

Governance Committee

Tuesday 22 February 2022 at 10.00 am

Town Hall, Sheffield, S1 2HH

The Press and Public are Welcome to Attend

Membership

Councillor Julie Grocutt
Councillor Penny Baker
Councillor Sue Alston
Councillor Dawn Dale
Councillor Peter Garbutt
Councillor Christine Gilligan
Councillor Mark Jones
Councillor Mary Lea
Councillor Mike Levery
Councillor Mohammed Mahroof
Councillor Sioned-Mair
Richards

PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE MEETING

The Governance Committee is leading on work to transition to a committee system of governance from May 2022. It is a politically proportionate Committee which will be tasked with oversight of the transitional work and will approve the recommendations to be made to Full Council.

The Committee will be outward facing. The Council will not be working in isolation on this project but will seek input from outside the organisation, ensuring citizens are engaged and are provided with opportunities to help shape this programme of work. The Council will also be engaging the professional support of agencies such as the Local Government Association, the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and Monitoring Officers from other local authorities which have recently transitioned or are about to transition to a Committee system. This will ensure the Council is supported through this period and learns from best practice to ensure that the system implemented in Sheffield responds to the needs of our City.

A copy of the agenda and reports is available on the Council's website at www.sheffield.gov.uk. You may not be allowed to see some reports because they contain confidential information. These items are usually marked * on the agenda.

Members of the public have the right to ask questions or submit petitions to Governance Committee meetings and recording is allowed under the direction of the Chair. Please see the [website](#) or contact Democratic Services for further information regarding public questions and petitions and details of the Council's protocol on audio/visual recording and photography at council meetings.

PLEASE NOTE: Meetings of the Governance Committee have to be held as physical meetings. If you would like to attend the meeting, you must register to attend by emailing committee@sheffield.gov.uk at least 2 clear days in advance of the date of the meeting. This is necessary to facilitate the management of attendance at the meeting to maintain social distancing. In order to ensure safe access and to protect all attendees, you will be asked to wear a face covering (unless you have an exemption) at all times when moving about within the venue.

It is also recommended that you undertake a Covid-19 Rapid Lateral Flow Test within two days of the meeting. You can order tests online to be delivered to your home address, or you can collect tests from a local pharmacy. Further details of these tests and how to obtain them can be accessed here - Order coronavirus (COVID-19) rapid lateral flow tests - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). We are unable to guarantee entrance to observers, as priority will be given to registered speakers. Alternatively, you can observe the meeting remotely by clicking on the 'view the webcast' link provided on the meeting page of the website.

If you require any further information please contact Jay Bell email jay.bell@sheffield.gov.uk.

**GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE AGENDA
22 FEBRUARY 2022**

Order of Business

- 1. Welcome and Housekeeping Arrangements**
- 2. Apologies for Absence**
- 3. Exclusion of Public and Press**
To identify items where resolutions may be moved to exclude the press and public.
- 4. Declarations of Interest** (Pages 5 - 8)
Members to declare any interests they have in the business to be considered at the meeting.
- 5. Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 9 - 24)
To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 January 2022.
- 6. Public Questions and Petitions**
To receive any questions or petitions from members of the public.
- 7. Committee System Structure**
Report of the Director of Legal & Governance to follow.
- 8. Date of Next Meeting**
The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 9 March 2022.

This page is intentionally left blank

ADVICE TO MEMBERS ON DECLARING INTERESTS AT MEETINGS

If you are present at a meeting of the Council, of its executive or any committee of the executive, or of any committee, sub-committee, joint committee, or joint sub-committee of the authority, and you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest** (DPI) relating to any business that will be considered at the meeting, you must not:

- participate in any discussion of the business at the meeting, or if you become aware of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the meeting, participate further in any discussion of the business, or
- participate in any vote or further vote taken on the matter at the meeting.

These prohibitions apply to any form of participation, including speaking as a member of the public.

You **must**:

- leave the room (in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct)
- make a verbal declaration of the existence and nature of any DPI at any meeting at which you are present at which an item of business which affects or relates to the subject matter of that interest is under consideration, at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent.
- declare it to the meeting and notify the Council's Monitoring Officer within 28 days, if the DPI is not already registered.

If you have any of the following pecuniary interests, they are your **disclosable pecuniary interests** under the new national rules. You have a pecuniary interest if you, or your spouse or civil partner, have a pecuniary interest.

- Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain, which you, or your spouse or civil partner undertakes.
- Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from your council or authority) made or provided within the relevant period* in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

*The relevant period is the 12 months ending on the day when you tell the Monitoring Officer about your disclosable pecuniary interests.

- Any contract which is made between you, or your spouse or your civil partner (or a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest) and your council or authority –
 - under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and
 - which has not been fully discharged.

- Any beneficial interest in land which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, have and which is within the area of your council or authority.
- Any licence (alone or jointly with others) which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, holds to occupy land in the area of your council or authority for a month or longer.
- Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) –
 - the landlord is your council or authority; and
 - the tenant is a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest.
- Any beneficial interest which you, or your spouse or your civil partner has in securities of a body where -
 - (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of your council or authority; and
 - (b) either -
 - the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or
 - if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

If you attend a meeting at which any item of business is to be considered and you are aware that you have a **personal interest** in the matter which does not amount to a DPI, you must make verbal declaration of the existence and nature of that interest at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent. You should leave the room if your continued presence is incompatible with the 7 Principles of Public Life (selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty; and leadership).

You have a personal interest where –

- a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial standing (including interests in land and easements over land) of you or a member of your family or a person or an organisation with whom you have a close association to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the Council Tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward or electoral area for which you have been elected or otherwise of the Authority's administrative area, or
- it relates to or is likely to affect any of the interests that are defined as DPIs but are in respect of a member of your family (other than a partner) or a person with whom you have a close association.

Guidance on declarations of interest, incorporating regulations published by the Government in relation to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, has been circulated to you previously.

You should identify any potential interest you may have relating to business to be considered at the meeting. This will help you and anyone that you ask for advice to fully consider all the circumstances before deciding what action you should take.

In certain circumstances the Council may grant a **dispensation** to permit a Member to take part in the business of the Authority even if the member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest relating to that business.

To obtain a dispensation, you must write to the Monitoring Officer at least 48 hours before the meeting in question, explaining why a dispensation is sought and desirable, and specifying the period of time for which it is sought. The Monitoring Officer may consult with the Independent Person or the Council's Standards Committee in relation to a request for dispensation.

Further advice can be obtained from Gillian Duckworth, Director of Legal and Governance on 0114 2734018 or email gillian.duckworth@sheffield.gov.uk.

This page is intentionally left blank

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Governance Committee

Meeting held 25 January 2022

PRESENT: Councillors Julie Grocutt (Chair), Penny Baker (Deputy Chair), Sue Alston, Dawn Dale, Peter Garbutt, Christine Gilligan, Mark Jones, Mary Lea, Mike Levery and Sioned-Mair Richards

.....

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mohammed Mahroof.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

- 2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the press and public.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 4.1 The minutes of the meetings held on 30 November, 7 & 8 December were agreed as an accurate record.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

- 5.1 The Committee received 6 questions from a member of the public, which were submitted prior to the meeting.

Ruth Hubbard, It's Our City

1. The work developing design principles for a new committee system took place over four months including some intensive work with stakeholders and members of the public - who gave their time willingly to contribute. It is not clear how the committee system structure report relates to, aligns with, or puts the principles (and their implicit outcomes) into practice. In some cases what is being proposed seems to be in active tension with, or in opposition to, the principles. What was the point of all that work and citizen/stakeholder input? I recognise that the report covers a limited number of core issues at this stage but isn't this part of the governance problem - stated council commitments with little real meaning, and no actual demonstrable impact or influence via engagement and consultation

In response to question 1, The Chair, Councillor Julie Grocutt stated the Governance Committee agreed in public to use the design principles both when considering the various options and when reviewing later on how well the new system is working. The way that those principles changed significantly during development clearly showed the impact of citizen and stakeholder input. It was the Chair's expectation that evidence from all three sessions of the Inquiry and the principles should be in the forefront of members' minds when giving consideration to the options presented at the meeting.

