



Report to Governance Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report:

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Tel: 0114 2734755

Report of: Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement

Report to: Governance Committee

Date of Decision: 14th December 2023

Subject: Citizen participation and Community Involvement – identifying Member leads

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given?				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Purpose of Report:

This paper seeks to identify cross-party Members representation for a Working Group to lead the transformation of citizen participation and community involvement at Sheffield City Council.

It is intended that the Working Group will include citizen, stakeholder and Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector representation. This proposal is an initial step to identify Elected Member involvement from across the Council, ensuring that we can kickstart activity in early 2024.

Recommendations:

That Governance Committee:

1. Nominate and agree a maximum of five Governance Committee representatives for the community involvement Working Group.

2. Agree for Governance Committee leads to discuss with respective Groups and identify a maximum of two Member representatives per Group (including at least one that sits on a Policy Committee) by Friday 22nd December.
3. Agree to receive a further paper in early 2024 setting out proposed next steps for the community involvement project.

Background Papers:

Six Month Review of New Governance Arrangements,

<https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/b27181/Item%207%20-%20Six%20Month%20Review%20of%20Governance%20Arrangements%20-%20report%20Wednesday%2017-May-2023%2011.30%20Council.pdf?T=9>

Citizen Participation and Community Involvement: next steps,

<https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/b28343/Item%207%20-%20Citizen%20Participation%20and%20Community%20Involvement%20Next%20Steps%20Report%20Wednesday%2022-Nov-2023%201.pdf?T=9>

Lead Officer to complete:-									
1	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;">I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.</td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;">Finance: Matthew Ardern, Senior Finance Manager</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="vertical-align: top;">Legal: Andrea Simpson, Corporate Governance Lawyer</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="vertical-align: top;">Equalities & Consultation: Ed Sexton, Senior Equalities and Engagement Officer</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="vertical-align: top;">Climate: N/A</td> </tr> </table>	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: Matthew Ardern, Senior Finance Manager		Legal: Andrea Simpson, Corporate Governance Lawyer		Equalities & Consultation: Ed Sexton, Senior Equalities and Engagement Officer		Climate: N/A
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	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>								
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Citizen participation and Community Involvement – identifying Member leads

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This paper seeks to identify Member representatives to participate in a cross-party and cross-committee working group to support the Council’s work on transforming its approach to citizen participation and community involvement. It is proposed that the working group will also include and seek to work with citizens and community representatives.
- 1.2 This is an initial step in response to the recommendations agreed by Governance Committee at its meeting on 22nd November 2023.

2. Transforming community involvement: identifying Member leads to work with communities and citizens

- 2.1 At its meeting on the 22nd November 2023, Governance Committee received a draft report from Involve which made clear recommendations for how the Council could improve its practice and approach to community involvement. The recommendations stated that the Council needed an ambitious, shared vision for community involvement which demonstrates why it matters to the organisation and the city. The recommendations also stated that the Council needed to build upon and enhance its engagement practice so that there is a more consistent and coherent approach across the whole organisation.
- 2.2 Governance Committee resolved to:

“set up a schedule of workshops to start the discussions and work on this report, and engages widely with outside communities and brings regular updates to this Committee and reports the outcomes of its discussions to Full Council or S&R and makes recommendations including the commissioning of activity to S&R or Full Council as appropriate.” (Governance Committee, 22nd November 2023).
- 2.3 It is proposed that the above recommendation is taken forward in earnest from the start of 2024, bringing together a coherent programme of activity that:
 - responds to the recommendations set out by Involve and other independent reviews (LGA Peer Challenge, Lowcock, REC);
 - involves communities, stakeholders and VCFSE partners from Sheffield;
 - draws on best practice and independent expertise from within the city and beyond; and

- connects to the Council's transformation programme, Future Sheffield.

2.3 To support the development of this work, it is proposed that we establish a Working Group which should consist of cross-party Member representation citizens, stakeholders and VCFSE partners. The Working Group will provide governance and support for the work over the coming year. Recognising that it will only have a small number of representatives, a key part of the Working Group's responsibility will be to connect to and harness existing community voices and networks in the city, ensuring that there is genuine community insight in the transformation of the Council's approach.

