

Democracy Commission

Thursday 5 August 2010
6.00 pm
Southwark Town Hall

Membership

Councillor Abdul Mohamed (Chair)
Councillor Anood Al-Samerai
Councillor Columba Blango
Councillor Mark Glover
Councillor Michael Mitchell
Councillor Helen Morrissey
Councillor Cleo Soanes

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

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	<p>The meeting of the 12 July 2010 considered best practice from a number of authorities who had carried out similar reviews; South Tyneside, Nottingham City Council, Birmingham City Council and Bath & North East Somerset . All had reviewed their assemblies. Summaries or full reports are attached.</p>	
4.	EVIDENCE FROM THE LEADERS OF THE POLITICAL GROUPS	
	<p>The Labour group leader & Leader of the Council; Cllr Peter John has confirmed his attendance.</p> <p>The Liberal Democrat leader; Cllr Anood Al-Samerai has confirmed her attendance.</p> <p>The Conservative group may attend this meeting or present evidence at a different stage.</p>	
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	<p>The last meeting requested more information on what decision making powers could be transferred to the Council Assembly or delegated to other bodies; such as Community Councils.</p> <p>Ian Mark; Senior Lawyer, Governance Team will attend to take questions.</p>	
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Date: 27 July 2010

Democracy Commission business meeting 6 July 2010

1. PRESENT

Councillor Abdul Mohamed (Chair)
Councillor Cllr Anood Al-Samerai
Councillor Columba Blango
Councillor Mark Glover
Councillor Helen Morrissey
Councillor Cleo Soanes

2. OFFICER SUPPORT

Sharon Beckwith - Business and Performance Planning Officer
Stephen Douglass - Head of Community Engagement
Julie Timbrell –Democracy Commission and Scrutiny Project Manager

3. INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME (CHAIR)

The Chair introduced himself and welcomed those present at the meeting and asked officers and members to introduce themselves. He asked that members recognise the great opportunity they had in front of them and that they respect and trust each other. He reminded them that the subject of this first part the commission's work would be the council assembly, asked that their work be focused, practical and meaningful and reminded them that the commission should aim to minimise spending.

4. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf Councillor Michael Mitchell

5. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

There were no urgent items of business.

6. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

None were disclosed.

7. Agenda pack

It was noted that the report included in the agenda pack was not the final version. The report that was distributed led to some confusion as it stated that the commission would appoint a Chair at its first meeting whereas the final adopted version stated that Councillor Mohamed had been appointed as Chair by the Cabinet. Stephen Douglass apologised for the mistake and confirmed that the correct version would be emailed to members after the meeting.

RESOLVED

- That officers would circulate the final version of the Cabinet report of 15 June 2010 pertaining to the establishment of the Democracy Commission.
- That for future meetings documents in the agenda pack should be numbered.

8. Underlying Issues

- 8.1. Cllrs Al-Samerai and Blango questioned the composition of the commission and expressed regret that it was not independently chaired, that there were independent members and that the ruling party had sought an assured majority. Cllr Al-Samerai asked for an explanation of rationale behind the make-up of the commission that seemed undemocratic and requested that the Cabinet reconsider. It was noted that Cllr Al-Samerai wrote to the Leader of the Council to express these concerns. Despite these concerns members welcomed the appointment of the Chair. Cllr Blango noted that the commission members had not had the opportunity to consider the Cabinet report together and decide what should be brought out of it.
- 8.2. The Chair explained that the cabinet was keen to have ownership of commission's output and to keep its spending and the scope of its enquiries under control. He reiterated the cabinet's commitment to reviewing the set-up and the work of the commission at the end of the first stage which would allow for members to put forward their concerns and ideas for improvement in subsequent stages. Cllr Glover reminded members that proportionality ensured it would reflect the democratic make-up of the council and that members were acting as party representatives but added that he hoped the commission would not be whipped. Cllr Morrissey made the point that regardless of party politics all the members had a shared interest in increasing participation in democracy. The Chair assured members that the draft documents put to them at the meeting were officers' interpretation of the Cabinet's recommendations and that they were free to agree changes, additions and deletions.
- 8.3. They considered the reasons for starting with the council assembly. It was suggested that it could be considered the council's primary or supreme meeting and the only forum in which all 63 elected members take part; that a large part the public and media tend to identify the council with its full meeting and that some may see it as being far removed from the public's reach. It was also argued on the other hand that the strong executive model reduced the powers of the full assembly and it would therefore be necessary to look into the implications of past, current and planned legislation on its potential impact.

9. Terms of reference

- 9.1. Members considered a draft terms of reference. The Chair explained that the document was intended as a starting point and that they should agree on what to keep, add, delete or change. It was noted that the terms of reference should be as simple as possible so they could be easily understood by all and used to inform the public about the democracy commission.
- 9.2. Cllr Al-Samerai questioned whether the council assembly was an appropriate forum to try to engage the public with. She made the point that its powers and way of working were heavily dependent on national level policy and so requested that that it be within the scope of the commissions first task to

make recommendations at a national as well as at a local level. The Chair noted that establishing what, if anything, can be done to make the assembly more engaging was precisely what the Commission was tasked with.

- 9.3. Members questioned the bullet-point referring to a 'joint communication and engagement strategy promoting the new style council assembly meetings'. It was agreed that it would not be appropriate to recommend a whole strategy for the first task of the commission and that the phrase 'new style council assembly' was unhelpful and pre-empted the commission's work.
- 9.4. There was a discussion about the review of the commission's work. It was pointed out that point 7 of the Cabinet Report (15 June 2010) states that a review and recommendations for future phases of its work be presented to Cabinet and the Assembly in October, that is at the same time as it presents its recommendations on the council assembly. Cllr Glover expressed a view that this was neither practical nor useful.
- 9.5. Members discussed the likely cost of the commission's work and what budget was available. It was clarified that as stated in the Cabinet Report (15 June 2010), there was no additional budget associated with the commission but it was recognised that there would necessarily be some cost associated with its work. The Chair confirmed that costs would be kept to an absolute minimum and would come out of existing budgets. Members hoped that spending would be closely monitored. The Chair proposed that they might at the next meeting decide to task individual commission members to keep an eye on this and other key issues.

RESOLVED

That subject to the following, the terms of reference were agreed:

- Consideration of the national context and recommendations on national policy should be included in the terms of reference.
- The bullet point on a joint communications and engagement strategy be removed.
- It be made clearer which points refer to the commission's first task and which refer to its review.
- That a competent officer to be identified by Stephen Douglass to provide evidence on the relevant government policy.
- That Cllr Mohamed will request of Cabinet that the report be amended to allow submission of the review to be at a later council assembly.
- That mechanisms would be agreed to ensure that costs were kept in check.

10. Methods to be used by the Commission and workplan

- 10.1. Stephen Douglass summarised the draft discussion papers on suggested methods and potential sources of evidence which covered select-committee style hearings that would be held in public with some public participation and other more engaging and participatory ways to collect evidence.
- 10.2. He confirmed that a focus group could be set up in time for the next council assembly meeting (14 July). Members were enthusiastic about the later and stressed that the composition of the group was very important and

care should be taken to make it fully representative of the borough's population.