2. Eight main committees are proposed (plus a significant finance sub-committee). What makes Sheffield an exception and 'extreme outlier' on this, especially in the face of evidence received and statutory guidance. And, from the Wirral, where a very recent External Assurance Review by the government's DLUHC is requiring a reduction in their number of main committees (a reduction not from 8, but 7 committees). Being an extreme outlier with 8 main committees would also be an explicit and conscious decision to very likely increase both bureaucracy and resource load (and that would also go against the design principles). How is this justifiable in the current circumstances, and what do you think voters will think if this is the decision

In response to question 2, The Chair explained that section four of the report dealt with this issue. Members heard through the inquiry process that there are risks to having too many committees, however we also heard that it is crucial to align committees to the way the business works. This is to avoid things like senior officers losing capacity due to needing to each attend and prepare for multiple committees every month, and to make sure financial accountability is crystal clear. The report proposes that the scale and complexity of this Council's business, as the first ever Core City to move to a committee system, means that there are actually benefits overall in terms of timeliness and reducing bureaucracy to aligning the committees to functional areas of the council and their clearly distinct budgets. We heard from the Chief Executive that in her view there were seven of these functional areas. Then there is a cross-cutting committee making eight. Members today, and at Council in March, can take a view as to whether these risks and benefits have been appropriately weighed up.

3. The proposal appears to me to exclude some or a few elected councillors from playing a full role on at least one of the main committees. This would, of course, be more than bad faith following the community campaign and referendum. I am sure citizens and communities would be very active in ensuring

relevant ward voters were aware if any of their councillors were not representing them in a main committee decision-making role - or if particular parties were against all their councillors sitting on a main committee. At one point the proposal seems to be driven by the maths rather than the imperative for change, core purpose, principle, or intended outcome. This approach seems highly inadvisable when it's clear some other councils have 13, 15 and even 17 on committees and are operating effectively. Will the committee carefully rethink and reject this proposal?

In response to question 3, The Chair explained that this was a matter for the committee to consider in the meeting. It is dealt with at section 9 of the report and Ms Hubbard was thanked for her comments. It appears to the Chair that under these proposals every councillor would have on average about three or four seats on real decision-making committees. The committee was very mindful of the need to ensure that the role of City Councillor is not so onerous as to prevent ordinary people with families and jobs from being able to be councillors. The more seats created on committees at the Town Hall, the less time members can spend in their local wards.

4. The paper also appears to be inching more and more in the direction of giving a range of additional powers to the 'overarching' Strategy and Resources Committee. For example, suggested additional powers to make urgent decisions, suggested additional powers to do external 'scrutiny' tasks when these could and should be integrated into main committee work. The necessary shift in thinking away from strong leader governance does not appear quite to have been made, despite the pretty unanimous warnings on this point given in evidence in the inquiry sessions, and in consultations. Does the Governance Committee agree with the expert John Cade from INLOGOV (who you heard from) that it would be a "betrayal" to somehow try to recreate a Cabinet function? (Conversely, can the committee not see the value of a Strategy and Resources committee that is more strategic, connecting things up, overseeing the budget as a whole and so on, as has been presented in evidence to you?)

In response to question 4, The Chair mentioned that again, members would need to give consideration to this in the meeting. The Chair stated that the committee were absolutely mindful of what it meant to move away from the Cabinet System to a committee system and had heard nobody attempt to artificially prolong the old way of doing things. The Chair hoped to reassure Ruth Hubbard somewhat anyway because the clues to the primary functions of the proposed Strategy and Resources committee are in the name: to operate strategically,

joining up cross-cutting issues across the other committees, and to oversee the finances.

5. Section 13 on Post-Decision Scrutiny (especially paras 13.1, 13.2 and 13.3) is problematic. It also contains inaccuracies and significant omissions that amount to inaccuracies. For example: Sentence 1 could just as easily say the emphasis is on collaboration and the potential for consensual decision-making. Sentence 2 is inaccurate - it was always possible to have different parties in Cabinet, it is just that Sheffield ruling groups have chosen not to do this (as some other councils do). (Indeed this choice is what has contributed to such a big democratic deficit in Sheffield, which was the main reason for the petition and referendum). Paragraphs 13.2 and 13.3 are also highly problematic and they omit a fundamental purpose of scrutiny - to amplify the voices of the public and stakeholders. Please can this section of the report be at least corrected, and amended? However I would prefer it be fully reviewed and rewritten as it fails to understand the significance of the shift to "good decision-making" in a modern committee system and how this incorporates many of the functions and good work of scrutiny.

In response to question 5, The Chair agreed that one role of scrutiny was to find ways to bring the voice of residents into the decision-making process. This was always a challenge since scrutiny committees weren't able to make formal decisions on the back of what they heard. The Committee was putting a lot of thought into how to bring the voice of residents into the whole decision-making process and this was the subject of their second substantive agenda item today.

