



Governance Committee Report

Report of: The Director of Legal & Governance

Date: 25th January 2022

Subject: Committee System Structure

Author of Report: Gillian Duckworth, Director of Legal & Governance

Summary: This report makes recommendations for some key aspects of Sheffield City Council's future governance arrangements under a committee system, such as the number of committees and broadly how they would make decisions. Continuing the Committee's iterative approach to design, and in line with the plan to define the 'what' before the 'how', a number of key areas are not yet defined. This includes some important areas such as eg the Council's approach to public engagement/participation within this system.

By agreeing these recommendations at this point, the Committee would provide the Monitoring Officer with enough certainty and direction to redraft the constitution accordingly and to make proposals for the rest of the detail over the coming weeks.

It should be noted that Full Council will be the final decision-maker on this matter.

Recommendations:

1. *That the elements of a committee system of governance set out in this report be agreed as set out in this report and illustrated in the diagram in Appendix 1 including the following key points:*

- a) *Seven themed Policy Committees which will be closely aligned to the functions of the Council;*
- b) *A Strategy & Resources Policy Committee including all Policy Committee Chairs within its membership, with overarching responsibility for the policy and budgetary framework, and a standing Finance Sub-Committee, both Chaired by the Leader of the Council;*

- c) *Provision for Full Council but not individual Committees to agree the addition of sub-committees to this structure, and limits (to be defined) on the number and frequency of Task and Finish Groups carrying out detailed pre-decision scrutiny (policy development) on behalf of Policy Committees;*
 - d) *Seven Local Area Committees linked to the Policy committee with responsibility for Communities;*
 - e) *No change to the committees referred to as Other Committees in the Governance Framework;*
 - f) *An Urgency Sub-Committee linked to each Policy Committee and an ability for scheduled Strategy & Resources Policy Committee to take urgent decisions for the other Policy Committees if necessary;*
 - g) *A programme of six meetings a year of Council and each Policy Committee including the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee, and four meetings a year of each Local Area Committee;*
 - h) *No separate scrutiny committee;*
 - i) *Decision review triggered by 40% of the relevant Policy Committee's own membership, with referral to the Strategy & Resources Policy Committee;*
 - j) *A requirement for the Councillor with statutory responsibilities for children to be the Chair of the Policy Committee with responsibility for Children.*
2. *That a methodology for agreeing the size of committees be developed for the Committee's consideration, based on the need to deliver political proportionality to each committee and to the membership overall, working within the parameters of a committee size of between 8 and 11 members.*
 3. *That the Monitoring Officer be asked to redraft the constitution in line with this report's recommendations, for Members' agreement between now and the 2022 AGM, including by making compatible recommendations to this Committee for all the other aspects of the system not defined yet by this paper;*
 4. *That the requirement for an Extraordinary Council Meeting on 23 March for the purpose of agreeing the revised Constitution be noted; and*
 5. *That the requirement for Council to suspend or adjust aspects of its standing orders for its 23 March meeting in order to effectively handle this business be noted.*

Background Papers: N/A

Category of Report: OPEN

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial Implications
YES - Cleared by: Liz Gough
Legal Implications
YES - Cleared by: Sarah Bennett
Equality of Opportunity Implications
NO - Cleared by: James Henderson
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
Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Member
Councillor Julie Grocutt, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Community Engagement and Governance
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?
NO
Press release
NO

REPORT TITLE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Governance Committee has been appointed by Sheffield City Council to lead the work which will take the Council from a 'Leader and Cabinet' model of Governance to a 'Committee' model. Utilising the evidence and experience gathered during the engagement and inquiry phases, this report provides a recommended structural shape for the Committee system. The recommendations will be debated by the Governance Committee on 25th January 2022, to form the first part of the recommendation to an Extraordinary meeting of Full Council on the 23rd March 2022. The outcomes of the Governance Committee debate will steer the ongoing preparatory work including the continuing engagement and communication, constitutional redraft and design of the operating frameworks and procedures required to deliver a successful transition in May 2022.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The whole committee inquiry held between 30 November and 8th December 2021 was designed to follow on from, and somewhat mirror in form, the exercise undertaken by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in 2019 when it looked at what could be achieved by changing the Council's decision-making model. Using a 'select committee' approach, the Governance Committee held three evidence gathering sessions to hear from a range of witnesses, including contributions from citizens through a range of public engagement events.

2.2 As agreed by members, the inquiry included:

- a) Collation of opinion, ideas and feedback gathered through council-led engagement with stakeholders, the public, members and council officers
- b) Desktop research including review of relevant material received in the 2019 Scrutiny exercise and since, including the Big City Conversation
- c) Research into comparator authorities' experiences and recognised best practice
- d) Lessons learnt from the first few months of the active experimentation taking place within the Council's democratic arena via the Transitional Committees, Local Area Committees, Co-Chairing pilot and other Members' experiences of decision-making during the 2021/22 transitional year
- e) Updated written or verbal submissions from a range of other contributors including an open invite to the witnesses from the 2019 Scrutiny exercise to update their submissions with any new or changed information. This included e.g. representatives from the business community, officers, academics, local campaign groups etc

- f) Verbal and written submissions from Councillors and Officers from other authorities which have moved to operate a Committee System in the modern era

An open public call for evidence was not repeated in light of the open public engagement sessions recently undertaken and the ongoing work with the Council's partner Involve which is designed to hear from a greater diversity of voices from across the communities of Sheffield in 2022.

Links to inquiry papers and webcasts for the [30th November](#), [7th December](#) and [8th December](#) sessions are provided.

3.0 WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE

3.1 This report outlines a proposal for a committee structure to be implemented in May 2022 based on the evidence and feedback received by the Committee and the Committee's understanding of best practice. There is no perfect system so it is important to build in regular reviews, the first being six months after implementation with a view to implementing any changes at the following AGM (2023).

3.2 The Full Council has the ability at any time to call for an amendment to any optional part of the structure that is implemented over the 10 year period that the Council is required by law to operate under this system of governance, however it is helpful to allow time for any structure to be properly tested.

3.3 The following paragraphs set out the framework as a first step to producing a constitution for a Committee system in May 2022. A significant amount of detail has yet to be agreed by this Committee including how Full Council will operate and most importantly how the public will engage and interact with this new system.

3.4 The intention is to broaden members' role in the decision making and governance of the organisation and ensure they have the ability to raise their constituents concerns no matter what roles they are appointed to at the Town Hall. Building transparency and forward planning into the model will help with this but it may also be beneficial to report here that there is an expectation that all members will have an ability to question senior members as a minimum in a Full council meeting.

4.0 POLICY COMMITTEES

4.1 The evidence and feedback received suggests that there is benefit for having themed committees making policy decisions and aligning these committees to the corporate functions or priorities, particularly when the budgets are also

aligned in accordance with function and priority¹. As a large proportion of what the council does happens by function, it makes sense for Committees to align to Council services and budget headings in order to operate efficiently. By aligning to functions, the system allows sufficient flexibility for changing political priorities to be overlaid into work plans.

4.2 The Corporate plan, and therefore the political priorities, can be mapped on an annual basis and embedded in the workplans of the themed Policy Committees.

4.3 Themed Policy Committee functions naturally divide into a minimum of three groups:

1. Corporate direction and resourcing,
2. Adults, health, children and family; and
3. Place, communities and neighbourhoods.

This is the minimum structure of committees and should be the starting point. Theme 1 is usually captured in an overarching Strategy & Resources Policy Committee (see 6.0 below) by comparable councils who then subdivide the latter two groups of functions into other committees.

4.4 The statutory guidance originally issued with the Local Government Act 2000 recommended that a committee system form of governance should have no more than five themed policy committees.

4.5 There are currently eight Councils with a committee system that have the same functions as this Council. Of these:

- 1 council has three policy & services committees (Kingston Upon Thames),
- 1 council has four policy & services committees (Reading)
- 3 councils have five policy & services committees (Brighton & Hove, Hartlepool and Sutton)
- 1 council has six policy & services committees (Cheshire East)
- 2 councils have seven policy & services committees (Wirral and Barnet)

It should be noted that, following an [External Assurance Review into the governance of Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council](#) carried out by Ada Burns for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (as a condition of that council's capitalisation direction for 2021/22), Wirral has been told it should "review the Committee system to reduce the number of

¹ See [Governance Committee 301121; Supplementary Appendices to Agenda Item 8](#); The evidence provided for 7 Local Authorities indicates that all but one of the Councils have Themed Committees based around Council functions with only one being portfolio based. This evidence in practice bolsters our assumption that it is a robust approach.

committees...and significantly reduce the related administrative burden.”

4.6 On the basis that one priority is to minimise the potential risks caused by having budgets and functional units of the council reporting to multiple different decision-making committees, a proposal has been made to align the council’s Policy Committees with the future functional areas of the Council’s operational delivery (and those areas’ budgets). Compared to the majority of other councils which are operating committee systems this Council is significantly larger and operating in a more complex environment as a Core City. In addition this Council has 84 Councillors, meaning that it has more capacity amongst its political leadership than most smaller councils, many of which will have around half or two thirds that number. The contention is that any risks to efficacy associated with having a number of committees which is above average are outweighed by the risks of attempting to handle too much scale and complexity through any one committee if there were fewer.

Therefore the initial proposal for subject headings could be as follows. This reflects the number and titles of the functional areas described by the Chief Executive in her evidence to the Inquiry:

1. Communities, parks and leisure
2. Education, children and families
3. Adult Health and Social Care
4. Housing
5. Waste and street scene
6. Economic development and skills
7. Transport, Regeneration and Climate

These can be seen in the diagram found in Appendix 1.