- 10.3. There was a discussion about the aims, subject and nature of the next meeting on 12 July 2010. Stephen Douglass explained that due to the short timeframe, potential witnesses have been provisionally invited and venue pre-booked subject to commission members' agreement; that although Cllr Mohamed proposes that it be open to the public, it was not appropriate to publicise it before the commission had reached agreement on this.
- 10.4. Members questioned whether the proposed subject of 'Strategic and legal perspectives on the relationship between Council and the public' was appropriate for a public meeting that aimed to engage residents with the commission's work.
- 10.5. There was concern about there not being enough time a) to allow members to thoroughly consider all the relevant documents before deciding on the format and content of the first public meeting (Cllr Blango) or b) to give the public sufficient notice (Cllr Al-Samerai). Both councillors expressed regret that the commission may be missing an opportunity to fully involve the public from the outset, finding out how they would like the Commission to proceed.
- 10.6. The Chair stated that the primary aim of the first meeting was not necessarily to engage the public but to inform the commission whilst allowing for and welcoming the public's participation. He reassured members that rationale for proceeding in this way was to establish boundaries to the commission's work but that there would be opportunities to use much more engaging methods later on. Cllr Al-Samerai hoped that the format would allow for members to put questions to officers freely.
- 10.7. It was agreed that care needed to be taken in publicising the meeting appropriately so as not to raise expectations of full engagement at this point.
- 10.8. Members confirmed that a detailed workplan should be agreed at the next meeting and that it should include desk research to be carried by officers with recommendations of good practice, carefully considered outreach by commission members and officers in August and September according to availability and use of internet based and social media. Outreach should target people who already have some knowledge of how the council assembly works (e.g. councillors and people who have already attended council assembly) as well as the wider public.

RESOLVED

- That a focus group that is representative of Southwark's population be set up in time to attend the 14 July council assembly meeting.
- That the outputs of the meeting on 12 July would include a) a list of questions that could be used to find out what residents think about key issues related to the council assembly, and b) a simplified version of the agreed terms of reference that could be used to inform people about the democracy commission, and c) agreement on how to launch the commission's work.
- That Julie Timbrell will email commission members and gather details of their availability in July and August.
- That members should email the Chair with any ideas and issues they have regarding the terms of reference or the workplan.

- That in terms of outreach, events to consider attending should have a local, community-based focus, such as Tennants and Residents Association events and that time constraints (such as school term times) need to be considered in the workplan.
- That the multi faith forum be added to the list of bodies to included in consultations.



DEMOCRACY COMMISSION

MINUTES of the Democracy Commission held on Monday 12 July 2010 at 6.00 pm at Cambridge House, 131 Camberwell Road, London SE5 OHF.

PRESENT: Councillor Abdul Mohamed (Chair)
 Councillor Anood Al-Samerai
 Councillor Columba Blango
 Councillor Mark Glover
 Councillor Michael Mitchell
 Councillor Helen Morrissey
 Councillor Cleo Soanes

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT: Mr Les Alden

OFFICER SUPPORT: Shelley Burke, Head of Overview & Scrutiny
 Stephen Douglass, Head of Community Engagement
 Ian Mark, Senior Lawyer - Governance Team
 Ian Millichap, Constitutional Manager
 James Postgate, Principal Strategy Officer

1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

1.1 The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced himself and asked everyone present to introduce themselves.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2010 be circulated to members for agreement at the next meeting.

3. APOLOGIES

- 3.1 Apologies for lateness were received from Councillors Anood Al-Samerai and Mark Glover.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The chair informed members that the report from this body would be received at the October 2010 meeting of the Council Assembly.

Mr Les Alden stated that he hoped the committee would be open to new ideas regarding public participation with the council.

RESOLVED:

That the terms of reference for the Democracy Commission were agreed.

5. COUNCIL ASSEMBLY'S ROLE AND SCOPE FOR CHANGE

- 5.1 The Constitutional Manager presented this item concerning background information on the council assembly's role and scope for change. The Senior Lawyer was also present to address any legal issues which may arise from members' questions.
- 5.2 The officer pointed out that the key aspects of council assembly were contained under paragraph 5 of the report, which included budget setting and the policy framework.
- Council assembly sets policy framework i.e. (planning and licensing) and has added community councils to the framework.
 - Council assembly has delegated some matters to cabinet, which in turn can delegate down to community councils such as the cleaner greener fund.
- 5.3 It was pointed out to members that over the last few years the number of meetings have been reduced, but this year one extra meeting has been called for October 2010 so there are now currently a total of 7 meetings scheduled for this year.
- 5.4 It should be noted that if changes were made to council assembly, it should also recognise that for each meeting there is only a limited amount of time (3 hours).
- 5.5 The current forms of public participation include:
- Petitions: new rules from central government set out where and when a petition is heard by the council i.e. depending on the number of signatories it will have to be heard either by a community council, the council assembly or the cabinet. In general the new rules are quite prescriptive but there are some changeable elements e.g. thresholds set for the number of signatures.
 - Deputations: (1) only allowed if there is a relevant report on the agenda to be decided on at that session (otherwise the deputation would be advised to submit a request to a community council or cabinet). (2) Strict time rules : 5 minutes speaking, 5 minutes for questions.

- Public Questions
- 5.7 Members then heard from the Senior Lawyer (Governance Team) who explained decisions were in fact driven by the council's executive. This had replaced the previous style under the local government act 1972, where members carried out council business through committees and sub-committees.
- 5.8 The local government act 2000 has allowed the executive/cabinet decision making powers. Part of the idea had been to reduce the number of meetings. The system was made to be more efficient, and more clear to the public, with a small number of members making decisions.
- 5.9 Scrutiny was set up to monitor and check executive decisions. Any item decision made by the executive/cabinet can be called in under the call-in process.
- 5.10 Members were informed that council assembly was not the only decision making body. The others were:
- Individual member decision
 - Cabinet
 - Planning committee
 - Licensing committee
 - Community council
- 5.11 In response to questions regarding empowering community councils, the officer reported that central government wants to give more decision making powers to community councils and would allow councils to go back to the old committees if they wish or retain cabinet arrangements. The authority has to operate legally and essentially council assembly and cabinet can devolve some decisions down to community councils or another body.
- 5.12 The officer reported that with regards to petitions and deputations'. What used to happen was that a deputation would be submitted, this would provide a motion to council assembly where it would be heard and debated, which would impact on the rest of the agenda. The motion would then be referred to the cabinet for decision, so members would indeed need more meetings which would impact on the budget.
- 5.13 Members were informed that council assembly cannot override cabinet decisions, but overview and scrutiny committee can call-in any decisions.
- 5.14 Les Alden stated that questions and answers to cabinet members should be published on the Southwark website.
- 5.15 Councillor Glover stated that decisions were not taken at council assembly meetings where public concerns were raised. More people would attend meetings if they could be heard and the council could make decisions which were binding.

RESOLVED: That officers provide to members a list of things that council assembly can and cannot do. A report would be provided that would detail what powers could be delegated to Council Assembly from Cabinet etc and what decision making powers could be moved to other bodies , such as Community Councils.

