

THE GOALS FOR A CHANGE IN GOVERNANCE

Based on a series of conversations with Group Leaders, previously summarised at the meeting of the Working Group on 5 November, and further comments at the Member Briefing on 21 November and the Working Group meeting of 25 November the following design principles have been identified for any change in governance, whether that be a modification of the Cabinet model or the adoption of a Committee system:

- 1. Inclusiveness** – more Councillors should be involved in making decisions. Currently, 7 out of the 30 Councillors make decisions in Cabinet. The aim should be to increase the percentage of Councillors who have a role in making policy and service decisions.
- 2. Representation** – currently, some communities in Folkestone and Hythe, represented by the Green, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties, have no representation in the main decision making processes of the Council. Change should ensure that more communities feel represented in the way decisions are made.
- 3. Accountability** – the current system of portfolio holders gives clear accountability and responsibility for the decisions that are made. Any change should ensure that clear accountability remains.
- 4. Effective Scrutiny** – strong scrutiny is to be encouraged. In particular, there should be more emphasis on pre-decision scrutiny to ensure that proposals are explored in detail before decisions are made. In a Committee system this can be achieved through ensuring that each Committee has a clear role in ensuring effective scrutiny. In a Cabinet system, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can have a stronger and more influential role in decision making (eg the Kirklees model) and not just scrutinising decisions once they are made. A process for call in will remain necessary.
- 5. Efficiency** – the current model is reasonably streamlined. Any change should not increase the overall number of meetings that are held in any year and should be mindful of the capacity of Members and officers alike to attend or service meetings. Any change should not lead to any significant increase in the costs of the Council's decision making.
- 6. Transparency** – the forward programme of decisions and the reasons for decisions, once made, should be communicated clearly to all Councillors and to residents and businesses in the Borough. The number of meetings held in private or confidential papers should be minimal.

NOTE: Although 6 separate design principles have been identified, it will be evident that there are inter-linkages between these goals. For example, stronger pre-decision scrutiny also helps deliver greater inclusiveness and representation.