4.7 During its inquiry the committee explored the matter of what size its Policy Committees should be in order to find a balance between efficiency and inclusivity. Of significant concern was the risk that the new system created too much of a time burden on Councillors at the Town Hall, interfering with their effectiveness at a local level or making it harder for people to be councillors who are also parents, carers, or in full time work. The time demand on Members of various options of committee size is demonstrated in the table below, taking into account this proposal as part of the context of the whole governance model:

Table 1

Time/ Resource	8 Seats per Policy Committee	9 Seats per Policy Committee	10 Seats per Policy Committee		11 Seats per Policy Committee
Time taken for the whole	4,938	5,064	5,190	5,316	5,585

model for the year (hours)					
Time taken for the whole model for the year in 7.5hr working days	658	675	692	709	745
Time taken for the whole model in 5 day weeks	132	135	138	142	149
Number of meetings per year for the full model	200	200	200	200	230
Number of meetings per month for the full model	16	16	16	16	19

- 4.8 It should be noted that the above figures are an approximation and includes the time of all 84 Members, all potential 27 total Committees featured within the diagram in Appendix 1 within this report with the exception of the 8 as-and-when Urgency Sub-Committees, the 1 potential Finance Sub-Committee, the Partnership Boards where we were unable to attain seat numbers within the desktop exercise and the 'other' sub-committees where no meeting had happened since 2019.
- 4.9 Members are aware that alongside the work to develop a governance model, consideration is being given to the staffing structures required in order to support whatever is agreed. This proposal considers the evidence provided and has yet to have support resource and capacity costs fully applied. This is being developed in tandem. The Democratic Services team has a funding envelope of £1.2 Million that the support model must fit into were it to remain cost neutral. Therefore for the purpose of this report this structural model must be considered potentially subject to change once those costs are more fully defined.
- 4.10 The committee system is expected to also require additional preparation time, Political Party meetings, public engagement as well as Officer support

time factored in when compared to the current system, creating additional resource and time requirements for more members and officers. This is consistent with the information provided by other authorities who have made this change, particularly when operating under No Overall Control.

- 4.11 Good forward planning will help Members manage agendas and in turn their time commitments to ensure they can achieve a balance of time in meetings and time in their wards with constituents²
- 4.12 Whilst the evidence suggests that the number of Committees should be limited as far as possible, it is considered that good forward planning coupled with investment in support to the Committees and member development³ will have more of an impact on the efficiency of the system than limiting the numbers of committees. Therefore, the proposal is to plan for 7 thematic Policy Committees from May 2022. It should be noted that the current budget for this is £1.2 million and further work is underway to assess the financial implications of this suggested proposals which may require additional funding to be found.

5.0 SUB-COMMITTEES OF POLICY COMMITTEES

- 5.1 The evidence and feedback received suggests that allowing committees to establish sub committees can result in a lack of control of the agenda and of the time Members are spending in formal meetings⁴. Sheffield's own experience of a committee system pre-2000 included periods of time with hugely impractical numbers of committees and sub-committees in existence. However, it is likely that in certain circumstances the establishment of a Sub-Committee may be beneficial and time efficient. For example, the Strategy & Resources Policy Committee may require a standing Finance Sub-Committee to be established in order to deal with the management of the Council's finances given the uniquely fundamental and all-encompassing nature of this subject area, which has the potential to swamp the other business of the committee were it not delegated.

² See Appendix 2- Inquiry Sessions 07th and 08th December 2021- Evidence Received and Members Reflections v0.2 170122; Members reflected that they would need to account for what is expected to go through the committees with a clear forward plan that is pre-agreed and to consider this when scaling the system. This will ensure that the work is spread out, will not be overwhelming and will enable them to focus on engagement and delivery.

³ See Appendix 2- Inquiry Sessions 07th and 08th December 2021- Evidence Received and Members Reflections v0.2 170122; Councils from Hartlepool to Cheshire East indicated a need to work with Members, provide briefings, training and support to enable this system to work. Anecdotally, Wirral have repeatedly stressed the impact on Officers and the need to ensure suitable support in addition to the need to train and support Members.

⁴See Appendix 2- Inquiry Sessions 07th and 08th December 2021- Evidence Received and Members Reflections v0.2 170122 Suggested that where Committees establish sub-committees it was important to have very clear Terms of References to avoid duplication and tangential working as well as impressing the challenge of increasing time delays in decisions being made, keeping a tight agenda (2-3 items maximum). It was also raised that the more time spent in meetings and sub-committees, the more time it takes away from local engagement and representing the communities. This can be further demonstrated by Table 1 of this report.

5.2 Therefore, this proposal enables Full Council to establish sub-committees at the request of a Policy Committee. Policy committees would not by themselves be able to create sub-committees; they can however set up task specific, time limited working groups⁵. There will need to be specific limits on the duration and number of concurrent 'task and finish' exercises in order to operate within the reasonable bounds of officer and Member capacity – this to be defined at a later point by this Committee.

6.0 STRATEGY AND RESOURCES POLICY COMMITTEE

6.1 All authorities within the desktop exercise referenced having an overarching committee to oversee strategic matters including the budget⁶ and provided compelling evidence that there should be a controlling mind when dealing with the finances of the Authority as well as the Corporate Plan and Policy Framework which that budget enables. It's important to remind members that you will collectively be managing a business with a turnover in excess of £1 billion. The most effective method of ensuring there is sufficient organisational grip of this is by creating an overarching committee made up of the Chairs of the Policy committees that has responsibility for recommending a balanced budget to Full Council⁷. This Committee will be politically proportionate⁸, therefore including representation from all political groups on the Council. It would be chaired by the Leader of the Council.

6.2 The Governance Committee has heard and expressed concern that such an arrangement might be considered to be 'a Cabinet by another name'. Other evidence and feedback received disputed this notion as such a committee has oversight and responsibility rather than all of the decision-making power, which remains distributed amongst various politically proportionate policy committees and, critically, is politically proportionate itself⁹. It should be noted that the membership of this committee will include members of all Groups on the Council, including members who are not chairs of a Policy Committees,

⁵ See Appendix 2- Inquiry Sessions 07th and 08th December 2021- Evidence Received and Members Reflections v0.2 170122; Members reflected on the evidence provided and indicated that the consensus was no policy development was to be done in sub-committees, therefore working groups/task and finish groups would be adequate to conduct the discrete pieces of work as and when required.

⁶ See [Governance Committee 301121; Public Document Pack](#); These diagrams demonstrate the models for the 7 authorities explored via desktop exercise. Each diagram features an approximation of an overarching committee, differing in title (i.e. Finance and Policy (x2), Policy and Resources (x2), Corporate Policy, Corporate Resources, Policy)

⁷ See Appendix 2- Inquiry Sessions 07th and 08th December 2021- Evidence Received and Members Reflections v0.2 170122; Several witnesses gave testimony to the need for a central committee and clarified proposed seat owners. Dr Karen Ford indicated that a Chair from each Themed Committee would provide at least the minimum proportionality and that we might also consider other means to incorporate additional representations (including but not limited to geography and gender) with the National Expert on Local Governance & Decision Making supported the former suggestion. Additionally, within the desktop exercise, it was found that authorities such as Hartlepool, Wirral, Cheshire East all have membership of their Overarching Committee made up from at least the Chairs of the Themed Policy Committees found within the document: [Governance Committee 301121; Supplementary Appendices to Agenda Item 8](#)

⁸ See Appendix 2- Inquiry Sessions 07th and 08th December 2021- Evidence Received and Members Reflections v0.2 1701221 – Some voices in the public engagement sessions said that they would like to see an 'Overarching Committee' act in a more consultative approach with cross-party working.

⁹ See Appendix 2- Inquiry Sessions 07th and 08th December 2021- Evidence Received and Members Reflections v0.2 170122; the Summary Report of Transitional Committees and Lessons Learned triggered discussion of how an 'Overarching Committee' might stream-line cross-cutting issues to ensure pace and remove blockages. Witnesses such as Kingston indicated that their Overarching (Resources) Committee is responsible for finance and assets, receiving the benefit of having this function in one place instead of spreading across themed committees. It was also advised that this committee would encourage a moderating influence on the system instead of control. The National Expert on Local Governance & Decision Making further suggested that instead of 'Cabinet' typed practices, we use this committee as a forum to bring together the key citywide socio-economic matters with a wider-lens also in an advisory oversight capacity.

because membership must reflect the Council's overall political proportionality.

- 63 As the ambition is to have the budget closely aligned to the Policy Framework, it makes sense for this Committee to also have responsibility for recommending the Policy Framework to Full Council. This committee will therefore take responsibility for setting and co-ordinating the delivery of the Corporate Plan commitments and for managing the delegation to, and performance of, the Policy Committees. It is likely that it will directly manage any cross-cutting priorities (such as early intervention and prevention for example) as well as providing an escalation route for the Policy Committees in matters which are especially cross-cutting or which have implications beyond the committee's budget and policy framework.

