

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.

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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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •