

Minutes

Meeting name	Governance Committee
Date	Monday, 30 April 2018
Start time	5.00 pm
Venue	Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray LE13 1GH

Present:

Chair Councillor P. Cumbers (Chair)

Councillors J. Simpson (Vice-Chair) T. Beaken
M. Blase P. Chandler
J. Douglas P. Faulkner
A. Freer-Jones J. Illingworth

Observers Councillor M. Graham
Councillor T. Greenow
Councillor J. Orson

Officers Chief Executive
Deputy Chief Executive
Director for Corporate Services
Assistant Director for Strategic Planning and Regulatory Services
Senior Democracy Officer
Administrative Assistant Elections & Member Support

Minute No.	Minute
G69	<p>Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Glancy.</p>
G70	<p>Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest.</p>
G71	<p>Governance Review The Chief Executive</p> <p>(a) submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) updating this Committee and requesting comments on the work carried out by the Governance Development Group (the Group), which would form the basis of a further report of the Chief Executive to be considered at an Extraordinary meeting of Council and enabling Members to consider and comment on the deferred items from the Constitution Review 2017/18, which were presented to a meeting of this Committee on 27 March 2018;</p> <p>(b) circulated additional copies of Appendices A, B and D of the report, with recent amendments highlighted yellow on the Appendices;</p> <p>(c) provided an overview of the report, including some background to the Governance Review. Following the Local Government Association's Peer Challenge in December 2017, a report, a list of recommendations and an action plan was accepted by Full Council on 22 February 2018. One of the recommendations was to improve the Council's governance and decision making arrangements. The Local Government Association carried out a further review of this function between 12 and 14 March. The remit of the review was to explore where the Council could improve, streamline and clarify its policy development, committee system and decision making arrangements. A peer Member and an officer from the Local Government Association met with Members and officers involved in supporting the decision making processes. They then provided a report, which was submitted to a meeting of this Committee on 27 March. At the meeting this Committee supported the establishment of an informal Member/officer group (the Group) and tasked it with bringing forward proposals to both strengthen and streamline the current committee structure creating a clearer route for policy development;</p> <p>(d) advised that the Group's proposals were submitted to this meeting for Member comment and these would be circulated as an addendum for the Extraordinary Council meeting on 8 May;</p> <p>(e) highlighted the following proposed changes to the committee structure:-</p>

- i. There would be a change to the number of policy committees, to realign them with the new corporate structure and corporate priorities. Corporate Committee, People Committee and Place Committee would replace Policy, Finance and Administration Committee, Community and Social Affairs Committee, Melton Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee and Town Area Committee. Attempts had been made to minimise potential for duplication and create clear scope and responsibility for all matters within the remit of the committees, including policy setting, delivery and performance etc
 - ii. Town Area Committee would be removed. The Local Government Association found that the role of this Committee was not widely understood and created significant overlaps of responsibilities with other committees. This was frustrating for Members. Removing it and incorporating its responsibilities within the other committees would help remove duplication and improve clarity of responsibilities. The aim was to support and work towards the development of a Town and Place Partnership with more stakeholder involvement and a focus on regeneration and tourism. First steps towards this would be the establishment of a steering group, which would include the Chair and Vice Chair of the Place Committee alongside other stakeholders.
 - iii. It had been necessary to review some functions within other committees. This had been particularly relevant to the Governance and Planning Committees and the revised Terms of Reference were set out at Appendix B and C of the report.
- (f) advised that the Local Government Association's Review had also highlighted the role of Members (particularly the Leader and the Committee Chairs) in policy development for this Council. There was no recognised informal policy development route prior to discussion and debate at formal committee meetings. The Group felt it was appropriate to create a Policy Forum (comprising of the Leader, Deputy Leader, Chairs and Vice Chairs of the policy committees) and a Regulatory Forum (comprising of the Leader, Deputy Leader, Chairs and Vice Chairs of the regulatory committees) and as a consequence proposed that the Conservative Chairs Group no longer meet;
- (g) highlighted the proposed removal of Lead Members and Champions on external groups. It was felt that these roles should align with the Chair and Vice Chair of the relevant committees. However, there would be potential to appoint a different Member if there was a business reason to do so
- (h) confirmed that future work of the Development Group would go to Extraordinary Council on 8 May for Members' consideration.
- (i) highlighted that comments on the remaining outstanding items from the Constitution Review 2017/18, as set out at Appendix D would be reported to Extraordinary Council on 8 May.