6. LEARNING FROM SCRUTINY ELSEWHERE – HOW OTHER COUNCILS HAVE IMPROVED THEIR COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

- 6.1 The Head of Overview & Scrutiny presented a review of other councils; reporting that in particular four other councils (South Tyneside, Nottingham City Council, Birmingham City Council and Bath & North East Somerset) had reviewed their assemblies through scrutiny reviews.
- 6.2 The three roles for full council meeting were policy framework decisions, holding the executive to account and demonstrating community leadership.
- 6.3 The four common themes were :
- How to express community leadership – state of the borough type reports, leader’s annual look back/look forward – cutting across partnership themes – encouraging partners to come and address council meetings. This raises the question of where do citizens come into the picture?
 - Varying the styles of meetings e.g. Nottingham were developing different styles of council meetings for different purposes (participation of different interest groups, debating issues with partners with the council in committee mode).
 - Communicating the work and work programme of the council meeting (advance planning, webcasting).
 - Holding the cabinet to account – how do full council and scrutiny’s role complement one another.
- 6.4 The officer reported that Southwark was the first to undertake executive/cabinet member interviews in its scrutiny committees. Executive members were willing to open up and debate issues with backbenchers in a dialogue that was more manageable in a relatively small committee than it might be at council assembly.
- 6.5 Members discussed how the council could engage with the community and those groups which do not normally attend council meetings. It was suggested that other councils have done this through webcam on the council website, one council received 3,500 hits regularly. Another suggestion was to stop public questions at meetings, instead public questions along with the answer should be posted on the council website or through webcasting. It was reported that the GLA and Camden had provided webcasting successfully.
- 6.6 The officer stated that there were different models used by other authorities for public questions.

- 6.7 Members discussed having themed meetings and agreed that this would be a good way forward and arranging a meeting later in the year, it was felt that this would attract people to attend, it was also felt that new initiatives were needed to be taken on by the council and this would be explored.

7. WORKPLAN

- 7.1 The Head of Community Engagement introduced the work-plan for the Democracy Commission and stated that this was a draft document outlining dates which needed to be firmed up for future action.
- 7.2 Members were informed that the commission is to participate in Southwark Youth Council and Youth Community Councils Summer Event on Monday 23rd August 2010.

It was reported that Saturday 4th September 2010 would consist of two parts :

- Public hearing which would be community focused event engaging others in Council decision making
 - Public seminar to present and review evidence (including conclusions drawn from workshops and focus groups so far, video footage and feed back from events and outreach activities.
- 7.3 The programme highlighted the months July – October 2010, members expressed concern that some dates may clash with conference dates for the political groups.
- 7.4 Members also expressed a wish to engage all 8 community councils views into the report to council assembly, which is scheduled for 20th October 2010.
- 7.5 The commission was informed that a group of residents (12-20) who have never attended council assembly will be attending the focus group workshop on Wednesday 14 July 2010 .
- 7.6 Member discussed the short timescale to cover all aspects of the work-plan and decided there was a need to meet as many deadlines as possible.

This report was noted.

8. QUESTIONNAIRE

- 8.1 Members viewed the draft questionnaire and stated that people attending meetings will have seen the document and it will also be included at workshop meetings.
- 8.2 Members discussed that the questionnaire needed to generate data to produce both quantifiable and qualifiedly data that can be collated and used in the report to council assembly. The officer informed members that this was the start of the process and more details would be included as the process picked up. Members

stated that generic branding with the right level of questions were required.

- 8.3 It was reported that the commission web page is up and running and the questionnaire can be loaded onto it for the public to access the document.
Members wanted the public to access the document and feed their thoughts back to the council.

The document was noted.

Councillor Columba Blango gave his apologies for the meeting of the 4th September 2010.

The meeting ended at 8.10 pm



Members and the Full Council

5 April 2005

Report to City Council

The Role of Members and of the Full Council



Further copies of this report can be obtained from:

Scrutiny Officer: **Gail Sadler**
☎: **0121-303-1901**
E-mail: gail.sadler@birmingham.gov.uk

Reports that have been submitted to Council can be downloaded from

www.birmingham.gov.uk/scrutiny.



Members and the Full Council

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Members and the Full Council

Preface

By Councillor Michael Wilkes

Chair, Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee
05 April 2005



Throughout the city, the full City Council would generally be perceived as the sovereign body governing the work of the local authority. Those of us who have been elected to the Council realise, of course, that since the Local Government Act 2000 there are twin streams of legitimacy – the Executive has one set of powers to propose policy and budgets and to take decisions, the City Council another to carry out some non-Executive functions and to set the budget and policy framework within which the Executive acts.

This is a good time to look at how the arrangements flowing from the 2000 Act are working in practice. It is apparent that nationally many elected Members have felt disempowered, and this view has some echoes locally. The purpose of bringing this report today is to allow all Members the opportunity to highlight how they could be better equipped to perform their roles as elected representatives. It is also a chance to shape the organising and business of full Council meetings for the next municipal year. My Committee would then propose to continue its work and pursue further areas in which an increasing number of Members can undertake what they would consider to be a more fulfilling role.

Many Members have already made an input during the course of the review, and I would like to thank them for their contributions. I am also grateful to the Chief Executive, the Strategic Director Local Services and the Chief Legal Officer for discussing the issues with the Committee, to the Scrutiny Office team of John Cade and Nick Partridge, and to Phil Cooper who captures our discussions so ably and accurately.

Michael Wilkes



Members and the Full Council

1 Summary

- 1.1.1 The Local Government Act 2000 radically changed the nature of local government by introducing the system of a powerful executive, of no more than 10 elected members, having its own statutory remit and taking the majority of decisions. Whereas the full council meeting was previously the ultimate decision maker, this is no longer the case and full council now has relatively few decision making powers. Birmingham City Council was an early adopter of some of the measures in the Act and has been operating full executive arrangements since December 2001.
- 1.1.2 Over the last two years, research evidence has emerged which shows that across the country non-executive councillors feel relatively disengaged from the new system. Similarly, many authorities have reported a struggle to find a role for the full Council. Locally, there is a perception that not all Members feel properly informed about decisions and matters affecting their ward and important developments in the city as a whole. This has been highlighted in several Overview and Scrutiny reports, along with its complement – that Members often hold important information about needs, conditions and service performance in their wards which it is felt is not always used constructively by the officer body. More generally, the skills and experience of backbench Members may not be being utilised to the benefit of the City Council.
- 1.1.3 For both national and local reasons, this appeared to be an appropriate time, therefore, to look into the current arrangements. We wished to assess how well these are supporting the roles of elected Members, particularly in effective representation of constituents' views.
- 1.1.4 The two key questions we set out to answer were:
- Do elected Members consider that there are ways in which, both individually and collectively in a meeting of the full City Council, they could play a more effective role in Birmingham's local democracy?
 - What improvements in the flow of information would be of particular benefit to Members?