2.4 As an initial step, it is proposed that Governance Committee consider and agree an appropriate approach to identifying Members to be involved in the Working Group. The intention is to ensure we have broad cross-party Member involvement beyond Governance Committee but without making the size of the Working Group unwieldy (especially once community representatives have been identified).

It is suggested this should include:

- **Governance Committee representation** – suggest up to five Members from Governance Committee with up to three from Labour and Liberal Democrats and two from the Green Party and Sheffield Community Councillors.
- **Maximum of two Members from each of the main political Groups** – ideally including at least one Member that sits on a Policy Committee. Group Spokespeople from Governance Committee are asked to collaborate to ensure we identify representation from across Policy Committees and LAC Chairs.

2.5 The intention of the suggested approach above is not to be deliberately restrictive but rather to ensure that there is cross-party Member involvement from across the Council balanced with citizen and community representation. Further, Members on the Working Group are to act as a connecting point for their Groups and Policy Committees (where appropriate), providing updates, sharing ideas, connecting to opportunities in Committee workplans and implementing actions.

2.6 Governance Committee are asked to nominate representatives from the Committee and be part of the working group.

2.7 One representative of each political group is asked to engage their wider group and confirm up to two additional nominations to the Working Group by **Friday 22nd December 2023**.

4. **How does this decision contribute?**

- 4.1 This is an initial step to identify lead Members from across the Council to support the transformation of community involvement at SCC.
- 4.2 This is in direct response to the recommendations of the Six Month Review of Governance Arrangements and the approach agreed by Governance Committee on 22nd November.
- 4.3 Creating an open Working Group with citizen and stakeholder involvement is a vital step and demonstration of the 'People' policy driver in our draft Council Plan, putting people at the heart of our work and involving and engaging citizens in shaping the city's future.

5. **Has there been any consultation?**

- 5.1 This proposal from the insight of citizens and stakeholders who contributed to the Council's governance change, the research and report by Involve and the Six Month Review of Governance Arrangements.
- 5.2 As suggested above, the intention is to fully involve citizens, stakeholders and VCFSE organisations in the proposed Working Group alongside democratically elected Councillors.

6. **Risk analysis and implications of the decision**

6.1 Equality Implications

- 6.1.1 Under the Equalities Act 2010, s149, the authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- (1) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is connected to protected characteristics and prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (2) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not;
 - (3) foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 6.1.2 The way the authority promotes, supports and enables citizen participation and community involvement influences the way the above Duty is met. For example, some considerations in relation to the need to advance equality of opportunity are:
- **Who is participating and being involved** – to what extent does the authority reach and encourage engagement with so-called 'seldom heard' groups? How representative and diverse is this currently? Are appropriate mechanisms consistently used to encourage diverse participation and involvement, (e.g. adjustments, financial, etc)?

- **How participation and involvement take place** – what engagement mechanisms are we encouraging? How accessible, available and appealing are these mechanisms to geographical communities and communities of interest? Are these enabling engagement that is community-led as well as authority-led?
- **When participation and involvement take place** – are we enabling early engagement that might empower communities to help identify issues and solutions? Are we giving people enough time to meaningfully participate and be involved? Are we over-relying on informing people of our plans or consulting on our own ideas rather than jointly developing proposals with communities?

Equality, diversity and inclusion is one of the primary drivers for the approach that is proposed above – ie. to ensure that people from all backgrounds in Sheffield can participate and get involved in the opportunities and issues that matter to them. There is clear evidence in the Race Equality Commission report that we have to do more to make sure that all communities in Sheffield can participate, contribute and play an active role in the city.

6.1.3 There are EDI implications from this report. The Working Group and the developing programme of work must fully involve people from all communities in Sheffield. The resulting change in ambition and practice must enable and support greater participation from different communities in the city.

6.1.4 A full EIA to support the developing programme of activity will be produced.

6.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

6.2.1 The recommendations in this report will be undertaken within existing resources. Activity to implement the recommendations will be prioritised factoring in organisational capacity.

6.3 Legal Implications

6.3.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

6.4 Climate Implications

N/A