

Political Group Leaders

October 2014

Governance arrangements – scheduling the annual review

1. It was agreed by Council on 2 April that the new governance arrangements approved at that meeting should be reviewed twelve months after their coming into operation.
2. This report seeks Political Group Leaders' views on the shape and timing of that review. It suggests an approach for discussion and includes a potential timeline. The intention is to identify an approach which is both inclusive and effective.

Background

3. The new governance arrangements, as you will recall, sought to engage all members and to slim down bureaucracy while simultaneously creating a flexible and focused form of governance. This involved reducing the number of scrutiny committees from six to three – Performance, Education and Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny – providing a keener focus.
4. In addition, Council approved the concept of Cabinet Advisory Groups to strengthen and support the Cabinet in policy development. A standing advisory group was created in the form of the Transport Advisory Panel. The remit of the Audit and Governance Committee was also changed to take on the majority of the responsibilities of the former Standards Committee and the Democracy & Organisation Committee, which was ended.
5. At the local level, Council recognised the importance of engaging members in their localities and therefore created nine Locality Meetings with a view to maximising the perspectives of local members and to integrate these into the direction of the Council.
6. In April, the Council also endorsed the creation of a statutory body, the Health and Wellbeing Board, which had existed in shadow form for a year previously.

Basis for a review

7. In changing its governance arrangements, Council wished to ensure that the new arrangements actually achieved the twin aims of engaging members more fully and providing a more focused, integrated approach to policy and performance.
8. Council envisaged that the arrangements should be in place for twelve months before undertaking a review. The arrangements came into effect

after the May 2013 elections and therefore a decision on a review is probably best taken to September 2014 meeting of Council. However, to enable an informed decision, it would be appropriate for key considerations to begin a little earlier than that, in early Spring.

Conclusion and potential way forward

9. It's envisaged that the Audit and Governance Committee, with responsibility for the Council's governance and constitutional arrangements, would be the 'lead' body. But clearly the Cabinet, CCMT and the Performance Scrutiny Committee may also wish to comment on the 'effectiveness' of the new arrangements.
10. Group Leaders are asked to consider the proposed outline and timeline for the governance review, at Annex 1 (below).

Peter Clark

County Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

October 2013.

Annex 1

Potential outline and timeline for the Governance Review

Approach:

1. A working group of three members of the Audit and Governance Committee supported by Claire Phillips, Sue Whitehead, and Glenn Watson – reporting to Maggie Scott and Peter Clark and keeping the Leader/Deputy Leader and the Chairman of the Performance Scrutiny Committee informed. The purpose of the Group being to drive the review, ensuring all essential contributions are considered and that a report reflecting on the effectiveness of the new arrangements and any changes (if any) that may be recommended, is delivered to July 2014 Council.
2. Essential contributors are likely to be: Audit & Governance Committee; Cabinet; CCMT; Performance Scrutiny Committee; Political Group Leaders and Council.
3. Consultation is also envisaged with members engaged in other aspects of the governance arrangements, i.e. to gain 'self-review' perspectives: Locality Meetings (or at least meetings of their chairmen); Health and Wellbeing Board or Steering Group; Education and Joint Health Scrutiny Committees; Cabinet Advisory Group/Transport Advisory Panel.

Timeline:

4. To commence after the budget-setting round is over. Effectively from February 2013 – July 2014.

Preliminaries – Informal views from CCMT, Cabinet and Political Group Leaders from 1-20 February 2014

Lead constitutional view: confirmation of scope/requirements + timeline

- Audit & Governance – 26 February

Main Review –

Informal self reviews and input from:

- Health and Wellbeing Board Members
- Political Group Leaders
- Education Scrutiny Committee Members
- Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members

Formal Consultation - Performance Scrutiny perspective

- Performance Scrutiny Committee – 13 March

Progress Report

- Audit and Governance Committee – mid April

Review Report and Recommendations

- Performance Scrutiny Committee – 26 June
- Audit and Governance Committee – 2 July
- Cabinet – 15 July

FINAL: County Council Decision Meeting

- 9 September