Members and the Full Council

- 1.1.5 We looked at national research and guidance on both the role of full council meetings, including innovative practice elsewhere, and on support services for Members. The latter includes the full range of support including accommodation, information and communications technology, allowances and training. Many authorities, it appears, are struggling to find a role for the full council meeting. Some authorities have experimented with trying to involve the public directly in the meeting; others have attempted to foster discussion and deliberation rather than debate. As far as Members' roles are concerned, the research evidence is clear that, of all the groups involved in local government, non-executive councillors are the most dissatisfied with the new arrangements.
- 1.1.6 Specific inquiries were made about practice in the other Core Cities. There are some interesting differences between them; some have a successful public question time at full council, whilst another has abandoned that. The most striking practice concerned the provision of a wide range of ward-based information to Members.
- 1.1.7 This all provided benchmarks against which we could look at our own practice in Birmingham City Council. We considered the business of the full Council meeting over the last five years, paying particular attention to debates and decisions on the Policy Framework – the setting of which is potentially a major power remaining to the full Council.
- 1.1.8 We considered it to be very important that all Members had an opportunity to put forward constructive suggestions for improvement, and commissioned MORI to undertake a short exercise in which twenty-two Members took part. MORI found a degree of disengagement among some councillors because of the nature of the non-executive role under the present arrangements, and a need to empower Members to undertake their role as effectively as possible.
- 1.1.9 It is important to respond to these and to other issues raised by Members through MORI. Whilst our report cannot be a full response, we have given particular weight to this evidence.
- 1.1.10 We are quite clear about our fundamental conclusion. It is imperative that the executive arrangements within Birmingham City Council are rebalanced so that there is some re-empowerment of ordinary Members. What flexibility there is within the 2000 Act must be employed so that an efficient and effective Executive of 10 can more constructively co-exist with a proactive, properly representative body of 120.



Members and the Full Council

- 1.1.11 The recommendations in our report represent a first step. We start with a set of recommendations for initial changes to the full Council meeting. Members of the City Council should have more opportunity to bring the attention of the Council to topical issues of importance to them. The Council should also become a forum in which postholders – including Cabinet Members, Regulatory Chairpersons, the Chair of the Co-ordinating O&S Committee, and Lead Members on Joint Authorities – account for their past actions and discuss forthcoming issues. We also wish to see the City Council setting a somewhat greater and tighter Policy Framework within which the Executive takes its decisions. To facilitate these changes, we have suggested that a programme of Council meetings be set as far as possible at the start of the municipal year, and that the maximum length of each meeting be extended slightly.
- 1.1.12 In the course of the review the issue of support to District and Ward work – in particular to the new District Committees – emerged as a real matter of concern to Members. The District and Ward roles of Members are extremely important. It is clear Council policy that they are supported and strengthened. Through the forthcoming review required by the Council Plan 2005+ there is an immediate opportunity to set out clear standards for support and how best to provide that. It is essential that this opportunity be taken.
- 1.1.13 We consider that the O&S Committees should support the full City Council in the task of enhancing the accountability of Cabinet Members. We therefore recommend that Cabinet Members attend the relevant O&S Committee to give a similar report to that for Council, only at six month's distance from the Council report. We are also suggesting somewhat enhancing the call in process.
- 1.1.14 On the whole the package of support provided to Members is good compared to the norm. We are suggesting some extra flexibility to allow individual requirements to be better met. The programme of induction training has been well received by Members, but there is a need for a more co-ordinated subsequent development programme. The major area for improvement is to provide easier access to ward- and district-specific information.
- 1.1.15 We intend to continue our work to look at other aspects of the constitutional arrangements and see what more can be done to empower non-executive Members. In the meantime we are recommending these changes now, so that, if the Council agrees, they can be implemented at the start of the new municipal year.



Members and the Full Council

2 Summary of Recommendations

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R1	<p>That Council Business Management Committee propose to the Annual Council Meeting a programme of Council meetings throughout 2005/6 which enables:</p> <p>a) each Cabinet Member to report to the full Council once during the year on past achievements and future issues;</p> <p>b) similar reports to be made once during the year by the Chairpersons of the three Regulatory Committees, the Chairperson of the Co-ordinating O&S Committee, a lead District Committee Chairperson (on behalf of all) and the City Council's lead Members on the West Midlands Police Authority, the West Midlands Fire and Civil Defence Authority, and the West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority;</p> <p>c) the holding of a "State of the City" debate at the meeting at which the Leader of the Council presents his report</p>	Chairman, Council Business Management Committee	May 2005
R2	<p>That Council Business Management Committee propose to the Annual Council Meeting a new model agenda for the full City Council meeting to provide time for:</p> <p>a) the reports required by Recommendation R1;</p> <p>b) Members to be able to raise topical issues notified to the Lord Mayor in advance;</p> <p>along with any necessary adjustment to standing orders governing the length of the Council meeting.</p>	Chairman, Council Business Management Committee	May 2005
R3	<p>That the current constitutional requirement, for Chief Officers to report regularly to the appropriate Cabinet Member on the exercise of their delegated functions, be reinforced, such reports to be clearly labelled and posted on the ADMES system.</p>	Chairman, Council Business Management Committee	April 2005
R4	<p>That arrangements be put in place to</p>	Chairman, Council	October 2005



Members and the Full Council

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
	<p>ensure that undertakings made at full Council meetings:</p> <p>a) in answer to oral or written questions;</p> <p>b) following the receipt of petitions;</p> <p>are followed up and can be seen to have been discharged fully.</p>	Business Management Committee	
R5	<p>That in bringing forward amendments to the Constitution at the next Annual Council Meeting, Council Business Management Committee be asked to:</p> <p>a) propose a Policy Framework which includes up to an additional 3 policy plans on locally determined policy issues;</p> <p>b) inform the City Council of a working timetable for the debate of draft Policy Framework Plans during the municipal year 2005/6 by including this in the annual programme requested in Recommendation R1.</p>	Chairman, Council Business Management Committee	May 2005
R6	<p>That Council Business Management Committee bring forward a communications programme for the full Council meeting to consider, including:</p> <p>a) giving greater advance publicity to full Council meetings;</p> <p>b) giving full Council an enhanced web presence showing forthcoming topics for debate, questions asked and answers received;</p> <p>c) a prominent facility on the Council's website for members of the public to put questions to Cabinet Members and Committee Chairpersons;</p> <p>d) the costs and benefits of a trial relay of selected debates to the big screen in Chamberlain Square, possibly starting with the State of the City debate;</p> <p>e) a recommendation, based on costings, on whether to replace the equipment in the Council Chamber.</p>	Chairman, Council Business Management Committee	October 2005
R7	<p>That the review of localisation and devolution to be carried out during the summer specifically include proposals for providing appropriate support for all Members and Chairs of District Committees.</p>	Leader	October 2005
R8	<p>That the brief for the review of localisation and devolution be discussed with the Co-ordinating O&S Committee before it is agreed by the Executive</p>	Leader	June 2005
R9	<p>That each Cabinet Member be asked to</p>	Leader	May 2005



Members and the Full Council

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
	complement his/her annual report to full Council with a similar report, at the six-month point, to the corresponding O&S Committee, again setting out recent achievements and future issues and that this be written in to the terms of reference of the O&S Committees.		
R10	That the Chief Executive be asked to attend the Co-ordinating O&S Committee annually in October to discuss management actions and priorities.	Chair, Co-ordinating O&S Committee	October 2005
R11	That where, following a call-in, the Cabinet is minded to reaffirm its original decision without significant modification, the Chair of the Co-ordinating O&S Committee (or his/her nominee) should have the right, written into the constitution, to request the Leader to stay its implementation until the next Cabinet meeting to enable further discussion.	Leader	April 2005
R12	That in bringing amendments to the constitution to the next Annual Council Meeting the Council Business Management Committee propose an amended call in procedure : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) allowing for the possibility of a stay of implementation as proposed in Recommendation R11, if the Executive has so agreed; b) expanding the acceptable reasons for the call in of an Executive decision by proposing two extra criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that notification of the decision does not appear to have been given in accordance with Council procedures; • that there is a substantial lack of clarity, material inaccuracy or insufficient information in the report to allow Overview and Scrutiny to hold the Executive to account and add value to the work of the Council. c) numbering the call in criteria in an appropriate order, following proposals from the Co-ordinating O&S Committee 	Chairman, Council Business Management Committee	May 2005
R13	That the monthly printing allowance for Members be a maximum of 2,700 A4 sheets (black and white only) and that the ICT allowance be more flexibly applied to allow a wider range of office equipment to be provided.	Chairman, Council Business Management Committee	June 2005