A Member queried how the role of the Chair of Town and Place Partnership would work and the Chief Executive advised that the Partnership needed broad appeal, with involvement of a wide range of stakeholders to maximise impact. The Council would play a key role through influence, rather than direct control. It was felt that the Chair of the Partnership should be from the private sector, to act as an ambassador for business in Melton, as this would increase credibility regionally and nationally.

Another Member noted that the words 'policy, delivery, performance including complaints were part of the terms of reference of each policy committee. The Chief Executive confirmed that although performance was currently reported to Members via the Performance Management and Information Task Group, the intention was for it to be reported to each committee, with complaints forming part of the report. This would ensure that the relevant committee would not only be responsible for making policy and delivering services but also would receive regular reports on performance within their remit. This would include complaints as this was part of performance feedback. He added that there would still be a periodic check by the Governance to ensure that trends were identified and this Committee would provide an independent check and overview of complaints at least on an annual basis. Also, not only would performance be reported to committees formally but to all Members as well via the soon to be expanded Members' Bulletin.

With regard to the Review of the Constitution, a Member asked if the delegations at Appendix D, item 6, which referred to Melton Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee would realign to the Place Committee. The Chief Executive confirmed that the delegations would realign to the Place Committee as a consequence of Full Council's approval of the governance review. The Monitoring Officer had delegated authority to make minor procedural and operational changes and this type of amendment would be necessary throughout the Constitution where these committee name changes were required.

A Member queried if the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership would be the Chair of the relevant committee and would this follow through for other chairing roles. The Chief Executive advised that to ensure understanding of the people agenda, it would make sense that the Lead for the Community Safety Partnership would be the People Committee Chair. Whilst there was a presumption that the Chairs should take certain roles, the report included an element of discretion, enabling the ruling group to consider practicalities or other issues and confirm their own appointments. The Governance Development Group felt that wherever possible, the default position should be the Chair of the relevant committee, so that they were part of the wider community agenda and were able to develop the overall knowledge within their committee's remit to help inform policy direction. The Leader would consider this as part of the allocation of roles across the Council.

A Member asked what would happen to the work of the Performance Management and Information Task Group. Members had been impressed by the quality of the information received at the Task Group but understood it was not widely shared.

The Chief Executive advised that this Task Group would not be reconstituted. Currently, this Council did not publicise its performance and it should be publicly accountable and transparent in this area. Therefore, the host committees would receive quarterly reports and there would be informal briefings in the Members' Bulletin. Over the last six months, officers had been working on specific scorecards; one for the place and one for the organisation. There would be a member of Senior Management Team present at each Committee meeting to ensure matters relating to performance progress.

Another Member commented that realigning performance to individual committees was a huge positive for this Council. It was a key change as 'visibility brings accountability'.

A Member asked why the Wheels to Work scheme was aligned to the Place Committee rather than the People Committee and the Chief Executive confirmed that this was due to the senior management reporting structure and it was acknowledged that the work straddled both People and Place Committees.

A Member referred to the remit of the Place Committee at Appendix A of the report, querying why 'Licensing resources' had been highlighted. Had it previously been aligned to another Committee? The Chief Executive confirmed that this was for clarification on where the financial and policy areas of licensing were placed.

Another Member noted that there would be less business at future committee meetings and asked how the public would know how Members made their decisions. The Chief Executive advised that committees would deal with all the business within their remit. Members would have the same opportunity to consider matters and make decisions publicly but 'updates' would not be brought to committee meetings. These would be communicated in a different way, as this Council was developing a greater focus on corporate and external communications.

The Chair highlighted the recommendation at 2.2 of the report and invited Members to comment and ask questions. There were no comments or questions forthcoming from Members. Members agreed that the report had been given full and appropriate consideration.

The Chief Executive reminded Members of the Members' Briefing on the governance proposals, to be held on Thursday, 3 May at 5:30pm.

RESOVED that

- (1) this Committee's comments on the work carried out to date by the Group, which will form the basis of a report from the Chief Executive to the Extraordinary meeting of the Council on 8 May 2018, regarding the future governance of this Council be reported to the Extraordinary Council meeting;
- (2) this Committee's comments on an amended Appendix D from the Constitution Review 2017/18, which was previously presented to this Committee on 27 March 2018 and is to form part of the Chief Executive's

	report to the Extraordinary meeting of the Council be reported to the Extraordinary Council Meeting.
G72	Urgent Business There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at: 5.35 pm

Chair