6. The report omits any mention of stakeholder input (as above, vital if one wants to ensure that the strengths of scrutiny are built in, and also vital for good decision-making (but also essential for inclusive and improving democratic practices). There are simple, extremely resource-lite, and efficient, participatory mechanisms that would be very easy to embed at the outset of new governance arrangements to ensure that a range of different stakeholders are heard directly in relevant Policy Committees, and as a very solid starting point/baseline position. Will the committee ensure that the new arrangements and constitution embed such a baseline for direct stakeholder involvement into main committees?

In response to question 6, The Chair explained that it was not omitted. The report stated clearly at 3.3 that stakeholder input is yet to be designed and that this will be crucial. The other main item on the agenda dealt with the progress on this matter. The Governance Committee had said clearly since September that

because of tight timescales and the need to work iteratively, the Committee would first agree the 'what' (ie an outline of the structure of the system) and then we would later add the 'how' (ie ways of working within this system including how to bring the voice of citizens into the process).

6. COMMITTEE SYSTEM STRUCTURE

- 6.1 The Committee received a report of the Director of Legal and Governance which made recommendations to key aspects of Sheffield City Council's future governance arrangements under a committee system.
- 6.2 The Assistant Director (Governance), Alexander Polak, explained the report had taken into consideration the opinions of each witness from the enquiry process, which took place in November and December of 2021.
- 6.3 The Assistant Director (Governance) stated that Full Council would be the final decision-maker on the recommendations. The Governance Committee had been asked to agree a skeleton model from the recommendations, which would give the Monitoring Officer enough certainty to begin to redraft the detail of the Council's constitution.
- 6.4 The Committee were asked to keep the design principles in mind as they debated on the report's recommendations, as well as everything they had heard through the inquiry process.

a) Seven themed Policy Committees which will be closely aligned to the functions of the Council;

- 6.5 The Assistant Director (Governance) mentioned the Committee had previously heard from a range of Councils, through the enquiry process, which expressed their thoughts on the total number of themed policy committees and how they were arranged in accordance with their council's functions.
- 6.6 The recommendation proposed that themed committees would be aligned with the council's functions rather than by political or corporate plan priorities. This meant that if any priorities were to change, the overall functions should remain stable and clearly link into individual budgets.
- 6.7 Members of the Committee discussed recommendation 1a) and the following comments were made: -
- 6.8 A member of the Committee stated their political party supported this recommendation although believed it would need reviewing 6 months after implementation. Another member of the Committee added that it was important to mention the new system would not be set in stone

and it is planned for the new system to go under a review process, therefore the system could undertake changes in the future. It was added that Council should review the system annually.

6.9 The Committee agreed recommendation 1a) as is.

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;

6.10 The Assistant Director (Governance) mentioned there was a common message that came from the enquiry process. This was that there needed to be a place for cross-cutting issues and for the budget as a whole to be discussed and priorities weighed.

6.11 The Committee were informed that the Chairs of all policy committees would form part of the membership on the Strategy & Resources Policy Committee. The Committee would need to be politically proportionate therefore the membership would be Chairs of committees plus other members as necessary to form a proportionate membership.

6.12 This recommendation also stated that a standing Finance Sub-Committee be agreed and that this along with the Strategic & Resources Policy Committee both be chaired by the Leader of the Council.

6.13 Members of the Committee discussed recommendation 1b) and the following comments and questions were made: -

6.14 A Member of the Committee suggested that the Leader of the Council should not Chair the Finance Sub-Committee. It was believed that the role would be too large for one individual to Chair the Strategy & Resources Committee along with the Finance Sub-Committee.

6.15 It was suggested that a Member who specialised in finance or was tasked with looking at the council's financial situation throughout the year, should chair the Finance Sub-Committee. It was added that the Leader of the Council should still have a seat on that Committee.

6.16 In response to a question, The Assistant Director (Governance) explained that it is the Committee's decision whether the Strategy & Resources Policy Committee could overturn a decision made by the Finance Sub-Committee. It was added that any Committee that delegates authority to a body beneath it, such as a sub-committee, does reserve the right to withdraw decision-making responsibility.

6.17 In response to a question, The Assistant Director (Governance) stated the report does not seek to define how many seats would be on the

Finance Sub-Committee. The recommendation is just for the Committee to decide whether one should sit beneath the Strategy & Resources Policy Committee and whether it should be chaired by the Leader of the Council. The number of seats and how they are appointed could be decided at a later stage.

