

Governance Working Group

Held at:	Hythe Room, Civic Centre
Date	Thursday, 27 February 2020
Present	Councillors Connor McConville, David Monk, Tim Prater, Rebecca Shoob and Lesley Whybrow
Apologies for Absence	Councillor Ian Meyers
Officers Present:	Amandeep Khroud (Assistant Director), Susan Priest (Head of Paid Service) and Jemma West (Committee Service Specialist)
Others Present:	Councillor Rebecca Shoob. Ian Parry (CfPS)

8. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2019 were agreed as a true record.

9. Goals for Change

The Working Group Members commented on the paper provided by Andrew Campbell of the LGA, and made points including the following:

- There had been significant welcome changes to the Cabinet recently, but these should be constitutionally guaranteed, not just gifted by the Leader, although it was understood that this could not be done under current arrangements and therefore not before May 2021.
- The council was not doing enough to engage with the public. More effective interaction and engagement was needed.

It was agreed that:

- A seventh objective be added that politically balanced decision making be enshrined in the constitution. It was agreed that this principle would be explored but it was necessary to explore this in accordance with legislation and the remit of the constitution.

- Point two relating to representation be amended to make reference to effective engagement with the public.

10. **Summary of Member survey results**

Ian Parry (CfPS) set out a summary of the responses from the survey on governance which had been circulated to members. The survey had received a 63% response rate.

A copy of the [presentation](#) is appended to these minutes.

11. **Best practice examples**

The Head of Paid Service gave a presentation which outlined the headlines of governance arrangements at Tewkesbury, and the Scrutiny arrangements at Devon.

The Working Group agreed that in a committee hybrid model, there still needed to be contingency provision for urgent decisions to be made.

It was agreed:

- **That a site visit/briefing be arranged for both Devon and Tewkesbury Councils.**

12. **Overview and Scrutiny - forward look**

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee gave a presentation setting out proposals to change the way in which the Overview and Scrutiny Committee operates.

Members of the Working Group commented on various issues and made points including the following:

- The call-in thresholds should be reconsidered if there was no opportunity for pre-scrutiny prior to the final decision at Cabinet.
- The forward work programme needs to have some degree of flexibility.
- The number of members to sit on the Performance & Monitoring Sub-Group to be considered.
- The selection process for items needed to be 'hard-nosed' and follow an agreed methodology.

The Assistant Director of Governance and Law advised that the constitution made provisions for topics to be referred to Scrutiny.

The Head of Paid Service advised that the Sub-Group should be made up of a small group of members, possibly

Ian Parry added the following points:

- Scrutiny could deal with topics using task and finish groups but these should be limited to perhaps one at any time due to the resources required to service the group.
- A selection process for work plan items could be implemented following a clear methodology that links the item to key pieces of work that would give clear outcomes of value to the council and the community.
- Elsewhere an annual joint meeting between Scrutiny and Cabinet is held.

The Group Leaders indicated their agreement for the proposals contained within Cllr Shoob's [presentation](#).

13. Report from the Independent Remuneration Panel

The Assistant Director of Governance and Law set out the recommendations from the IRP and invited feedback from the Working Group Members on each recommendation. Members commented as follows:

- 13.1 There was no support at the present time for this recommendation, but should there be a significant change to the constitution, this point should be reconsidered.

The Leader left the meeting for the consideration of the above recommendation.

- 13.2 All Group Leaders should be entitled to the Special Responsibility Allowance, regardless of the group size.

- 13.3 The Working Group supported this recommendation.

- 13.4 The Working Group supported this recommendation.

- 13.5 The Working Group supported this recommendation.

- 13.6 The Working Group supported this recommendation, and the implementation of the Parental Leave Policy as drafted and included in the agenda pack.

- 13.7 The Working Group **did not** support this recommendation.

- 13.8 The Working Group supported this recommendation.

- 13.9 The Working Group supported this recommendation.

The Leader of the Council indicated that he felt the Deputy Leaders SRA points weighting should be increased by 100 points, making 320. The Assistant Director of Governance and Law advised that she would look into this proposal and report back to the group.

Governance Working Group - 27 February 2020

The comments of the group would be reported back to Full Council, along with the report of the IRP.