
| NO     Cleared by: |

| Tackling Health Inequalities Implications |
|---|
| NO |

| Human rights Implications |
|---|
| NO: |

| Environmental and Sustainability implications |
|---|
| NO |

| Economic impact |
|---|
| NO |

| Community safety implications |
|---|
| NO |

| Human resources implications |
|---|
| NO |

| Property implications |
|---|
| NO |

| Area(s) affected |
|---|
| NONE |

| Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council? |
|---|
| **NO** |

| Press release |
|---|
| NO |

# Transitional Committees Update

## Purpose

This paper provides an opportunity to share initial learning to date from Transitional Committees.

## Background

At its Full Council meeting in May 2021, Sheffield City Council established four Transitional Committees on a politically proportionate basis, with a remit to advise the Co-operative Executive during the transitional year and to help the Council experiment with ways of working within cross-party committees, as we move towards implementing a Committee System in May 2022.

The Chairs of the Transitional Committees are members of the Governance Committee. This Transitional Committees began meeting formally in October 2021 – please note that at the time of writing, some Committees have only met once.

## Recommendations

That the Governance Committee:
1. Notes the learning from the Transitional Committees and uses it to inform the development of the Committee system model.

## Implications

No Legal, Financial or Equalities implications at this point, it is for information and noting. Any implications associated with implementation of the Committee system model will be covered in a report at that time

# Learning from Transitional Committees to date

Transitional Committees were established from October 2021, with a key purpose of trialling new ways of working to inform the Governance Committee's work, developing the Committee System that will be in place post May 2022. This paper sets out the initial learning from the early meetings of the Transitional Committees – noting that at the time of writing, some Transitional Committees have only met once.

## What have TCs trialled?

- Co-Chairing job share
- Papers light
- Citizen Space Portal for untargeted public engagement
- Collaborative working with executive/officers on papers and approach
- TC as the route for member engagement in core topics
- Policy Development

## What has worked well?

- A collaborative approach with the Executive to develop Work Plans for each Transitional Committee
- Developing consensus on issues that are important for the city, and appropriate approaches to develop policy -eg working groups, workshops, focus groups.
- The collaborative working with executive/officers on papers and approach on 10 point plan for Climate Action
- Enhancing engagement through use of Citizen Space for gathering public input – more to be done in regard reach and expectation of what next following submission

## What will need to be clear in new decision-making committee system?

- How the Committees engage with the public voice, the voice external to the organisation, manage their expectations
  - Young People as a core target group
  - Public engagement – could there be ongoing calls for evidence on topics, but who will manage the input, set out expectations on response. Recognition that on-line solutions are not appropriate for all – but a useful 'tool' in the suite of engagement mechanisms
  - How to bring in 'expert' view and opinions into Committee work, in a balanced and appropriate way.
- Where is accountability

- Opportunity for members to hold services to account on performance
- Opportunity for public to voice concern – not individual case matters – maybe contemporary issues or future policy steer
- Overlap across Committee portfolios – if an issue overlaps, how will it be dealt with

### Learning

- Policy development activity requires early input and consideration of work in draft
- Policy development is time consuming it requires a high level of engagement from members, there is a workload impact for members
- Need to use a variety of methods to gather evidence – doesn't all need to be through formal meetings
- Need adequate administrative support for whole Committee, not just Chairs e.g. diaries, meeting set up, point of contact
- Appropriate meeting schedule set out at start of municipal year for whole year for all Committees, but also flexibility to vary as Committee workload requires
- Need the right 'infrastructure' to facilitate the meetings – sufficient rooms with appropriate layout and ability to webcast; hybrid meeting technology – this has impacted already this year
- Transitional Committee portfolios too big to be able cover full remit effectively, even with current responsibilities, the Committee system next year will also require them to undertake more activities, such as:
  o Decision
  o Organisation performance
  o Accountability
  o Policy Development

Transitional Committee Chairs & Deputy Chairs

Policy & Improvement Officers

18th November 2021