

Governance Committee Item 80 Appendix 4

Summary of consultation responses - Members – January 2009

<p><b>What has gone well?</b></p>	<p>Housing Management and Planning Committees working well</p> <p>More open and transparent</p> <p>Quicker decision making</p> <p>Closer liason with Officers</p> <p>More informed</p> <p>The transition to the new Constitution went smoothly</p> <p>The openness of Cabinet Member Meetings</p> <p>Audit and Licensing and some other Regulatory Committees, including Standards, operating well and inclusively</p> <p>Decisions made more quickly</p> <p>Introduction of political assistants</p> <p>Introduction of webcasting (but technical problems remain)</p> <p>The principle of the Forward Plan (but not been able to get the reports)</p>
<p><b>Cabinet Meetings and Cabinet Member Meetings</b></p>	<p>Would like more debate at Cabinet and Cabinet Member Meetings</p> <p>Difficult for Members to raise issues/speak at these meetings.</p> <p>Physical layout not welcoming or inclusive – a more inclusive approach would be welcomed</p> <p>Redesign the seating arrangements in meetings which are perceived to be hostile and unwelcoming</p> <p>Access to information and opportunity for debate greatly reduced</p> <p>Would like to be able to speak at these meetings as of right</p> <p>Grant speaking rights at all public and private Cabinet Member meetings</p>

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	<p>A disproportionate amount of responsibility allotted to the principal opposition group</p> <p>Should allow cross party involvement at these meetings – ie a seat at the table for Greens and Lib Dems</p> <p>Opposition Parties need access to Officer briefing on Cabinet papers</p> <p>Involve main spokespeople of all parties in Chair's briefings</p> <p>Cabinet meetings too confrontational</p>
<b>Decisions /agendas at Cabinet and Cabinet Member meetings</b>	<p>Not enough business on some CMM agendas</p> <p>Agendas for some meetings very thin</p> <p>Difficult to justify resources spent on CMMs.</p> <p>Decisions should either be taken at Cabinet or by the Member and reported to Cabinet</p> <p>Lack of seat at the table at these meetings means do not attend</p> <p>Decisions driven further from (non Cabinet) Members and the public gaze</p> <p>Revisit the officers' delegated powers to see how they have been affected by the introduction of the Cabinet system</p>
<b>Community Affairs and Inclusion</b>	<p>Lack of CMM for this portfolio means there is no place for a dialogue on these issues</p>
<b>Special Cabinet Meetings</b>	<p>Need clarity on when these can be called and how</p>
<b>Council – Notices of Motion</b>	<p>Clarify what NOMs can cover</p> <p>Too many hoops to get through – Members should be able to ask the Administration to consider action</p>

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<p><b>Council</b></p>	<p>Council is the only forum for genuine debate</p> <p>Council is being used instead of Cabinet/CMM to debate issues</p> <p>There should be more Full Council meetings</p> <p>Report substantive decisions to Council for review</p> <p>NOMS/questions and supplementaries escalating</p> <p>Opportunities to debate major issues are limited to five general council meetings a year – should increase number to 11 per year</p> <p>Urgency Committee of Council should be politically proportionate</p>
<p><b>Scrutiny</b></p>	<p>Clarify limits on number of panels to ensure not overloaded</p> <p>Look at other models eg Birmingham to improve understanding and best use of scrutiny</p> <p>The Scrutiny Commission needs to operate more as a filter for the work of Panels and ensure that work is not duplicated with work already underway</p> <p>The OSC has not undertaken work requested of them</p> <p>Clarify the role of OSC</p> <p>Reduce the number of reports for noting where no action from scrutiny requested.</p> <p>Policy development role is not embedded.</p> <p>Too many reports to note.</p> <p>Forward Plan timing not effective to assist with work programme.</p> <p>Need training for Officers and Members and look at other models that are working well</p> <p>A disproportionate allocation to the principal opposition group re Chairs/Deputy Chairs</p>

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	<p>Not on top of how scrutiny works</p> <p>Pre decision policy development role not working</p> <p>Comments made by Scrutiny Panels not taken to Cabinet</p> <p>In practice scrutiny has very little direct power or influence</p> <p>Ensure urgent decisions cannot be made exempt from call-in</p> <p>Separate Scrutiny Committees for ASC and Housing</p> <p>Separate Scrutiny Committees for Environment &amp; Community Safety</p>
<p><b>Regulatory Committees</b></p>	<p>Change the size of Regulatory Committees to odd numbers</p>