7.0 LOCAL AREA COMMITTEES

- 7.1 2021 saw the establishment of Local Area Committees and a commitment from the organisation to work with and learn from our communities. The proposed structure therefore retains the 7 Local Area Committees in their current form including the range of decisions delegated to them. The proposal is that they will have a direct link to the thematic Policy Committee with responsibility for Communities. This Policy committee would be responsible for considering issues raised by LACs and their effect and impact across the City¹⁰ and could refer issues on to other committees if needed. They will also be responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of LACs, delivering a coherent strategy for our work on Communities and providing an Annual Communities Report to Full Council.¹¹

8.0 OTHER COMMITTEES

- 8.1 The change in Governance can be effected without any change to the non-policy-making committees such as the regulatory committees of Planning and Licensing, Audit & Standards and Employment Committees.
- 8.2 As there will be a significant organisational shift required to mobilise the Policy Committees, the proposal here is not to make any changes to these Committees at this stage.
- 8.3 This proposal includes the retention of a Governance committee to oversee the operation of the new system and to consider all matters of governance including the Council's Member development strategy¹². This Committee

¹⁰ See [Governance Committee 301121: Public Pack](#); Some voices at public engagement sessions told us that they did not see strategic aim or vision concerning the LACs so far and no strategic alignment for the LACs to make a real impact. Aligning the LACs to a single committee with a view of the city-wide approach would provide clear links, escalation and a central place for cross-cutting/symbiotic requests and support a joined up strategic view.

¹¹ See [Governance Committee 301121: Supplementary Appendices to Agenda Item 8](#); Kingston is the only authority evidenced that has Local Area Committees. They chose to have the LACs feed directly into Full Council. However, as Kingston is approx. 180,000 population with nearly half the number of Members that Sheffield has, it could be argued that we need to scale up this model to ensure a robust approach to consistency and oversight. As such, we propose a parent link to the Themed Committees layer, with the Communities Committee as the most appropriate space.

¹² See [Governance Committee 301121: Supplementary Appendices to Agenda Item 8](#); ; This is a similar approach taken to that of Hartlepool, who retained a Constitution Committee, responsible for: reviewing, monitoring, and where

should include senior Member representation. This Committee should report to Full Council in a similar way to the Audit and Standards Committee.

9.0 SIZE OF COMMITTEES

- 9.1 The evidence and feedback suggests that committees of between approximately 8 and 11 members is desirable in order to find a balance between effectiveness of the committee when in discussion, the workload on individual members and political proportionality. The proposal is to agree these as parameters with actual numbers per committee to be determined at the AGM in accordance with the calculation of political proportionality.
- 9.2 This parameter would not apply to committees other than the Policy Committees. The Strategy and Resources Policy Committee's size would need to be defined by political proportionality once the Chairs of the Policy Committees had been appointed and it was therefore known which Group or Groups they were drawn from.
- 9.2 However, it should be noted that this provides a maximum of 77 seats on Policy Committees, meaning not every member will have a seat on a *themed Policy* Committee. There is a lack of consensus in the evidence and feedback as to whether every member should have a seat on a Policy Committee¹³. There is no requirement for this to be the case¹⁴ and the system of Local Area Committees means that every Councillor does have a decision-making role in the council as well as clear access to an escalation route through the Communities Committee. There will also be a need for members to have seats on the regulatory committees (also decision-making roles with very real and strategic impacts on local areas). Therefore on average each member will need to be on around three committees each, plus act as a substitute on one or two more. Our recommendation is not to make it a requirement for every councillor to sit on a **Policy** committee.
- 9.10 However, members will not be short of strategic decision-making roles. Depending on the size of the Policy Committees, the full structure proposed in this paper has between 327 and 348 committee seats in it, including the new Policy Committees, Local Area Committees and all other formal, strategic decision-making committees. 87 of these seats are Local Area Committees. Even if the Policy Committees are at the minimum end of the size bracket proposed, members can be expected to have an average of 3 or

necessary, recommending changes to the Constitution to full Council, so that the aims and principles of the Council's Constitution are given full effect. However, our proposal is that this committee also has a softer role to attain and review feedback, lessons learned etc. as part of the period prior to implementation review. As part of the Inquiry Session; Appendix 1- Inquiry Sessions 07th and 08th December 2021- Evidence Received and Members Reflections v0.1 131221; we were advised multiple times to ensure we had a robust period of implementation review and it is clear that the Governance Committee would play a vital role in this, given their oversight of the pre-implementation work.

¹³ See Appendix 2- Inquiry Sessions 07th and 08th December 2021- Evidence Received and Members Reflections v0.2 170122; Kingston found that members have concerns about losing their voices and increased seat numbers in committees so that everyone could participate in at least one forum while Brighton indicated that their third party don't hold any seats in Themed Committees. Members' reflections afterwards were varied, from every Member must have a seat to there shouldn't be a rule that every Member must have a seat but considered that all Members would want to.

¹⁴ [See Governance Committee 301121; Public Pack](#); - Some voices at our public engagement events told us that they think that the size of committees needs to be relevant and proportionate to the work being done by that Committee.

4 seats each on formal decision-making bodies at the Council. This is before considering all of the outside bodies on which members can also be appointed. This also does not take into account the need for many of these seats to also have nominated substitute members. Many members will have a number of substitute positions in addition to their main committee seats.

Table 2

Local Authority	# Cllrs	# Cttees	# Seats on Overarch. Cttee.	# Seats on each Policy Cttee.
Hartlepool	36	5	11	7
Wirral	66	7	13	8 - 10
Cheshire East	82	6	13	13
Kingston	48	3	13	13
Reading	46	4	17	10, 15, 17
Brighton & Hove	54	5	10	10
Sutton	54	5	15	10 - 11
Barnet	63	7	13	10 - 11

Comparator authority committee sizes

10.0 CHAIRING OR CO-CHAIRING POLICY COMMITTEES

10.1 The Committee heard a range of perspectives and evidence about the potential benefits of more than one member sharing a Chairmanship role, either on the basis of a 'job share' (where the total capacity equals 1FTE) or as 'co-chairs' (where the total could equal more than 1FTE). Furthermore there have been a range of views expressed by witnesses and Committee members on the subject of whether to mandate that the chairmanship of any committees, or any proportion of committees, should be done by members from one or more specific political Group.

10.2 At the Council's AGM each May the political proportionality of the Council is calculated and seats on committees allocated accordingly. Members at that point are able to vote on the appointment of Chairs of committees. There are currently no restrictions preventing the appointment of Chairs from more than one Group. The proposal is for the constitution to allow for co-chairs, job shares and the annual appointment of Committee Chairs in order that this matter can be defined by Full Council at its AGM in light of the changing political environment.

11.0 FREQUENCY OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

11.1 The evidence and feedback received suggests that meetings should be scheduled as far as possible to enable a flow of information through the

system¹⁵. The frequency of meetings has a very direct impact on the scale of bureaucracy and workload of both members and officers, but must be sufficient to allow for informed and efficient transaction of business. Therefore the proposal is for Strategy and Resources Policy Committee to be scheduled on alternate months to themed Policy Committees and Full Council meetings. Each committee meeting approximately 6 times per year¹⁶. Additionally, this would allow urgent matters to be tabled at the intervening Strategy and Resources Policy Committee as an alternative to calling an additional meeting of an urgency sub-committee as part of an urgency procedure (see below).

12.0 URGENT DECISIONS

12.1 The evidence gathered suggests that all structures and models of governance require an urgency procedure. It will no longer be possible for individual Councillors to take urgent decisions. The option in a committee system that appears to be most effective, that is not a delegation to an officer, is an urgency sub-committee. One of these can be attached to each committee or one set up centrally to take any decision from either Strategy & Resources Policy Committee or any other policy committee. Having one sub-committee attached to each committee means that the Members with the knowledge in that area are equipped to make an informed and consistent decision quickly therefore this seems to be the better option. This can be combined with the ability for Strategy & Resources Policy Committee to take urgent decisions for other committees at any of their scheduled meetings as above, perhaps with the agreement of the relevant Policy Committee Chair.

13.0 POST-DECISION SCRUTINY (DECISION REVIEW)

13.1 The Committee system model of governance is predicated on politically proportionate decision-making¹⁷ meaning that the emphasis is on members to hold each other's party political positions to account in the development and execution of policy. The absence of this cross-party environment in the Leader and Cabinet model of governance was the original reason for the creation of the 'Overview and Scrutiny' system in 2000. A significant benefit of the committee system is that in this cross-party decision-making environment, decisions are therefore scrutinised before they are made, *theoretically* leaving no requirement for either a separate scrutiny function or call in within a committee system.

¹⁵ Appendix 2- Inquiry Sessions 07th and 08th December 2021- Evidence Received and Members Reflections v0.2 170122; Kingston advised us to book meetings far ahead enough in advance that we could brief leaders prior to the meeting to ensure that discussion of the agenda items can be focused, intentional and informed. It was also widely agreed that we would need to provide Officers with enough capacity to attend and add value, which would be supported by providing enough forward planning and notice. Members further reflected and agreed that there would need to be more planning involved to ensure that the increase in meetings with this system could be managed.

¹⁶ See [Governance Committee 301121; Supplementary Appendices to Agenda Item 8](#); Most of the authorities reviewed as part of the desktop exercise had Themed Committees that meet between once every 2-3 months. During the Inquiry Session, Governance Committee- Inquiry Session 071221, we heard from Kingston, Brighton & Hove who verified this.