6.18 In response to a question, The Assistant Director (Governance) proposed a possible wording for an emerging recommendation 1b) to something that allowed for the constitution to include a separate committee/sub-committee which had a responsibility of looking at finance, similar to the Finance Sub-Committee although its membership was not necessarily drawn from the Strategy & Resources Policy Committee.

6.19 Councillor Richards seconded by Councillor Alston proposed an amendment to the recommendation as follows: -

- b. A Strategy & Resources Policy Committee including all Policy Committee Chairs within its membership, with overarching responsibility for the policy and budgetary framework, is chaired by the Leader of the Council;*
- 1. A standing Finance Committee or Sub-Committee, reporting to the Strategy & Resources Committee;*

6.20 The Committee agreed the amendment and then agreed the recommendation as amended.

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;

6.21 The Assistant Director (Governance) highlighted the purpose of recommendation 1c) was to give responsibility to full council for agreeing the creation of sub-committees rather than committees themselves. This would aim to reduce to number of sub-committees within the new system in line with modern practices. The recommendation also referred to Task and Finish Groups, the ambition was that committees had the authority to set up their own Task and Finish groups, within limits. The aim was to avoid all the policy committees having the ability to form many groups simultaneously, as this would cause issues for member and officer resource.

6.22 Members of the Committee discussed recommendation 1c) and the following comments and questions were made: -

6.23 In response to a question, The Assistant Director (Governance) anticipated that Full Council would need to approve an additional sub-committee although a committee would not need approval from Full

Council to arrange a Task and Finish Group.

6.24 A Member of the Committee suggested that Full Council, on an annual basis, review whether each sub-committee is still needed.

6.25 A Member of the Committee stated that Annual Council (AGM) may not be the best meeting to review standing sub-committees due to the nature of that meeting.

6.26 The Chair, Councillor Grocutt seconded by Councillor Garbutt proposed an amendment to the recommendation as follows: -

- c) Provision for Full Council but not individual Committees to agree the addition of sub-committees to this structure. When sub-committees are agreed they will be time limited or at minimum will be reviewed annually at the AGM, 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;

6.27 The Committee agreed the amendment and then agreed the recommendation as amended.

d) Seven Local Area Committees linked to the Policy committee with responsibility for Communities;

6.28 The Assistant Director (Governance) explained that the recommendation sets out for Local Area Committees (LAC) to link into the system through the policy committee that has responsibility for Communities.

6.29 Members of the Committee discussed recommendation 1d) and the following comments and questions were made: -

6.30 It was mentioned that LAC's should be able to report to more than just the policy committee that had responsibility for Communities and other policy committees may be better suited to address certain issues.

6.31 A Member of the Committee expressed the importance of ensuring the Local Area Committee Chair Group had a recognised position within the new structure. It was added that the LAC Chair Group would also be a quicker method of getting information to an individual LAC. The Assistant Director (Governance) explained the LAC Chair Group is not currently a formal decision-making committee therefore it is not in the new structure. If the Committee wished for this to be included, they would have to go through the usual steps to formalise this. It was mentioned that the LAC Chair Group would then have to be politically proportionate therefore the membership may need to change to support that.

- 6.32 Councillor Alston seconded by Councillor Garbutt proposed an amendment to the recommendation as follows: -

d) Seven Local Area Committees with a mechanism to allow for referrals between them and Policy Committees as necessary and regular informal meetings of local area committee chairs to ensure effective coordination;

- 6.33 The Committee agreed the amendment and then agreed the recommendation as amended.

e) No change to the committees referred to as Other Committees in the Governance Framework;

- 6.34 A Member of the Committee suggested that Audit and Governance fall under the same Committee. The Assistant Director (Governance) suggested that further consideration be given to this at a later stage.

- 6.35 The Committee agreed recommendation 1e) as is.

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;

- 6.36 The Assistant Director (Governance) stated that this recommendation meant so that each policy committee had an urgency sub-committee linked to it, which could be formed in-between policy committee meetings, if an urgent decision had to be made. It was mentioned that the quorum for a committee would likely be 3 therefore it would be expected that from 3-5 politically proportionate members would sit on an Urgency Sub-Committee. The Urgency Sub-Committee could be scheduled to met on the alternate months to the Policy Committee but only if necessary.

- 6.37 Members of the Committee discussed recommendation 1f) and the following comments and questions were made: -

- 6.38 A Member of the Committee stated that it needed to be clear in what circumstances the Strategy & Resources Policy Committee could take an urgent decision rather than an Urgency Sub-Committee.

