

## **Possible Governance structure for post May 2015**

The conclusions from the previous meeting of the Political Structures Working Group included the following:

- Members discussed and agreed the Objectives of the Group
- The Group accepted the need to change the Governance structure, to be more cost effective and enable effective decision making, working with reduced resources
- A Cabinet model was ruled out. The preferred way forward was a One Committee or Hub Committee
- The Group would like to see a stronger Overview and Scrutiny function
- Ensuring Members were not disenfranchised was a significant concern and any future model would have to address this
- The next piece of work would be to look at the Constitution in terms of how a 'Hub Committee' would work, potentially with two Scrutiny Committees – one each for the two strands aligned to the officer structure (Strategy and Commissioning and Customer Delivery)
- Officers were tasked with working up some details to reflect these views before reporting them back to this Group meeting.

**To change the Governance structure to be more cost effective, and take account of the preferred way forward, the Group is asked to consider: -**

### **Size of Single Hub Committee:**

In the event of a politically balanced Hub Committee being introduced, **what does the Group consider would be an appropriate size?.**

To align with the structure of the organisation post T18, it has been suggested that the Committee could consist of 7 Members, to be chaired by the Leader of Council, with the vice-chairman being the Deputy Leader of Council.

### **Lead Members:**

Some Members have given the view that the Committee should be made up of Members who will each have responsibility for specific functions or services within the Council, with these Members presenting reports to Member meetings and being ultimately responsible and accountable for these functions and services. **Does the Group support the principle of Lead Members being in place?**

### **Substitutes:**

If the Group support the principle of Lead Members being in place and a strengthened Overview and Scrutiny Function, this brings into question the potential role of substitutes on the Committee. **Does the Group believe that there should be no provision for substitutes to serve on this Hub Committee?**

### **Frequency of Meetings:**

It is envisaged that the Committee would work in a similar way as the existing Committees, but as one committee there would be no overlap or duplication of work. Any decisions would have to be within the Policy and Budget Framework already agreed by Council, otherwise full Council approval would be needed. In recognising the driver for effective and potentially quick decision-making, it is expected that the Hub Committee would meet approximately 10 times per annum (whilst also maintaining the ability to convene special meetings if deemed necessary). **Does the Group support this suggestion?**

### **To ensure that Members were not disenfranchised, to have a stronger Overview and Scrutiny function and to align Overview and Scrutiny to the officer structure:-**

At the last Group meeting, some Members were of the view that two O&S Committees could be introduced. To align with the T18 Model, one could then oversee Strategy and Commissioning, with the other overseeing Customer Delivery.

Each Committee would be able to set up Task and Finish Groups which would have an overview of the functions within their remit. This would enable T&F Group members to be involved at an early stage in Policy Development and influence the decision making of the Hub Committee.

The Council should aim to have a scrutiny function which adheres to the Centre for Public Scrutiny's four principles of good public scrutiny, as set out below:

- Provides critical challenge to policy makers and decision makers;
- Enables the voice and concerns of the public to be heard;
- Is carried out by 'independent minded governors' who lead and own the scrutiny role; and
- Drives improvement in public services.

A Forward Plan could also be introduced that would enable Members to see in advance the items that were due to be presented to the Hub Committee.

In terms of meeting frequency, it is suggested that the two Committees could each have five meetings scheduled per year, with them alternating and being held two weeks prior to meetings of the Hub Committee. This would enable the O&S Committee to question the Lead Members on the impending item, before the report is published. This would be another way of enabling O&S Committee Members to influence decision making at the earliest possible stage.

With regard to the governance structure, assuming that the Group is minded to support a Hub Committee made up of 7 Members, then:

**Option A** – Each of the 31 Members could have one seat on either the Hub Committee (7 Members) or the two O&S Committees (12 Members on each); or

**Option B** – Each of the 31 Members could have one seat on either the Hub Committee (7 Members), the two O&S Committee (6 Members on each) and the P+L Committee (10 Members).

**What are the Groups views on all of the above?**

As a starter for ten, if the political balance did not change following the next election, the Committee membership would (based upon Option A) be as follows:

	Total Entitlement	Hub Cttee	O&S Strategy & Commissioning	O&S Customer Delivery	Audit	P&L	Standards	DNP	(Check)
(15) Con	27.58 = <b>27</b>	3	6	6	3	5	3	1	<b>27</b>
(10) Ind	18.38 = <b>18</b>	2	3	3	2	4	3	1	<b>18</b>
(2) LibDem	3.67 = <b>4</b>	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	<b>4</b>
(2) Ind Con	3.67 = <b>4</b>	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	<b>4</b>
Independent	1.83 = <b>2</b>	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	<b>2</b>
Independent	1.83 = <b>2</b>	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>57</b>