¹⁷ See [Governance Committee 301121; Public Pack](#); – Some voices at our public engagement sessions told us that there needs to be a shift in language from scrutiny to decision review to make it more accessible and also more current to our new position. Furthermore, see Appendix 2- Inquiry Sessions 07th and 08th December 2021- Evidence Received and Members Reflections v0.2 170122; further supported this view, with De Montfort indicating the term 'scrutiny' is outdated away from a Cabinet model

- 13.2 Some Local Authorities have chosen to retain such functions but evidence and feedback received suggests that it is not necessary to replicate scrutiny but that some of the good features of the scrutiny system can be designed into a committee structure. For example, scrutiny committees are used in the executive model of governance to consider matters such as, for example, a poor Ofsted report. In a committee system this might be something that is considered by the Strategy & Resources Policy Committee rather than the Policy Committee with responsibility for Children’s Services, in order to present an element of check and challenge. In that example, the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee can hold the Children’s Committee to account.
- 13.3 The other element of the current post-decision scrutiny function is call-in of decisions. Evidence and feedback suggests that any decision review or ‘call-in’ function built into the new committee system should be neither overly complex nor too casually available as either can have a disruptive effect on decision-making. There is also an absurdity to be avoided in allowing one politically proportionate body of members to interfere with a decision made by another politically proportionate body of members unless there is a clear logic to that intervention. There is considered to be some merit in reserving the power of call-in to the actual committee itself, but a minority of those committee members. This would be in order that there is a mechanism for the majority to be held to account in extremis, or for a committee to react to critical information received immediately after the fact of a decision. The trigger should be a significant percentage of the membership in order to reduce the likelihood of abuse of this system. The suggestion is a 40% threshold and the referral to be to the Strategy & Resources Policy Committee to uphold or overturn the decision¹⁸.
- 13.4 There are some statutory scrutiny functions that must be built into the new structure:
- Flood Risk Management
 - Crime & Disorder; and
 - Health
- This can either be part of the remit of the relevant themed committee Policy Committee or operated by a separate committee set up for that purpose¹⁹. These are primarily outward-looking areas of scrutiny. As the themed Policy committees develop the policy in any given area, it seems sensible for them to also carry out the scrutiny of these external functions related to their own areas of expertise and this is therefore recommended.

¹⁸ See Appendix 2- Inquiry Sessions 07th and 08th December 2021- Evidence Received and Members Reflections v0.2 170122; Kingston, for example, sets their criteria for call in as 9 Members or 2.5k residents (approx. 2% of their population, while another Authority requires half of the membership of Full Council to call-in a decision

¹⁹See Appendix 2- Inquiry Sessions 07th and 08th December 2021- Evidence Received and Members Reflections v0.2 170122; Multiple sources gave testimony that we should keep the best elements of scrutiny and build them into our model as opposed to keeping scrutiny siloed in its own unique space. De Montfort indicated that a committee system has more Member engagement, more cross-party working and reduces challenge, which in turn reduces the likelihood of requiring decision-based scrutiny. Cheshire East echoed this by suggesting that by collaborating in this type of model, scrutiny has already been achieved. It’s Our City also argued that using separate scrutiny is “not a good thing” and asked that we instead consider how we make sure we make good decisions that stand the test of time.

13.5 The evidence presented also indicated how Authorities have included the citizen voice and enabled communities, groups and individuals to call in decisions made. It is considered that our current route of optimising the petition process would be the best option at least in the short to mid-term, however it is of course the case that the Council's mechanisms for engagement and participation in the democratic environment must continue to be under review as part of this iterative design process.

14.0 STATUTORY FUNCTIONS OF MEMBERS

The requirement to have nominated councillor under the Children's Act is retained in the new system. The proposal is for this Member to be the Chair of the Themed committee with responsibility for Children. This also ensures that this Member has a seat on the Strategy & Resources Policy Committee

15.0 NEXT STEPS

14.1 Once these fundamental aspects of the structure of the new system have been agreed by the committee, its detailed work on the constitution can proceed. There is probably a need for extraordinary meetings of the Governance Committee during February and March to achieve this. The Monitoring Officer will provide members with options on matters within this framework such as the operation of Full Council, the Scheme of Delegation and crucially how the committee system will interact with the public as part of the Council's wider objectives to improve its public engagement and participation.

14.2 The Governance Committee will ultimately recommend a complete constitution and governance framework to Full Council for agreement at its 23 March Extraordinary meeting, called for this purpose. In order to avoid critical risks that could arise were the Council to either to fail to agree a system in March or to agree a system which was not lawful or internally coherent, it is to be proposed to an intervening Full Council meeting that a partial suspension or adaptation of the Council's Standing Orders is employed for the 23 March meeting, mirroring the approach taken to the Council's February budget meeting. In effect this would allow for each Group to propose a single comprehensive amendment to the Committee's recommendation if they wish to, having been supported by officers in advance to ensure that each of these is internally consistent and legally compliant, with no facility for agreement in part.

15.0 LEGAL, FINANCIAL AND EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There will be significant legal implications to the Governance Committee's final recommendations to Full Council in March 2022. At this point the committee's decision takes the form of an endorsement of the framework within which the detailed constitutional work will be conducted. The 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 and for at least 10 years thereafter.

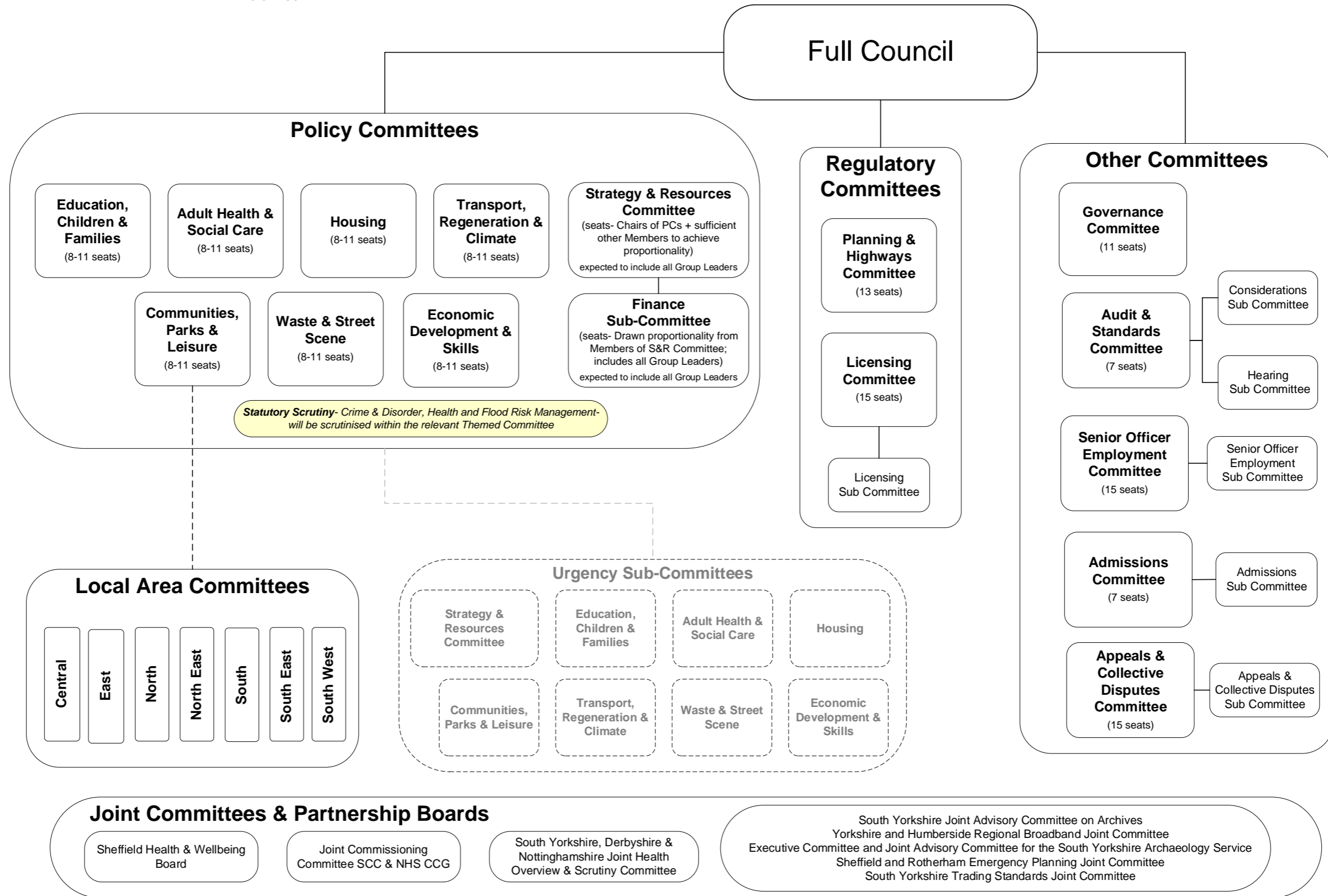
- 15.2 There are likely to be direct and indirect financial implications to the Governance Committee's final recommendations to Full Council in March 2022. Whether positive or negative, some of the financial impacts will be quantifiable in advance and others, such as the overall impact if any on the capacity of the Council's officer leadership corps, will only become clear once the system has been in operation. At this point the committee's decision takes the form of an endorsement of the framework within which the detailed constitutional work will be conducted, and so the work to model potential financial impact of these options, insofar as this is possible, continues alongside this process. The recommendations in this paper are designed to be consistent with the committee's agreed principle that the new committee system "...should not be overcomplicated or costly" however the full picture of any costs will not be clear until closer to that Full Council decision. The current budget for the officer teams which directly support the functioning of committees and members is £1.2m.
- 15.3 There are no immediate equalities implications to this report. Equalities will be a key consideration in the design and implementation of the Council's wider public engagement programme within which this decision-making environment should function. The Council is committed to ensuring that the development of our governance is inclusive, with involvement from all communities and Sheffielders with protected characteristics. An Equality Impact Assessment is underway to support the final decision and is being kept under review as a 'live document'.

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – Proposed Governance Arrangements May 2022 (diagram)
- Appendix 2 - Inquiry Sessions 07th and 08th December 2021, Evidence Received and Member Reflections

Proposed Governance Arrangements May 2022

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Appendix 2

Inquiry Sessions 07th and 08th December 2021

Evidence Received and Member Reflections

Purpose

This Appendix provides key points from the evidence presented by a number of witnesses within the second and third of three inquiry sessions held by the Governance Committee on 7th and 8th December 2021, in addition to key comments from Members present as well as pertinent decisions that will need to be made in order to support Day 1 Model development. The minutes of those meetings will remain the formal record.