Members and the Full Council

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R14	That an audit be undertaken of the City Council's electronic information systems to ascertain how ward and district specific information could be better identified and accessed by Members.	Deputy Leader	April 2006
R15	That a core City Council modern casework management system be provided, which is capable of being tailored to the needs of each Political Group at their own expense.	Deputy Leader	September 2005
R16	That a co-ordinated programme of training opportunities for Members be put in place, drawn up following a survey of Members' training needs and with particular emphasis given to training support for their role in District and Ward business; the draft programme to be put to the Cabinet Member for decision by December 2005.	Cabinet Member for Human Resources and Equalities	December 2005
R17	That the scope, size and composition of Cabinet Committees be reviewed, with the aim of ensuring the best use is made of local skills and knowledge.	Leader	June 2005
R18	That the Co-ordinating O&S Committee should continue its review (at some point possibly through a small cross-party working group), giving early consideration to a report from the Chief Legal Officer on the permissive and prescriptive elements of the Constitution.	Chair, Co-ordinating O&S Committee	June 2005
R19	Progress towards achievement of these recommendations should be reported to the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2005. Subsequent progress reports will be scheduled by the Committee thereafter, until all recommendations are implemented.	Chairman, Council Business Management Committee	December 2005
R20	That based on the first progress report required by Recommendation 19, the Co-ordinating O&S Committee undertake an all-party review of how the changed arrangements are working out in practice, so as to make recommendations for further improvements.	Chair, Co-ordinating O&S Committee	January 2006

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

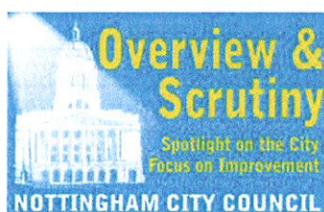
A REPORT ON

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

PREPARED BY

**THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

MARCH 2005



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CHAIR'S FOREWORD

The Constitution of any organisation is crucial if good governance is to prevail; therefore the opportunity to assist the revision process was a challenge readily accepted by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

In producing recommendations for consideration by the Executive and ultimately Council, members were mindful that time constraints would limit the scope of the Review.

Despite those difficulties the Working Party has produced a set of proposals which will, if adopted, symbolise the Council's commitment to the change agenda. In addressing issues of community consultation and engagement, it was felt that this should be real and continuous. Indeed, the imperative to embed it as an integral part of policy making, service delivery and the review process was paramount.

Clearly, some of our recommendations, particularly those affecting the conduct of Council meetings may prove controversial, but nevertheless should be given serious consideration. From a drafting point of view many of the procedural issues have been clarified to make the document more user friendly.

Whilst the exercise was daunting, I would like to put on record the appreciation of the Working Party to all those witnesses who have generously contributed to this important review. In particular I would like to thank Professor Steve Leach of De Montfort University and Gordon Mitchell, who encouraged us to stretch the boundaries and find new ways of invigorating the public face of local government. As ever, Barbara Cast has brilliantly pulled it all together with the support of Tony Austin, Val Mattinson and Tony McGovern and we are grateful for their substantial contribution. On a personal note I would also like to thank my colleagues; Councillors Gill Haymes, Chris Gibson, Penny Griggs and Gary Long for their input and in particular, the very amicable way they contributed to the review.

Councillor Malcolm Wood

Chair – Overview & Scrutiny Committee

March 2005

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the **constitution document** be organised in such a way that it is easy to use, much shorter, and with a summary section to allow all with an interest to easily access information on how the Council conducts its business. Within the legal framework, the document should contain only those matters necessary for the conduct of business and allow for flexibility of approach. A series of appendices should contain the necessary technical detail.
2. That a Council Business Steering Group (CBSG) be established to coordinate the programme for **full Council meetings**, determining what business should be presented to Council and when. The Steering Group should allow flexibility in the programme for different kinds of Council meetings and for items to be introduced into the programme should issues arise warranting Council attention. This steering group could, if required, have wider powers to oversee Council business in general.
3. That the CBSG be chaired by the Lord Mayor and be politically balanced. Consideration should be given to including the group whips in its membership which, in any event, should be kept as small as practicable. However, it would be for each group to determine the member/s to serve. Substitutes should be allowed in accordance with the Council's practice and the Deputy Lord Mayor should be an ex-officio member.
4. That the emphasis of the Lord Mayor's role in Council business should be to represent the interests of the wider Council and the public and to order the management of full Council meetings with that in view.
5. That an early task of the Council Business Steering Group should be to consider those items which form part of the Policy Framework and other policy or strategic papers which are or may be taken to Council. Further, that it should consider how best these items should be presented and if any items could be grouped together. Further, that the Steering Group ensures that Council meeting agenda are manageable and that the Lord Mayor considers appropriate indicative time allocations for each item to ensure that the matters of major interest to the Council and City are given adequate attention.
6. That consideration should be given to having a variety of full Council meeting types, depending on the business to be conducted. These would include the annual meeting with its civic and ceremonial character and the budget debate in March, but there could also be special themed meetings which people from other organisations could be invited to participate in, such as State of the City debates, and an annual youth participation event. The topics would be determined by the Steering Group. In pursuance of this it is recommended that there be up to ten meetings of Council each year and that some be commenced at 2pm and others at 5pm, depending on the subject and those to be involved.

7. That thirty minutes be allocated at the commencement of, or following adjournment of, certain of the meetings of full Council to allow for public participation. (The aim would be for this session to be held in the early evening at approximately 5pm.) This would be for (a) the receipt of petitions from City groups, accompanied by a brief two minute statement from the petition organiser or their representative councillor, and (b) questions from the public, addressed to any portfolio holder or Chair, with prior written notice of one week, to which a response would be given and one supplementary question relating directly to the initial question from the questioner allowed. The Lord Mayor should be given the discretion to determine whether any question was to be answered in full Council, by another body of the Council or in writing.
8. That questions be accepted from those appearing on the City's electoral register or people under 18 who have a City address.
9. That the public participation session be given a year's trial which the Council Business Steering Group would then review.
10. That the Lord Mayor, prior to installation, should undertake training on the management of full Council meetings, to include management of debates and the conduct of members, particularly for those occasions when people from outside the Council are involved. Training should also include the issues around the enforcement of codes of conduct and the application of standing orders.
11. That consideration should be given to adopting a "green paper" model for policy framework documents to allow full participation at the planning stage of such policies. Those documents which require a "green" stage could be determined by the Steering Group and fitted into the programme accordingly. Such deliberations should be held at "Council in Committee" sessions to allow officers to present papers and address members and, for these meetings, the Deputy Lord Mayor should preside. Any recommendations arising from this process would be taken to the Executive Board.
12. That the budget should be the only item on the agenda for that particular full Council meeting, excepting for urgent matters.
13. That fifteen minutes maximum be allocated for the proposer of an item to speak at full Council meetings and ten minutes maximum for each other speaker on that item and that, apart from proposers and seconders, members should only speak once on an item, excepting where there is a right of reply. It is acknowledged that there may be occasions when this time limit needs to be more flexible, including the budget debate, and the Lord Mayor should judge on this.
14. That, when amendments are proposed to Council items, the Lord Mayor should immediately identify which members wish to speak on that amendment and take those speakers until that amendment is resolved, before returning to those who wish to speak on the main recommendation.

