

Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) Chair: Cllr Mick Rooney (2019-20) and Cllr Denise Fox (2018-19)

Principles for governance at Sheffield City Council

In May 2020, the people of Sheffield will be asked in a referendum, whether they want the Council to keep a leader and cabinet model of decision making, or move to a committee system. In March, the Council will publish proposals on how both of the referendum options will work. As part of the process of developing the referendum options, we were asked by Full Council to work with the Deputy Leader to develop a set of principles that to underpin both of the options that are put to the referendum, and present these to Full Council in January 2020. We took a 'Select Committee' approach to this work, gathering evidence from a range of witnesses: experts in local government, local groups with an interest in democracy, the VCF and Business community, Youth Cabinet & Young Advisers, members of the public and Councils who operate different governance arrangements. The key finding to come out of this process was that there is no 'perfect' governance structure – there are advantages and disadvantages to all models – it is how we operate within those structures that will determine how successful they are. We identified 5 ambitions for Sheffield City Council and governance principles and ways of working that will deliver these ambitions. The five ambitions are:

- Strengthening Sheffield City Council's approach to Scrutiny
- A commitment to the highest ethical standards and ensuring that the Code of Conduct reflects this
- Improving Sheffield City Council's approach to communicating about how decision making works
- Ensuring that a commitment to meaningful community engagement, involvement and consultation runs through the organisation
- Improving the information that we provide about how decision making happens across the city as a whole, and how partnerships and boards interconnect.

Ethical Procurement

We've been monitoring the development of the ethical procurement strategy over a number of years and are very pleased with its progress. We were pleased to hear that we have been accredited with the Living Wage Foundation and that Sheffield City Council's policy is more robust than other authorities in terms of enabling us to deal with misconduct issues within groups of companies. In terms of further development we have requested that we try to monitor the number of people with disabilities employed by companies contracted with the Authority and that ethical procurement is included within the Council's performance management framework

Budgets and Finance

This has been a key area of work for us. In October 2018, we took an early look at planning for the 2019/20 revenue budget. We looked at a summary of the financial position, plans in place to address pressures, and the approach to the budget setting process and consultation on the 2019/20 budget. Recognising that the main pressures on council budgets come from social care, in November we considered how we plan to develop stable finances for health and social care services, and we invited NHS Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group to our February meeting to explain how money flows in the NHS. We considered the 2019/20 budget proposals in February. We expressed our concern that continued cuts to local government budgets and rising demand for social care services have led to the planned use of reserves to balance the budget, but we did not recommend any changes or amendments to the proposals. This process has been repeated for 2019/20, with the early look at planning for 2020/21 in September 2019. At this point we considered the need to think creatively about how the Council consults on its budget proposals, whilst recognising the difficulties and further work required on this. We considered 2020/21 budget proposals in February 2020.

Customer Experience Strategy

We took a look at progress on the implementation of the Customer Experience Strategy. We heard about developments to our digital and online services and how the focus will now shift to telephone and face to face services. We are keen to ensure that telephone services are affordable for all, and would like to see initiatives such as call-back services considered through the next phase.

In Brief:

The Committee also considered and commented on:

- Performance Management Framework
- Work based development and wellbeing
- Scrutiny Committees - work programme overview
- The Role of the Lord Mayor
- Report of the House of Commons Select Committee into the effectiveness of Local Authority Overview & Scrutiny Committees
- SCC 2020
- How Money Flows in the NHS and Financial Planning for 2019/20
- Equalities Objectives