It is crucial that this report be read alongside the evidence pack presented to the Governance Committee's [first inquiry session on 30th November 2021](#). These, together with the minutes of the Inquiry sessions, constitute the full body of inquiry evidence.

Background

Following the submission of a pack of evidence to the Governance Committee's first inquiry session on 30th November 2021, it was determined that further work would be undertaken to seek information from witnesses by inviting key voices to provide written submissions and/or to appear before the committee.

Over two sessions the Committee had an opportunity to hear from the witnesses, ask questions and develop their lines of enquiry through public and private discussion.

Contents

Purpose.....	1
Background.....	1
Discussion Framework Themes	3
1. Full Council	3
2. Leader's Role.....	3
3. Lord Mayor' Role.....	3
4. Themed Committees.....	3
5. Overarching Committee	7
6. Local Area Committees.....	8
7. Statutory Committees.....	10
8. Other Committees	11
9. Public Engagement.....	11
10. Communication	13
11. Schemes of Delegation	13
12. Statutory Responsibilities for Members.....	14
13. Staffing, Relationships and Casework.....	14
Additional Emerging Themes	15
14. Emergency Protocols/Urgent Decisions.....	15
15. Call Ins	16
16. Elections	17
17. WHIP Role	17
18. Co-Chairs	18
19. Role of Portfolio Holders	19
20. Councillor Culture/Behaviours.....	19

Inquiry Sessions 07th and 08th December 2021

Evidence Received and Member Reflections

Discussion Framework Themes

| 1. Full Council

We heard from **Kingston** and **Hartlepool** briefly on their arrangements for Full Council. Kingston indicated that Full Council was not the place for detailed deliberations as these should be kept to the Themed Committees. Hartlepool indicated that their Full Council meets every two months.

Member Reflections	Decisions Required
Unsure how much of a change is required for SCC Full Council	

| 2. Leader's Role

Dr Karen Ford was the only speaker to directly discuss the role of the Leader. The main point of discussion was asking if the leadership role could be split to encourage more cross-party working.

Member Reflections	Decisions Required
Ideas on splitting leadership were interesting	

| 3. Lord Mayor' Role

Additionally, **Dr Karen Ford** was also the only speaker to cover the Lord Mayor's role. The speaker indicated that they saw the role as an ambassador for the city and should remain as such. Dr Ford praised the work that previous Lord Mayor Magid Magid led on nationally and internationally raising the profile of Sheffield. It was expressed that whoever is in this role needs to work to their strengths, what they in particular have to offer, and reach citizens of Sheffield. Dr Ford asked for more clarity on what the criteria is for people to attain this role and how we can encourage more diversity and variety of perspectives and strengths in the position.

Member Reflections	Decisions Required
N/A- no explicit reflections given	

| 4. Themed Committees

The Themed Committees topic was one of the most discussed across the inquiry by all speakers. It was clear that different authorities have approached Themed Committees in very different ways and that our citizen speakers also had differing opinions.

Gary Mason (Corporate Head of Democratic & Electoral Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer Royal Borough of Kingston) calls their Themed Committees 'Strategic Committees' and they align to the 3 Portfolios; Place, People and Corporate Resources. They have varied in number between 3 and 5 where required,

with 5 being used throughout the pandemic. They meet approx. 5 times a year and last approx. 3 hours. Members were concerned about losing their voices, and to mitigate this, Kingston increased seats on the Committees. Kingston have a large volume of sub-Committees underpinning their Strategic Committees. They recommended having a clear Terms of Reference (TOR). The challenges raised included increase in time delays between decisions being made (particularly where cross-Committee referrals were made), but that a strong TOR helped to mitigate this. They also advised retaining a 4 year plan though no statutory need to do so, has been good practice and is available publicly. Kingston have found that keeping a tight agenda (2-3 items) has enabled more valuable debate and that more time was available for Officers to provide adequate advice and guidance as well as more time for the public to comment. Kingston are one of the only authorities with a LAC layer in place, and indicated that, as a result, the volume of business at the Strategic Committee level had decreased over time.

Councillor Cameron Stockell (Deputy Leader of Hartlepool Borough Council) has five Themed Committees, and stressed the need to be able to trust in Members involved in the Committees as Chairs, Co/Vice-Chairs and participating as attendees. We need to trust that party Members within parties and cross party Members all want to do the right thing for Sheffield, not necessarily what is best for their own party agenda. Hartlepool considers the Committees the place where they do most of their business; out in the open, honest debate and able to question Officer reports. Hartlepool indicated that they meet as often as needed, depending upon the Chair, and can be flexible; generally this is monthly.

Councillor Phélim Mac Cafferty (Leader of Brighton & Hove City Council) call their Themed Committees 'Policy Committees' and have 6 of these including a Parent Committee. Their Committees have 10 seats each and meet approx. 5 times a year, though has been as much as up to 8 times where required. Brighton outlined that their third party don't have a seat at the table.

Councillor Sam Corcoran (Leader of Cheshire East Council) spoke predominantly on the style of working, stressing the important of consensual agreement, increased Cllr involvement in decision making and representation. They were keen to highlight that there can be political agendas getting in the way of consensus on what's best for the city, or a local view influencing the wider city view. This was combatted by repeating that when Members are in a Committee, they are not representing their ward, they are representing the city. They also said that the Committees were spaces to express ideas and form ideas collectively.

Professor Colin Copus (Emeritus Professor of Local Politics, Department of Politics and Public Policy, De Montfort University) advised on how to keep the Themed Committees thoughtful forums and stressed the importance of maintaining elements of deliberations as well as being a space for Members to access information and support from Officers. Additionally, a consideration must be made as to how Committees avoid becoming insular and siloed, and instead consider the city-wide context around them. The Committees were framed as needing a policy focus.

Lord David Blunkett (Member of House of Lords) agreed and suggested 5-7 Committees and raised concerns that people get understandably focused on their part of the System that they don't see a bigger joined up picture. Committee Systems can be overly bureaucratic.

Dr Karen Ford expressed concern for proportionality; not just political proportionality but other types too such as gender, ethnicity, and geographical representation, with the concern that political proportionality isn't especially representative but also leaves no room for independents.

John Cade (INGOLOV)- Discussed that it was not unreasonable to set expectations of how long these meetings will last and have tight structured agendas as we need to demonstrate that the issues are properly discussed with adequate time coverage. This will also depend upon good chairing skills. It will be tempting to have a lot of meetings and multiple sub-Committees, but their sense is that Members want to spend more time in their wards, understanding what local people actually want and think.

Dr Matthew Wood (Senior Lecturer, The Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Sheffield) provided some steer on inclusivity, suggesting that an inclusive approach to decision making can help to achieve by recognising political differences, incorporating equality and diverse evidence in decision making. Openness and transparency and evidence-based decision making also make people feel that the System is more accountable.

Kate Josephs (Chief Executive, Sheffield City Council) gave some direction on our current progress and vision for the future, indicating that there may be value in reflecting on the themes within the 1 year plan as they were designed with endurance in mind and a move to collective and collaborative leadership to break siloed ways of working. There is a clear desire to be connected to the communities that we serve, to be confident and outward looking and provide the best public services possible. We will need to create space for iteration and learning, particularly with a challenging budgetary situation, and make sustaining robust connections across the council. The Committees will need a common framework which the Council will work on with Members, as we will want to align the Council to the Committees and key themes in the Corporate Plan as it progresses which should further support a move to changing Council structures to operate in an efficient and pacey way.

Member Reflections	Decisions Required
<p>Pre-Meets- Ability to discuss matters prior to voting. Some evidence to say most decisions are made unanimously so limited discussion actually happening, while others focus more on the deliberations. Cheshire East uses pre-meets for discussion before each meeting for private questions/briefing etc. to make sure reports are understood and that the discussion at Committee is clear and thoughtful.</p> <p>Seats- Hartlepool has 7 seats per Committee and found this fosters lively debate, while Brighton has larger Committees with 10 seats and suggested that this works well with debate and discussion. Cheshire East has 13 seats on each Committee and to consider that the administration must have majority</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of Committees, as this will then support informing number of Chairs and Co-Chairs • How the Committees may facilitate witnesses • How long the period of reflection post-implementation will be (some suggestion of 6-8 months, after 12

on each Committee when thinking of numbers of Committees. Also indicated that every Member must have a seat at a Committee. We need to get the size of our Committees right- 13 seats may be too many. Another speaker indicated that there shouldn't be a hard and fast rule that all Members should have a Themed Committee seat, though undoubtedly all Members would want to, this needs to be a party decision based on their knowledge of capacity and commitments. May become a perception issue, as everyone will want to be seen to do a 'full job'.

Number of Committees- Some evidence to suggest that our Portfolios are too big to cover their full remits effectively in Committees, are 4 Committees enough? Not enough evidence yet from Transitional Committees. Need to account for what we expect to go to our Committees in their forward plans and take this into account when scaling the System. Another speaker said that the number of Themed Committees should not reach double figures.

Sub-Committees- Consensus was no policy development done in sub-Committees/ working groups/ Task and Finish groups, but post-development work and evidence gathering is done. These are not formal decision-making settings. There was some concern about a high number of working groups. There was variety in number sub-Committees. Hartlepool has a simple model with only 2 underneath Licensing Regulatory Committee. While others have a lot more.