- 6.39 In response to a question, The Assistant Director (Governance) explained that the Strategy & Resources Policy Committee would have an Urgency Sub-Committee along with all other 7 Policy Committees.

- 6.40 In response to a question, The Assistant Director (Governance) expected there would presumably be a mechanism for Councillors to be informed of Officers' urgent decisions, within a specific timeframe. It was added that thresholds for what defines as urgent, would most

likely be outlined In the Council's constitution.

- 6.41 Councillor Alston seconded by Councillor Richards proposed an amendment to the recommendation as follows: -

f) Ability for scheduled Strategy & Resources Committee meetings to take urgent decisions for the other Policy Committees if the relevant Urgency Sub-Committee has been unable to meet in an appropriate timeframe;

- 6.42 The Committee agreed the amendment and then agreed the recommendation as amended.

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;

- 6.43 The Assistant Director (Governance) informed the Committee that the aim was for 6 meetings per year for the policy committees, these would meet every other month. There would also be 6 meetings for the Strategy & Resources Committee and that would meet alternatively to the policy committees. It was added that Council is also proposed to meet 6 times a year bi-monthly and for the LACs to meet at least 4 times per year.

- 6.44 Members of the Committee discussed recommendation 1g) and the following comments and questions were made: -

- 6.45 A Member of the Committee raised concerns around the reduction of Council meetings. It was suggested that there's 6 council meetings per year, plus the AGM and Budget Council meetings. Members of the Committee were happy with the suggestion.

- 6.46 It was suggested to add 'formal' into the recommendation to reflect that at least four formal LAC meetings would need to take place but allow for informal meetings to take place outside of that.

- 6.47 In response to a question, The Assistant Director (Governance) explained there was a separate item on the agenda that addressed public engagement in more detail.

- 6.48 A Member of the Committee mentioned that the leadership along with the Chief Executive were present at Council meetings and not necessarily at each Policy Committee therefore public engagement at Council should be retained so the Public could direct question/petitions to them if they wished.

- 6.49 The Committee discussed the importance of having flexibility of when Committees meet.

- 6.50 Councillor Alston seconded by Councillor Dale proposed an amendment to the recommendation as follows: -

g) A programme of eight meetings a year of Council and six Policy Committee including the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee, and four formal meetings a year of each Local Area Committee;

- 6.51 The Committee agreed the amendment and then agreed the recommendation as amended.

h) No separate scrutiny committee;

- 6.52 The Assistant Director (Governance) explained the intention for the recommendation was for the Committee to agree that no separate scrutiny committee exist in the new system. Statutory scrutiny functions (and other scrutiny-like functions) would be carried out elsewhere in the structure as highlighted in the report.

- 6.53 The Committee had no comments or questions on recommendation 1h).

- 6.54 The Committee agreed recommendation 1h) as is.

i) Decision review triggered by 40% of the relevant Policy Committee's own membership, with referral to the Strategy & Resources Policy Committee;

- 6.55 The Assistant Director (Governance) stated the enquiry process gave different views on how other authorities triggered a decision review although some were unusual. This recommendation would require for at least 40% of the relevant policy committee's own membership to trigger a decision review. It would then be referred to the Strategy & Resources Policy Committee to review.

- 6.56 Members of the Committee discussed recommendation 1i) and the following comments and questions were made: -

- 6.57 A Member of the Committee stated it shouldn't necessarily be a policy committees' own membership who can call in a decision.

- 6.58 It was mentioned that the threshold of 40% for an individual committee's membership was too high. It was suggested that 30% or a third of the membership may be more reasonable.

- 6.59 The Committee agreed that further consideration be given to the process of decision reviews.

j) A requirement for the Councillor with statutory responsibilities

for children to be the Chair of the Policy Committee with responsibility for Children.

6.60 The Committee did not discuss recommendation 1j).

6.61 The Committee agreed recommendation 1j) as is.

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.

6.62 The Assistant Director (Governance) informed the Committee that recommendation 2 indirectly asked the Committee to consider whether there needed to be a seat for each of the 84 Sheffield Councillors on at least 1 policy committee. It was intended to have somewhere between 8 and 11 seats on each committee depending entirely on best fit with political proportionality, although this Committee could agree to change that bracket if they wished.

6.63 Members of the Committee discussed recommendation 2 and the following points were made: -

6.64 In response to a question, The Assistant Director (Governance) explained that a document had been produced which highlighted the total number of seats, including substitutes across all committees, for the purpose of analysis.