15. That the practice on supplementary questions be formalised to ensure that the questioner is able to ask the first supplementary and that the Council Business Steering Group considers the practice to ensure that it is fairly and equitably managed. It is not considered desirable for the answers to supplementary questions to be recorded.

16. That the Leader present a report to the Annual Council Meeting setting out his or her proposals for the Executive Board composition and allocation of responsibilities and that any in year adjustments to this be delegated to him or her. The exception to this delegated power would be if the Leader proposed any changes which might require adjustments in levels of responsibility and, therefore, levels of responsibility allowance, in which case such proposals would be considered by the Independent Remuneration Panel and determined by Council.

17. That changes to the membership of Council bodies required after the Annual Council Meeting should be delegated to the Corporate Services Director for action, subject to it being ensured that political balance was maintained where it was applicable.

18. That there be a standing item on the Council agenda for Leader or Chief Executive announcements, depending on the subject. This would be for making members aware, without debate, of items of new information which it was necessary to be communicated without delay.

19. That consideration should be given to adopting the practice, after the 2005-06 municipal year, of holding the Annual Meeting of Council on the first Monday in May or, in an election year, the first appropriate Monday. Nominations for civic roles should be given at the meeting previous to the annual meeting, excepting in election years.

20. That there should be a standing order to allow members to correct any matters relating to them which have been stated incorrectly in Council.

21. That a guide to full Council meeting procedure should be available for new members and other interested parties.

22. That the scheme on delegations prepared by the Strategic Management Team (appended to this report at 10) should be adopted.

23. That it should be ensured that consultation with local members, as appropriate, should be required for matters on which an officer has **delegated powers**.

24. That, when a portfolio holder is making an individual decision, it should be made in conjunction with a corporate director and a declaration should be signed by both parties that this has been the case, and that the form recording the decision must be signed by both parties within 10 working days of each other.

25. That all decisions made and requiring formal record should have the same requirements for recording what consultation has taken place and with whom and, if it has not, the reasons why it was not considered necessary to consult.
26. That, where a formal record of a decision was required, that the correct and timely completion of such records be audited and that the Corporate Services Director put a system in place to ensure that records conform to requirements.
27. That the Executive consider the thresholds of **key decisions** to ensure that there was transparency and clarity about what constituted a key decision.
28. That those matters approved by the Appointments and Conditions of Service Committee relating to the **appointment** of corporate directors and related issues be adopted.
29. That, recognising that negotiation with the trade unions has been completed, that the **Appeals Panel** in its current form be abolished and be replaced by a new panel to consider appeals against dismissal to comprise an independent corporate director, a City Councillor and a human resources advisor, of which the corporate director would make the decision.
30. That, should a member **fail to attend** three consecutive meetings of a Council body of which they are a member, without stating the reason for their absence, Council should remove them from that membership. This would not apply to attendance at full Council meetings.
31. That each group be allowed to nominate up to six **substitutes** to each Council body.
32. That the Executive should consider the participation of **minority members** at meetings of the Executive Board, for example the opportunity for non-Executive minority members to address the Executive.
33. That the Executive consider whether a body should be established which will consider **risks** to the business and strategic objectives of the authority or whether the terms of reference of the Accounts Committee could be expanded to include this responsibility and a name more reflective of this role be given.
34. That **declarations of interest** a councillor has in any matter to be discussed at a meeting should be made at the commencement of the meeting.
35. That the **Housing General Committee** should be abolished due to the creation of Nottingham City Homes and the concurrent changes in responsibility.

36. That increased **public participation** in bodies of the Council other than full Council, including overview and scrutiny bodies and area committees, should be explored.

The Full Council Meeting *~ A need for change ~*

A Report by the
Corporate Issues & Partnerships
Overview & Scrutiny Panel

July 2005



BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET

**This is a report of the
Corporate Issues and Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Panel**

Cllr. Martin Veal (Panel Chairman)

Cllr. Keith Kirwan

Cllr. Hattie Ajderian

Cllr. Gitte Dawson

Cllr. Tim Warren

Cllr. Gail Coleshill

Cllr. Marie Brewer



Dear Colleagues,

I joined the Council five years ago and, like many of us, did so out of a desire to make a positive difference in how my own community is governed.

One prestigious forum we are privileged to take part in is the bi-monthly meeting of the Full Council. Many members are of the opinion that improvements could be made to this meeting to make it more effective and engaging for those involved. The meeting can be long and frustrating even for the most dedicated Councillor and I believe it is time for change.

A Member-led review of the Council meeting has been conducted with an unprecedented 94% of Members contributing to the process. The Corporate Issues and Partnership Panel have spent the last six months getting to the bottom of Member frustration and better still, we feel we have come up with new and different components that will bring life and fulfilment back into the Chamber.

The results of our review are laid out in this report, which encompasses the Panel's findings and our recommendations for improvements.

I implore you all to view these positive recommendations as an essential part of the ongoing culture change within our Council. By modernising, both we and the public can view the Full Council Meeting as a vibrant platform to be eagerly anticipated, rather than one which is arduously expected!

Yours, in anticipation of change,

Former Chairman of the Corporate Issues & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny panel

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- 3.9. The Culture of the Meeting**
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Executive Summary of Recommendations

This Executive Summary presents the Panel's recommendations as extracted from the body of the report.

3.1 The Need for Change

The Panel's recommendations should be considered as a whole package. Whilst they are not impossible to implement individually, the Panel believe that as a whole they represent a comprehensive solution for the Full Council Meeting.

Recommendations

1. That Council accept the need for change and acknowledge that doing nothing is not an option - based on the strong body of evidence accompanying this review.
2. The Panel's recommendations should be considered together as a whole package, for maximum positive effect.

3.2 The Role of the Modern Council Meeting

Recommendations

1. That the Council officially recognise and endorse its three key roles:
 - a. Considering and deciding on policy
 - b. Monitoring actions taken by the Executive on behalf of the Council, as well as their ongoing performance and
 - c. Demonstrating community leadership.
2. That Council actively seek to develop its role as community leader (*suggestions for this are included in section 3.6 Acting as Community Leader*).

3.3 Creating Capacity on the Agenda for innovation

Recommendations

1. That Full Council receive for decision only those Policy and Budget framework items that the Government require it to, with the remaining being determined by the Executive
2. That any ten Members or the relevant O&S Panel be entitled to refer any of the discretionary plans to Council for decision.