Political proportionality and Chair assignment- Hartlepool fed back that they didn't use political proportionality to assign Chairs and Vice Chairs. These get nominated at Full Council and voted on by all Members. Another speaker indicated that the Chair role should be the person who can command the most confidence on a particular Committee, regardless of party or Portfolio status.

Frequency & Timing- not good practice to meet until 10pm for a work/life balance. Amazed some only meet 6 times a year. We will need to accept the first 1 or 2 years will feel messy while we figure out what works. Appreciate the flexible approach Brighton has to how and when they meet.

Suggested that Brighton & Hove has a more similar size to Sheffield that other authorities who provided evidence. Unsure of a simpler model found with

months or after 18 months)

- How many sub-Committees and role of sub-Committees?

<p>smaller authorities and if these would work for Sheffield.</p> <p>Would like all parties to have a seat at a decision-making table.</p> <p>Keen to instil a clear public forward plan, will need to ensure that work is spread out and will not be overwhelming. Need to focus on the delivery of policy.</p> <p>Need to be clear on powers delegated</p> <p>Avoid 'mini-Cabinets' to ensure people feel like they can participate.</p> <p>Witnesses- we should enable Committees to have witness participation which would support exploration of issues and impacts of decision making, in turn ensuring that the right decision is made.</p>	
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| 5. Overarching Committee

Summary Report of Transitional Committees lessons Learned- triggered some discussion about cross-Committee issues and how we deal with these cases to ensure pace and remove barriers/blockages.

Gary Mason (Corporate Head of Democratic & Electoral Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer Royal Borough of Kingston) has a Resources Committee in place that acts as a lead Committee with a sort of triage function. This Committee is responsible for finance and assets. Kingston stressed the importance of this function sitting in one place and not being spread across multiple Committees. It makes sense for this Committee to meet last in the cycle to sign off and remove delays in sign off from earlier in the process. An Overarching Committee can encourage a moderating influence to try and achieve consensus, however, this can also present challenges by delaying decision making. Though, the benefit is that while delayed, you are more confident in the evidence behind your decision and it can stand the test of time, as opposed to a rush which may then be called in.

Lord David Blunkett (Member of House of Lords) was clear that there needs to be an Overarching Committee.

Dr Karen Ford sought clarification of an Overarching Committee; does it sit above the Themed Committees, do they have an ultimate veto etc. If so, this poses a risk of becoming a Cabinet by another name. If we go for an Overarching Committee, it will need to represent the city, not just politically. We might seek a Chair from each Themed Committee and review this to assess if wider representation is needed as Membership.

John Cade (INGOLOV)- challenged the role of the Overarching Committee, what role it would play in practice to avoid becoming another Cabinet. Suggested that for

a city of Sheffield's size, we might use it as a forum to bring together they key citywide socio-economic matters and a place to refocus on the city of Sheffield with a wider lens. Additionally it is sensible to have a place for key strategic and budgetary decisions to sit which might mitigate against the risk of these bouncing from Committee to Committee and avoiding ownership. It should not be a Cabinet by another name. It would be a betrayal to do so. This Committee would need to have Membership of Themed Committee Chairs and suspect we might also like to consider geographical spread of area Members to input on local issues.

Kate Josephs (Chief Executive, Sheffield City Council) advised that she found it hard to imagine how a vibrant and effective Committee System could operation without an Overarching coordinating Committee to ensure that we all stay connected and avoid silos. Everything needs to be in the open. As well as this, an Overarching Committee could act as a single point of contact for ownership and coordination of the budget as a lot of detail is needed and practical deliberation which needs to sit somewhere clear and not in a dispersed way.

Member Reflections	Decisions Required
<p>We don't want too much happening centrally with limited activity going on locally.</p> <p>Might chose to use an Overarching Committee as a central coordinator to determine where a cross-Committee item goes.</p> <p>We were clear that we have not decided to have it, but if we did, one function would be to avoid different Committees working on the same thing as well as looking at a communications conduit to ensure things run smoothly, a role to make sure that people are talking to each other and to streamline.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do we have the budget sat in one Committee with overall budget responsibility or do we have each Committee have an allocation of budget for their area of work. (Note this may still need to go back to an Overarching Committee for overall view, prioritisation and sequencing of events) How does scrutiny sit with an Overarching Committee? (A lot of witnesses indicated that some scrutiny sits here)

6. Local Area Committees

Vicky Seddon (Co-ordinator, Sheffield 4 Democracy) were clear that the relationships of LACs to Themed Committees is important to get right as they are in favour of the communities having more say. This process needs to sit together and be efficient and effective.

Professor Colin Copus (Emeritus Professor of Local Politics, Department of Politics and Public Policy, De Montfort University) suggested that they saw LACs developing as they were in favour of localising, passionate about devolving government to local governing and keen that key decisions are made with the local communities/neighbourhoods in mind which is something LACs can do. The key challenge is if a LAC wants to do something in addition to or different from the citywide view, how it will work/if it will work. We will need to think this through in a delegation's protocol, we will need to decide how far to delegate decisions. De Montfort's speaker was in favour of LACs taking responsibility for own area and

budgets. We should not stop LACs from discussing policy, even though they are not the ultimate decision makers.

Ruth Hubbard (It's Our City) indicated that we had not made it clear how LACs are part of the overall governance picture for Sheffield.

Councillor Sam Corcoran (Leader of Cheshire East Council) do not have LACs in place but did say that they wished that they knew about LACs before moving to a Committee System as this would have addressed a lot of the concerns at the time. Issue is Policy Committees only look at policy and not at local issues, a risk would be too much commonality.

Lord David Blunkett (Member of House of Lords) gave testimony that we need to develop some social capacity to build into how LACs fit as part of the wider model. We also need to be clear about roles and responsibilities. LACs need to relate to the Themed Committees, and we need a long-term strategy for how this is governed, managing communities and locality culture. We cannot afford to make it overly bureaucratic and ensure we have a review period to remove any barriers as we go.

Dr Karen Ford said that she could not find out who is on a LAC or how people are elected to them, what the composition is etc suggesting flaws in our communication.

John Cade (INGOLOV) reported that LACs relate into the wider structure by reporting into one of the Themed Committees, with a regular update to spot patterns of issues/themes developing. We can pick up emerging citywide problems before they become risks or issues and could be able to refer on to scrutiny to make recommendations on approach before it escalates. LACs do not have many decision-making powers in their own right, but can serve the decision making model by acting as early informants and engagement routes.

Member Reflections	Decisions Required
<p>Relationships between Themed Committees and LACs. Evidence provided suggests LACs have a wide remit but limiting themselves to planning and highways matters.</p> <p>Can use LACs as sounding boards for items that are set to go through the Committee System later. Can use to establish if there's a local impact of the item and what the impact might be.</p> <p>Hartlepool does not have LACs, did have a Forum for the North and South but found that these were poorly attended.</p> <p>Considered it interesting that others have found a reduction in Themed Committees work volumes as LACs deal with more of the local issues – feeling comfortable with this.</p> <p>Concern of how limited other authorities LACs are in terms of remit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What gets delegated to LACs and at what stage? • How do we ask LACs to look at something, what process should we use? • How much freedom should we give? Is a limit to financial budget enough?

Want to move away from central decision making and take more local decisions	
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| 7. Statutory Committees

Councillor Cameron Stockell (Deputy Leader of Hartlepool Borough Council) has no separate scrutiny apart from Statutory Health Scrutiny

Gary Mason (Corporate Head of Democratic & Electoral Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer Royal Borough of Kingston) has no separate scrutiny Committee but does retain some functions within the Themed Committees

Professor Colin Copus (Emeritus Professor of Local Politics, Department of Politics and Public Policy, De Montfort University) speaker indicated that they advise us to keep the best parts of the role of scrutiny and mould them into the best of a Committee System. What this looks like can be up to us. He suggested that we retain the ability to call in witnesses and provide Members with a range of different evidence to ensure that decisions are rightly made and deserve to be upheld long term. Scrutiny was devised for a Cabinet System to ensure that the smaller group of central decision makers had assurance. However, a Committee System has more Member engagement, more cross-party working and should reduce challenge. Therefore, scrutiny cannot have the same role in the old way. We ought to look at wider decision making that agencies do in general.

Councillor Sam Corcoran (Leader of Cheshire East Council) does their scrutiny as part of the Committee System as it is felt that by working in a cross-party collaborative way, scrutiny had already been achieved. There is one separate scrutiny Committee for statutory Health scrutiny.

(Ruth Hubbard, It's Our City) argued that using scrutiny is not a good thing. The question instead should be 'what goes into a good Committee, what goes into a good decision?' We should implement good decision making and optimise monitoring, review and evaluation as part of that process. We could establish a governance watch group with four Cllrs and other key city Stakeholders with an interest/investment in this process who report to Full Council to support a longer-term improvement agenda. It's Our City suggested the intention was that the good functions of scrutiny should be maintained including exploration, policy development etc. as part of good decision making. However, there needs to be a conceptual shift, instead of bringing along the old ways of working, we need to speak about it differently.

Dr Karen Ford asked that we make it clear what the role of scrutiny is and be transparent about it so that ordinary people can understand what is happening. There needs to be enough scrutiny.

Kate Josephs (Chief Executive, Sheffield City Council) said that there is a lot of strengths in the scrutiny approach and is something we do well as a council. Clearly the move to Committee System will require an ability for Officers in discussion with Committees to bring ideas, proposals, suggestions etc. for considerations. As Officers, it's our job without a favour, to present well evidenced and clearly explained options and proposals then it's the job of the democratically elected Members to

make the decisions. We can support and make this possible as we currently work in this way.