6.65 The Committee agreed recommendation 2 as is.

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;

6.66 The Committee did not discuss recommendation 3.

6.67 The Committee agreed recommendation 3 as is.

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.

6.68 Members of the Committee discussed recommendation 4 & 5 and the following points were made: -

6.69 In response to a question, The Assistant Director (Governance) mentioned that a lot of the aspects within the new system interlink, this is why it was proposed for Council to approve the new model or complete amendments as a whole on the 23 March. If members wanted to approve certain aspects and not others, then it could prove difficult to ensure that the council had an internal consistent decision-making system.

6.70 The Committee noted recommendation 4 and 5 together.

6.71 **RESOLVED:** *That the committee agreed the recommendations set out in the report as follows; (1)*

- 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, is chaired by the Leader of the Council;*
 - 1. *A standing Finance Committee or Sub-Committee, reporting to the Strategy & Resources Committee;*
- c) *Provision for Full Council but not individual Committees to agree the addition of sub-committees to this structure. When sub-committees are agreed they will be time limited or at minimum will be reviewed annually at the AGM, 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 with a mechanism to allow for referrals between them and Policy Committees as necessary and regular informal meetings of local area committee chairs to ensure effective coordination;*
- e) *No change to the committees referred to as Other Committees in the Governance Framework;*
- f) *Ability for scheduled Strategy & Resources Committee meetings to take urgent decisions for the other Policy Committees if the relevant Urgency Sub-Committee has been unable to meet in an appropriate timeframe;*
- g) *A programme of eight meetings a year of Council and six Policy Committee including the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee, and four formal meetings a year of each Local Area Committee;*
- h) *No separate scrutiny committee;*
- i) *That further consideration be given to the process for Decision reviews;*
- 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.*

7. ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

- 7.1 The Committee Received a report of the director of Legal and Governance. The purpose of the report was to update the Committee on the engagement activity that had been undertaken as part of the Transition to the Committee System Programme.
- 7.2 The Head of Policy and Partnerships, Laurie Brennan informed the Committee that various engagement opportunities had taken place, including frequent in-person and virtual conversations with citizens so that public could comment and develop the Committee System. It was mentioned that the Council had received great amounts of crucial feedback from citizens and stakeholders throughout this process, all of which had been factored into the report at item 7 of the agenda.
- 7.3 Paragraph 6 of the report highlighted key messages received throughout the process, which citizens and stakeholders believed needed to be considered as the Council transitioned to a committee system.
- 7.4 Sarah Allan from Involve attended the meeting virtually to update the Committee.
- 7.5 Sarah Allan mentioned that Involve had carried out two round table conversations, one with academics and stakeholders and the other with individuals representing community organisations. Both had similar messages. Those consulted were surprised on the whole that the Council had decided to run a one-off piece of engagement in the proposed manner rather than continuously consulting on how to improve engagement throughout the new system and using information already received through various previous processes.

- 7.6 During the round table exercise, the public also talked about how they would like to see long term engagement implemented in the long term vision for the Council. The 'health champion' work was highlighted as an example of current good practice.
- 7.7 It was mentioned that wider issues were raised during the process which was outside Involve's remit. This were comments dealing with issues such as lack of trust in the Council.
- 7.8 The Head of Policy and Partnerships stated that the Council had now been provided with a lot of good content which gives the Council, with the help of Involve, a perspective on how people wanted to engage.
- 7.9 A Member of the Committee suggested a simplified document be produced on 'how the council works' so that more citizens are informed and understand before they engage, this could also lead to more engagement if more citizens understood what the Council does. Another Member of the Committee explained that information is out there on the WEA website therefore information could be adapted toward the committee system from there.
- 7.10 **RESOLVED:** that the Committee (1) Acknowledges the findings of the public engagement to date and thanks citizens, stakeholders and independent experts for the involvement and contributions to date.
- (2) Acknowledges the findings of the stakeholder roundtable events managed by Involve;
 - (3) Agree that public engagement for the Transition to Committee Programme should proceed as outlined in this report to ensure meaningful findings that support the launch of the new committee system, making best use of the available budget, and aiming to build trust with Sheffielders; and
 - (4) Endorses that the Council need to undertake further public engagement work once the Committees are established, to help test and embed our approach to public engagement with the new Committee structure.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 8.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 22 February 2022.

This page is intentionally left blank