3.4 Opportunity for More Active Policy Development

Recommendations

1. That opportunities be created for the Council to be involved in policy development at earlier stages:
 - a. For key policy that is determined at Executive level - Council be given the opportunity to debate and to offer a general steer to the Executive before decision

- b. For all policy, that there be opportunity for Council to debate it at the developmental stage (wherever the final decision lies), the results of which may be fed into Overview & Scrutiny.
 - 2. That Political Groups recognise that group voting may not always be appropriate on items where the Council is making a recommendation rather than a decision.
- (Issues concerning how these policies are chosen are picked up in section 3.8 Planning the agenda).

3.5 Monitoring Executive Activity

Recommendation

- 1. That the Head of Democratic Services be asked to report to the Corporate Issues and Partnerships Panel through the Working Group (See Section 3.11 Next Steps) within three months, suggesting ways in which the Council could develop its role in monitoring
 - a. Executive activity on its behalf; and
 - b. the ongoing performance of the Executive.

Recommendations - Member Questions & Statements

- 2. That live supplementary questions during Member question time be abolished, with Member questions at Council being routinely answered only in writing.
- 3. However, that at each Full Council Meeting there should be provision for a small number of Member questions /statements designated for time-limited discussion; that these be determined by the Chairman drawing lots, on a 'first out of the hat - first to be discussed' basis
- 4. That the Chairman has discretion over how long be allowed for each discussion, with a maximum of 10 minutes for each, with the total time for Member questions and statements not exceeding 30 minutes.
- 5. That Members be encouraged to use other avenues to pose their questions, particularly the Executive Meetings and Overview & Scrutiny, where Panels have certain rights to call Executive Members to attend their meetings.
- 6. That Member submissions are moved to the end of the Council Agenda.

3.6 Acting as Community Leader

Recommendations

- 1. That where capacity is created on its agenda Council introduce items that will demonstrate its role as community leader, like those listed below
- 2. That Council be more proactive in providing opportunities for partner bodies to deliver presentations and to deal with Members' questions.
- 3. That Council receive an update and debate progress on specific improvement priorities
- 4. That Council make provision for topical, local public issues to be debated
- 5. That Council debate regional and national issues on behalf of the community and deliver a strong message to the appropriate Government agency

6. That the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council be asked to manage and champion these community leadership items, particularly in the context of agenda planning (*also see section 3.8 Planning the Agenda*).

Recommendations - Public Submissions

7. That following a public submission, there be an opportunity for a meaningful time-limited debate.
8. That Council use Overview and Scrutiny to enable more detailed consideration to be given to a matter raised in a public submission
9. That the member of the public be allowed to address Council from a more central position on the Dias, next to the Chairman.

3.7 Informal Sessions

Recommendations

1. That the Council meeting include an informal session after the start of the meeting and that the meeting start time is brought forward to 3:45pm to accommodate this. (full recommendations on restructuring the Council Day can be found in section 3.10)
2. That the Chairman and the Vice Chairman take a lead role in choosing suitable subjects for informal sessions. (The ongoing work planning of these sessions is covered in Section 3.8 Planning the Agenda.)
3. That informal sessions be Member-led and recorded by officers with a view to their outcomes being fed into the appropriate body and reported back to the Council.

3.8 Planning the Agenda and the Meeting

Recommendations – Planning the Council Agenda

1. That the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council be involved in the pre-planning of the agenda, particularly in ensuring
 - a. space for community leadership items and
 - b. a balanced and engaging agenda (*see also section 3.9 below*)
2. That a draft Council agenda be made available to Political Groups well in advance of the normal lead in / despatch date for the agenda, in order to provide an opportunity for the wider membership to have some influence over the agenda.
3. That the Chief Executive, together with the Administration Leaders, the Chairman and the Vice Chairman of Council, devise an outline annual workplan for Council including:
 - a. Policy and Budget Framework Items for decision
 - b. Policy items for developmental debate
 - c. Community leadership Items
 - d. Content of informal sessions

but allowing sufficient capacity for Member influence of each agenda through the process described above and acknowledging the impartiality of the Chairman or Vice Chairman at the meeting.
4. That this annual workplan go out for consultation to the Members (or Groups)

Recommendations – Planning the Meeting

5. That Council accept that pre-planning of the meeting is important and that the Chief Executive and the Administration Leaders continue to play a central role in this, together with the Chairman and/or Vice Chairman
6. That in this process consideration be given to whether group voting is appropriate on those items where the Council is making a recommendation rather than a decision
7. That the Council agenda include guide timings for each item
8. That Members be urged to enlist the support of Officers in the drafting of Member debating motions well in advance of the meeting
9. That Members be urged to issue all debating motions to the Chief Executive and other Political Groups by no later than 12 noon on Council Day.

3.9 The Culture of the meeting

Recommendations - The Role of the Chairman

1. That Political Groups make considered choices in nominating Members to be the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council, in view of the critical nature of the role in the context of the Council meeting.
2. That as a matter of routine (though not in an election year) Council agrees the Chairman and Vice Chairman designate at the January Council meeting prior to the beginning of their term.
3. That the Chairman and Vice Chairman receive obligatory training prior to their term of office.
4. That the Chairman of the Council should have more power to
 - a. relax rules if debate is going well – e.g allow more time and more speakers
 - b. curtail debate if not constructive and quality poor as long as there is sufficient balance in contributions
 - c. waive some procedural rules and thus exercise wide discretion in the management of debates and discussions
5. That the Vice Chairman take a more active role in Council meetings, accepting responsibility for time management of agenda items, whilst the Chairman presides over the proceedings.

Recommendations - Member Conduct

6. That there Members respect the role of the Chairman and Vice Chairman and that abide by the Chairman's ruling at all times
7. That Members respect the formality of the meeting and conduct themselves in an efficient, effective and courteous manner
8. That all-Member training sessions be held to cover the following subjects:
 - a. Effective debating
 - b. The role and working of Full Council
 (These could be undertaken as part of an informal session.)

Recommendations - Agenda Papers

9. That Council commission a review of agenda paper style and content by the Head of Democratic Services.

3.10 The Council Day and Venue

Recommendations

1. That Council agree to introduce the Council Tea as an all Member event (rather than as refreshments served in group rooms)
2. That the length of the Council activity on Council day be extended and follow the following pattern
 - 3:45pm Start of formal proceedings (any urgent items taken here)
 - 4:00pm Adjournment for informal session
 - 5:00pm Break for Council Tea
 - 6:00pm Group Meetings
 - 6:30pm Formal part of Council meeting reconvenes
 - 10:00pm (latest) Close
3. That the Council Chamber continue to be the meeting venue but that new technology be explored for
 - a. Visual presentation and
 - b. Improved audio equipment,
 with a working trial of optional schemes before the end of the current Council year
4. That a radio microphone be available in the Chamber for the duration of the meeting to assist public speakers and other attendees.

3.11 Next Steps

Recommendations

1. That following the acceptance of these recommendations the Head of Democratic Services report back to the next meeting of Council with a full implementation plan including any resource implications
2. That the implementation plan contain provision avoiding the need to alter the Council Constitution to reflect agreed changes, until the next planned review of the Constitution
3. That a working group meeting six-monthly be set up to
 - a. Initially to assist in the development of the implementation plan
 - b. To review the implementation of the agreed recommendations after an appropriate period of operation; and
 - c. to work towards further improvement.