Member Reflections	Decisions Required
<p>Need to determine the best functions of scrutiny area and build these into our Committee System</p> <p>Evidence today suggested that we don't lose the best of the overview and scrutiny process, alluding to pre-decision scrutiny, rather than Members being presented with options and recommendations, rather an opportunity to explore.</p> <p>Concerned about the 'scrutinise as you go' approach, felt that it was a bit flippant.</p> <p>Some good responses from witnesses about scrutiny but no clear solution for Sheffield.</p> <p>Would like to investigate using scrutiny to hold other organisations accountable moving forward. We haven't seen or done that before necessarily.</p> <p>Interested in using scrutiny, not as a reactive activity, but as an opportunity for key decisions to use with external witnesses and look in detail at decisions to be made and refer back after the fact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What scrutiny functions do we want to build into our new System?

| 8. Other Committees

Member Reflections	Decisions Required
N/A- no explicit evidence given	

| 9. Public Engagement

Councillor Phélim Mac Cafferty (Leader of Brighton & Hove City Council) see high participation in meetings, with packed public galleries and accept that this is unusual. They have approx. 32 working groups, panels such as Housing Panels, regular meetings with business leaders, universities etc.

Professor Colin Copus (Emeritus Professor of Local Politics, Department of Politics and Public Policy, De Montfort University) discussed best practice when it comes to engagement. Suggested that the best types of consultation are done sooner rather than later, dependant upon how we structure it. Consultation cannot be a one-off event, and must be deliberative, deliberate and an ongoing process with various opportunities to engage. Members must also have various opportunities to use this intel to reach a decision. We cannot afford to disappoint those who voted for change by reverting to how we used to engage. Do consultation early and often.

Councillor Sam Corcoran (Leader of Cheshire East Council) involved Members of the public by asking that if they wish to participate in a Committee, they need to

have questions that relate to the particular Committee they want to attend or to a particular agenda item. This hasn't been well received as the public like to attend one place and be able to ask anything. They don't think it's good practice to encourage the public to come to full council meetings during the pandemic to ask questions.

Ruth Hubbard (It's Our City) provided a lot of insight into engagement. They recommended that we find a way to tell Sheffield's story based on what's specific to us and tell it honestly, as this is what the public will recognise and respond to. Citizens and Stakeholders are vital to this. Consultation and engagement must be about building trust and relationships. Perception is that across Sheffield, SCC has difficulty in liaising with Stakeholders and that we have favourites. There are easy ways to start with a baseline by bringing in Stakeholders to comment on Committee papers early. We could look at allocating roles external to the Council and Cllrs. People also hate standard public consultation; we need to improve relationships and not continue acting transactionally with brief extracts. We could optimise a critical friend relationship and build our legitimacy by welcoming input rather than acting as authoritarian as we have done in the past.

Nigel Slack (Active citizen) provided feedback that engagement has proven to be invaluable however we need to broaden our toolkit. We want to enable public involvement at the start and maintain ongoing communication.

Dr Matthew Wood (Senior Lecturer, The Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Sheffield) provided insight as to why our engagement has been so low previously. It is difficult to design new formal Systems of accountability as a lot of people won't be paying attention anymore. There is a lot of distrust, and when you distrust an individual and institution, you switch off. It is up to the distrusted organisation to show and prove that they are doing things differently. Suggest use of innovative public hearings for Committees to show that they're collaborating with other Stakeholders in the city and considering diverse forms of evidence.

Kate Josephs (Chief Executive, Sheffield City Council) also recognised the huge amount of work going on currently regarding how we empower and engage communities. We need to think about how we do things around the edges including engagement. It is important to consider, with our LACs, how LACs feed into our wider Committee Systems and inform Thematic Committees.

Member Reflections	Decisions Required
<p>Considered why we have a lower engaged public vote than other core cities; because we've lost trust and transparency? Think that proportionality provides better representation in terms of a System, people need to know that if they vote it will count for something. Feels more trustworthy. Do people know what their votes mean and what impact it will have?</p> <p>Like that Brighton & Hove use multiple types of opportunities to engage, however concern about the number of working groups.</p>	

<p>Want to do consultation early and often as per De Montfort's advice.</p> <p>We need to regain the trust.</p> <p>Public needs to know that they can have a say in how the city is run.</p>	
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| 10. Communication

Gary Mason (Corporate Head of Democratic & Electoral Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer Royal Borough of Kingston) said it was important to undertake 121 briefings around unique Committee System and ways of working with both Members and Officers as part of induction

Professor Colin Copus (Emeritus Professor of Local Politics, Department of Politics and Public Policy, De Montfort University) suggested that we must develop the System with full Member engagement and use a range of methods and mechanisms for Members to be taken through this process.

Ruth Hubbard (It's Our City) gave feedback that there has been, so far, no outwards communications regarding the direction of travel for this journey, what we are seeking to do, the outcomes we're trying to achieve etc. The recommended that we use strong external comms that demonstrate we're keen to translate this for the public. It's also important to say what we will do now and what might come later due to the volume of change required. We also need to avoid terms from the old System, 'scrutiny' for example, means a lot of different things to a lot of different people. We need to shift to new language that is meaningful, clear, and useful.

Member Reflections	Decisions Required
N/A- no explicit reflections given	

| 11. Schemes of Delegation

Gary Mason (Corporate Head of Democratic & Electoral Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer Royal Borough of Kingston) advised that it was easier to focus on what should be reserved for Committees rather than that should be delegated to Officers and that this supports minimising Schemes of Delegation to one A4 page, stating that Officers can own decision making for anything not reserved to a Committee. Kingston encourage Officers to keep Portfolio Holders up to date on emerging matters. Delegations to Officers are wide and the Portfolio Holder needs to be comfortable with the Officer decision making route when exercising their decision-making rights.

Kate Josephs (Chief Executive, Sheffield City Council) put forward that we may need to increase delegations to Officers, as we have a personal commitment to have an organisation where all Officers understand that we need meaningful comms with Cllrs and no surprises. We need to be mindful that all Officers need to be supported to ensure Members have confidence in Officer delegations.

Professor Colin Copus (Emeritus Professor of Local Politics, Department of Politics and Public Policy, De Montfort University) suggested that the balance between delegated decision making need to be very clear and Members need to be happy with what needs to get delegated to Officers and what goes to other Committees. We don't need to wait for another meeting to get a decision made.

Member Reflections	Decisions Required
<p>Keen to ensure that Officers with delegated responsibilities maintain a relationship with the relevant Committee Chairs, Co-Chairs/Vice Chairs.</p> <p>Chairs can make informal decisions informally between Committees, only formal decision making has to be led by a Committee or an Officer.</p> <p>We need to be clear in what we're asking Officers to do and development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need to clarify the dividing line between who takes what decisions (i.e. which Committee, which Officer, LAC or Themed Committee etc.)

12. Statutory Responsibilities for Members

Kingston advised that we need to be clear about the roles in the transition of Members from Cabinet to Committee chairs. There was some confusion for Members and Officers regarding the extent of their panels and role boundaries.

Nigel Slack (Active Citizen) suggested that the transition must ensure that Cllrs know their roles and responsibilities within the structure. Choosing to not serve on a Themed Committee should not be allowed.

Member Reflections	Decisions Required
N/A- no explicit reflections given	

13. Staffing, Relationships and Casework

Clive Betts (MP) advised us that the key to making this Committee System work is to maintain and foster strong working collaborative relationships between Lead Officers and Committee Chairs. Cheshire East also highlighted the importance of working links.

Gary Mason (Corporate Head of Democratic & Electoral Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer Royal Borough of Kingston) suggested that we adopt a protocol that can support our structure, matched by a series of Leader's meetings each month to prepare for upcoming meetings and discussions.

Vicky Seddon (Co-ordinator, Sheffield 4 Democracy)- It was accepted that this may cause a resource issue as the more Committees there are the more staff will be required to support and accept that there is a balance between taking staff away from delivery to support Committees versus focus on delivery; this must be carefully considered.

Councillor Phélim Mac Cafferty (Leader of Brighton & Hove City Council) indicated that there would be a great need to develop the Democratic Services Team(s)

Councillor Sam Corcoran (Leader of Cheshire East Council) discussed the amount of Officer time the System takes to administer. The amount of Member time also increased during the pandemic as it became more accessible due to remote working. Officer involvement has remained high and there is more pressure that will need minimising. The Chairs cannot demand a high volume of meetings and that Lead Officers attend all of them and the whole session to wait for an item on the agenda.

John Cade (INGOLOV) described that there are budget cuts affecting Officers, and that we want good quality support, but we do need to give them the capacity to be able to deliver on this.

Kate Josephs (Chief Executive, Sheffield City Council) indicated that we need to be clear on not scrimping on support for Committees. Need to put Officer support and teams around them to ensure working effectively, clear alignment with the corporate plan and budget, and how we align our design for System with Officer structure. Aware of risk of other councils having Officers attend multiple meetings with no alignment.

Member Reflections	Decisions Required
<p>Does require advanced support and more planning due to increase in meetings</p> <p>Pre-meets attended by Officers and spokespeople to support with agenda setting.</p> <p>Committee work plans will need to be updated and published monthly.</p>	

Additional Emerging Themes

| 14. Emergency Protocols/Urgent Decisions

Gary Mason (Corporate Head of Democratic & Electoral Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer Royal Borough of Kingston) said that they rarely needed to arrange additional ad-hoc meetings but do have an emergency protocol.

Councillor Cameron Stockell (Deputy Leader of Hartlepool Borough Council)- Hartlepool's urgent decision process is simple, and kept to the Managing Director, Leader, Chair of the relevant Committee, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer meeting to discuss any prompt decisions required. It was suggested that this is straight forward.

