

Terms of Reference: Governance Review Task Group

Purpose

As a cross-party Task and Finish Group, to provide worked-up recommendations to Political Group Leaders, and to Cabinet, on potential changes to the Council's decision making arrangements.

The review should consider the Council's current and other available models of governance with a view to recommending arrangements that are *transparent, inclusive and reflect the political dynamics* of the Council.

The review should consider such evidence as the Group believes relevant, including:

- the views of current County Councillors e.g. as expressed in the Councillor Survey
- the views of senior officers on the impact on their services.
- the strengths and weaknesses of the various options
- benchmarked information e.g. from other authorities which may already operate any aspects of the model, for instance through visits and/or other methods
- the costs associated with each option

Membership and voting

Membership will be seven members of the Council appointed by Group Leaders on the basis of political proportionality:

- 4 Conservative-Independent Alliance members
- 2 Labour members
- 1 Lib Dem member

It is expected that the Task Group will reach its recommendations through consensus. However, if a vote is needed on the final recommendations to present to Political Group Leaders and to Cabinet, then each member of the Group (present and voting) shall have a vote each. The Chairman will have a second or casting vote.

If the appointed members from each Political Group cannot be in attendance, each Group Leader will be able to appoint a substitute. However, the nature of the Task Group's work would benefit from a consistency of membership.

Quorum

The quorum of each meeting shall be 3 members.

Chairmanship

The Task Group shall appoint a chairman and a deputy chairman at its first meeting, from among its membership, whose terms shall last for the duration of the review.

The Chairman will chair the subsequent meetings; if absent, the Deputy Chairman will chair the meeting. If both are absent, then (if quorate) the meeting will appoint a chairman from those present for the duration of that meeting.

Frequency of meetings

It is expected that Task Group will need to meet several times during October and November. Political Group leaders should be mindful of this when seeking members to serve on the Task Group.

It will be for the Group to determine the length of each meeting – it is expected that these will be between 90 minutes and 2 hours.

Visits to other authorities

In addition to meetings of the Group, it is also expected that the Task Group may wish to undertake visits to other authorities, or to conduct conversations with members and officers of other councils.

It is envisaged that the Group may wish to allocate visits between its members, to maximise coverage. It is suggested that a visit should comprise at least two members of the Task Group.

Publicity

The Task Group will necessarily be exploring options, including potentially radical options. As such, and to allow the Task Group the greatest possible freedom, in the public interest, the meetings of the Group will take place in private session. The final recommendations will of course be made public at Cabinet in any case.

Support

The Task Group will be supported by officers from Law and Governance; and the Council's Policy team as appropriate.

Nick Graham
Director of Law and Governance.