One authority indicated that they have two sets of urgency sub-Committees. Type 1 is an urgency sub-Committee formed of one representative from each political party. Type 2 is a special urgency sub-Committee consisting of a Committee's entire Membership where there needs to be an additional urgent meeting. This was built into the constitution to remain flexible.

Clive Betts (MP) advised that this process needs to be fast paced enough to respond quickly with other organisations.

Nigel Slack (Active Citizen) accepted that the witnesses generally have indicated that urgent decisions are few and far between and suggested that technology might support in providing a solution (may be legalities to consider with this). Wherever possible, we should not subvert the democratic process for an urgent decision. It is more important to make the right decision than it is to make a quick decision.

Member Reflections	Decisions Required
Want a flexible approach to urgency meetings; as and when needed	How do we decide what is an urgent decision?
We could delegate an urgent decision to an Officer in consultation with the relevant Committee chair and ask the chief Officer and monitoring Officer to advise.	Do we have one separate Committee or multiple sub-Committees?

| 15. Call Ins

Gary Mason (Corporate Head of Democratic & Electoral Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer Royal Borough of Kingston) sets their criteria for a call in as 9 Members or 2.5k residents (approx. 2% of the population). There is a 10 day stand still after every Committee decision. The Call In Panel convenes, chaired by the opposition and may vote to uphold or refer back to the relevant Committee with a recommendation for change. They cannot override a decision directly. This panel will receive comments from the Leader and representatives of those responsible for the proposal. Kingston has approx. 2 or 3 call ins a year. They recommend that Officers be aware of this in terms of project planning as it can lead to delays in implementation.

Councillor Cameron Stockell (Deputy Leader of Hartlepool Borough Council)- For Hartlepool, the call-in mechanism works by requiring half of Cllr Membership to decide to call in a decision to Full Council, this is 18 Members. The Hartlepool speaker has been a Cllr for 3 years and has not seen this happen during this time.

Councillor Phélim Mac Cafferty (Leader of Brighton & Hove City Council)- no defined process, they use a ‘scrutinise as we go’ approach.

Lord David Blunkett (Member of House of Lords)- monitoring in a scrutiny way of how policies are being implemented. Having a sub-Committee in each Committee, to give Cllrs a role and important to learn what’s working quickly to response efficiently and correct where things aren’t working.

Member Reflections	Decisions Required
A 10 day stand still could be problematic for us in Sheffield need to consider how scrutiny is used to limit Call ins	What should our call-in process be? And what are our expectations with this?

<p>Interested in how many people could call in a decision, we have never done this. Offering the public an ability to call in decisions may be a good opportunity to focus minds and demonstrate an active way of getting involved, improving engagement.</p> <p>2.5k people to call in seems like a lot. A decision is usually relevant to a small group of people/Stakeholders not the general public.</p>	<p>Do we allow the public to enable a call in? If so, what demand is needed?</p>
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| 16. Elections

Councillor Phélim Mac Cafferty (Leader of Brighton & Hove City Council) have elections every 4 years

Nigel Slack (Active Citizen) fed back that how we currently do elections is disruptive and puts Cllrs on the wrong footing. It reduces our ability to do delivery/business by three quarters of a year, every year. Would prefer an all-out election every 4 years, as it's becoming more and more the way to hold elections in metropolitan cities.

Kate Josephs (Chief Executive, Sheffield City Council) indicated that this was fundamentally a decision of the Council, which could be looked at separately.

Member Reflections	Decisions Required
<p>Have had quite a lot of evidence to suggest we move to a 4 yearly election. This may not be within the remit of the Governance Committee but recognise this way would suit a Committee System better than our current arrangements.</p>	

| 17. WHIP Role

Professor Colin Copus (Emeritus Professor of Local Politics, Department of Politics and Public Policy, De Montfort University) advised SCC to think carefully about how the System and parties move and operate. If a party wants multiple Committees and insists on a Whip for each, it becomes a decision-making forum only with no deliberation. It was indicated that we will get the strongest possible benefit from all Members signing up to considering how to re-frame the Whip System. Often groups make decisions too early. The point of the decision needs to be after not before discovery; Evidence, consultation, then decision.

Councillor Sam Corcoran (Leader of Cheshire East Council) considers use of the Whip System a political question. They do encourage Members to vote in favour of policy, which is clear from the manifesto. However, it's important that all Members of the Committee know and understand what they're voting on, including the Whips themselves.

Nigel Slack (Active Citizen) felt that the Whip System has no place in a Committee System. The new way of working needs to foster trust and Whips do not back up trust in party Members. If a party does not achieve a majority, they have failed to

garner support for their manifesto, therefore why should they lead? The city plan should be a collaboration.

Member Reflections	Decisions Required
N/A- no explicit reflections given	

18. Co-Chairs

Gary Mason (Corporate Head of Democratic & Electoral Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer Royal Borough of Kingston) has appointed up to 4 Co-Chairs of each Committee

Professor Colin Copus (Emeritus Professor of Local Politics, Department of Politics and Public Policy, De Montfort University) suggested that we have Members of the opposition of different parties as Co-Chairs for some dimension. Co-Chairs may not be beneficial if they meet separately to the Chairs as it will double Officer work. They're not sure how a Co-Chair System would work.

Ruth Hubbard (It's Our City) believe that the Chairs and Co-Chairs way of working is very important insofar as it implied cross-party working as it could be more inclusive and democratic. They were also interested in the idea of having different genders represented.

John Cade (INGOLOV) agreed, indicating that it could be a positive step and can broaden experience and knowledge.

The Co-Chair Pilot Report suggested that this should be given serious thought as there are several potential benefits and the overall findings were favourable, though we have only had a limited time to try this.

Member Reflections	Decisions Required
<p>Rather than thinking about number, need to think about the role and serving a purpose. If you work through role of Co-Chair /Vice Chair, we might want more than 1 per Committee. Might have opposition to create balance etc. Like the idea of co-chairs. We don't know how many Committees but no matter what we pick there will be a lot of work.</p> <p>Thinks Co-Chairs are a good idea, bring extra experience and perspectives in the job.</p> <p>Interesting that some swapped Co-Chairs depending upon items being presented at Committee to give others opportunities to speak on what they wish. Might not work for us but may help the Chair's with their role.</p> <p>Some individuals struggle to cope with the expectation and workload, Co-Chairing could support with this.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we want to investigate Co-Chairs as an option? • How many Co-Chairs is reasonable? • Will each Committee be bound by the same number of Co-Chairs? • How do we determine which people take these roles together? Do they self-nominate together? • How do we make clear the expectations of Co-Chair vs job share and ensure it's clear on the difference?

<p>We could have a fluid process to appoint Co-Chairs.</p> <p>We have an issue with continuity and consistency as people are different and have different styles, the division of tasks could be difficult. How would it work when from different parties? Opposingly, it might provide more continuity not less, if we had Co-Chairs, it might be much more clear and have less difficulties, creating a better work/life balance for those involved.</p> <p>Important to consider that at any one time there is one Chair and one casting vote.</p> <p>May lead to a challenge as when trying to come up with policy, inevitably we could get into a situation where challenging the status quo led by the leading party.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we keep this flexible or write it in formally? • How do we achieve proportionality, what kind of proportionality do we seek? i.e. gender, geography, ethnicity etc. • Do Co-Chairs Chair an entire meeting? An Item? • If a Co-Chair is leading on an item, should they chair that section or not chair that section?
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| 19. Role of Portfolio Holders

Gary Mason (Corporate Head of Democratic & Electoral Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer Royal Borough of Kingston) has no Cabinet Members but do have 8 Portfolio Holders, each with a shadow Portfolio Holder. Kingston uses their Portfolio Holders as Chairs of Strategic Committees and has also appointed up to 4 Co-Chairs.

Councillor Cameron Stockell (Deputy Leader of Hartlepool Borough Council) has no Portfolio Holders, they only have Committee chairs, who do admittedly act as Portfolio Holders i.e., work directly with the Directors and Assistant Directors of the relevant services.

Councillor Phélim Mac Cafferty (Leader of Brighton & Hove City Council) have 6 Chairs and 6 Co-Chairs with a balance of age and gender. They also have 6 Principal Portfolio Holders with good ongoing relationships.

Councillor Sam Corcoran (Leader of Cheshire East Council) had most of their Cabinet Members become Chairs and/or Vice Chairs.

Member Reflections	Decisions Required
<p>Seeking more information about how authorities have used the Portfolio Holders in their moves to Committees structures.</p> <p>Could use Portfolio Holders as chairs as they are the clear people/single point of contact for areas of knowledge.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we want Portfolio Holders to take on the Committee Chair and Vice Chair roles?

| 20. Councillor Culture/Behaviours

Kate Josephs (Chief Executive, Sheffield City Council)- We will pay some attention to learning and development and we need to build in capacity to do this well. There is a Member Induction programme in development. It's important that we don't scrimp on support needed at all levels to build on skills and capabilities to work in this new way.

Common themes of feedback from witnesses: Quality of Cllrs must be suitable for the roles, Requirement for 'good chairing skills', Committee success will depend upon the personalities of the Chairs and their raw perspectives, Cllrs must be willing to dedicate time to this way of working, Cllrs must know how to run these meetings otherwise Officers will end up running them, Parties must be able to put aside politics to better the interest of people of Sheffield, Moving to a Committee System won't automatically achieve the changes we and citizens want, the culture is important, Chairs are our standard bearers so need all the support and a great need to re-establish trust.

Member Reflections	Decisions Required
Need to be flexible and learn as we go	•