That this working group comprise the Steering Group for this review and that it report to the Corporate Issues and Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Panel.

1. Background

Bath & North East Somerset's Full Council Meeting is the official assembly of all 65 Members of the Council. The Council Chamber in Bath's Guildhall provides the setting for the bi-monthly meeting that normally runs from 6:30pm until 10:00pm. The meeting is open to the public.

The Full Council Meeting has a number of statutory obligations and is conducted on more formal lines than some other meetings. The remit of Full Council, as set out in the Council's Constitution, is to decide a framework of policies¹ that govern how council services are to be provided. It is the Council Executive's responsibility to take decisions to ensure services are delivered within this framework. The Council is the parent body of the Regulatory Committees and the Overview and Scrutiny function.

The Full Council Meeting remains the only official occasion where by all 65 Members of the Council are congregated.



Modernisation

In 2002 decision making in Bath & North East Somerset Council was modernised and a Council Executive and seven Overview & Scrutiny Panels were formed to replace most of the Council Committees.

The decision-making powers of most of the former committees were handed collectively and individually to nine Executive Councillors, with only the planning, access and licensing regulatory functions being retained at committee level. The Full Council also maintained decision-making powers over certain policies assigned to the Council's Policy and Budget Framework. Thus, the Council meeting became for some Councillors the only decision-making meeting in which they were involved.

Overview & Scrutiny Panels were set up to act as a check and balance to the Executive, to hold them to account and also to develop recommendations for improvements to Council policy, to aid

¹ Known as the Policy & Budget Framework

the Executive in their work. Overview & Scrutiny is designed to facilitate a mechanism for wider Member and public engagement in the modernised decision-making process.

Since these fundamental changes in the way council decisions are taken, little has been done to review the role and working of the Full Council Meeting in spite of its historical significance to local democracy. This paradox is by no means unique to Bath & North East Somerset. There now exists a national perception that the Full Council Meeting also needs to modernise - not only to contribute to the new system more aptly but also to reinforce its prestige and importance in the Council diary.

Prior to this Overview & Scrutiny review there have been a number of piecemeal local initiatives taken to improve Council. For instance, the agenda layout has been revised to reflect different types of business; an Executive report has been introduced; and there have been changes to the way Member submissions are managed. This Council has always allowed public submissions at its meetings and is a leading authority in good practice in this regard.

2. Approach and Methodology

What was investigated	How it was investigated	Appendix
<p>Background knowledge</p> <p>The Panel wanted to know more about the operation of Full Council Meetings in Bath & North East Somerset.</p>	<p>The Panel received a briefing from the Head of Democratic Services outlining</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council statutory and local functions • The organisation of meetings • Content and management • The culture of Full Council • Potential scope for change 	1
<p>Research</p> <p>Taking in a wider perspective, the Panel wanted to know what other authorities were doing to improve their Full Council Meetings</p> <p>They were keen to learn from examples of best practice and also find out what the national experts were saying to local authorities concerning modernising Full Council Meetings.</p>	<p>14 authorities in the Member Support Network responded to a question about how their Full Council Meeting operates and what they have done to improve it.</p>	2
	<p>The Panel undertook a visit to Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council, an authority cited by IDEA as having modernised their Full Council Meetings successfully.</p>	3
	<p>The Panel Chairman attended a national seminar at the Institute of Local Government Studies entitled 'Modernising Full Council'.</p>	4



<p>Consultation phase 1</p> <p>Focusing on our own Full Council Meeting, the Panel knew it was essential to involve all other Members in the process of change. They wanted to know what the other Bath and North East Somerset Councillors thought about the Full Council Meeting.</p> <p>They were also interested to hear about the experiences of Members of the public at our Full Council meetings. How would they like to be treated and engaged?</p> <p>The Panel also looked at the Full Council Meeting from the Officer perspective.</p>	<p>The Panel initially instigated discussion with groups of Members about what they thought of Full Council Meetings. They did this via Overview & Scrutiny Panels, at an informal Executive meeting and in informal discussions with other Members. The results of these discussions helped to form the framework for the remainder of the Panel's investigation.</p>	5
	<p>Armed with Members' initial opinions the Panel then designed and issued a detailed questionnaire to all Members of the Council achieving a 94% response rate.</p>	6
	<p>Specific discussion on the relationship between Overview & Scrutiny and the Full Council was held during a meeting of all the O&S Chairmen.</p>	7
	<p>The Panel also issued a separate questionnaire to members of the public. This was sent to local community organisations and distributed at all public meetings of the Council in the month of April. Additionally it was sent out to members of the press to gain their views. The Panel received 20 responses.</p>	8
	<p>The Panel Chairman also attended a Head of Service meeting to open a useful discussion on the subject of Full Council Meetings. This discussion was followed up by some more detailed emails from these officers.</p>	9



<p>Consultation Phase 2</p> <p>The Panel wanted to continue to involve other Councillors in the process of forming their recommendations for changes.</p> <p>Following on from hearing their opinions via the questionnaires the Panel wanted to work together with Members and hear their collective ideas for improvement.</p>	<p>At this stage the Panel hosted an interactive workshop for all Members of the Council to work together to form the details that would help shape the Panel's recommendations. 21 Members attended and contributed.</p>	10
	<p>The Panel also consulted with past Chairmen of Bath & North East Somerset Council, including those who had already left the Council. They held a workshop specifically to explore the development of the role of the Chairman and Vice Chairman in managing the Full Council Meeting.</p>	11

3. Findings and Recommendations

3.1 The Need for Change

The Local Perception

Only 16% of members are fairly satisfied with Full Council Meetings, none are very satisfied.

The overwhelming message for change that has been expressed to the Panel over the past six months has been consistently strong. The majority of Councillors do not look forward to Full Council nor do they get much satisfaction from the meetings.

In fact the meeting seems to have fallen into the same trap as the British weather; people get used to complaining, they always expect the worst and resign themselves to the fact that it will never improve! The following quote quite adequately represents the general feeling amongst the majority.

Council should be our showcase and should engage both public and councillors. Instead most of us dread it and are dying to get out of the chamber!

Councillor questionnaire comment

The message is loud and clear - if the overriding stigma attached to the meeting is negative for its participants, how then is it supposed to carry any integrity of presence or purpose with the wider community?

In their comments back to Panel, Members are not denying the meeting's powers or role in determining policy although there was some misunderstanding about what constituted "policy" and who could make it. Many are advocating the meeting's importance as a forum where Councillors and Political Groups can voice their political opinions and make a public stand on certain issues. But the Council meeting is lacking the life and the 'buzz' that should be present at a prestigious gathering of community representatives.

As an occasion that has traditionally served as the main public event of the Council diary, the Panel are concerned that the negative perception of these meetings does nothing to maintain or enhance the Council's wider reputation.

A programme of culture change is at present being implemented across the council.

The National Picture

Nationally the picture is similar. In their research the Panel have struggled to find examples of good practice. The main efforts for modernisation have been focused on introducing public speaking (something Bath & North East Somerset has included for years), hosting 'State of the Borough' debates or holding some kind of informal session. Most of the Local Authorities the Panel asked are keen to monitor what changes result from this review.

At a seminar run by INLOGOV² the moderator advocated that authorities should review their Full Council Meeting with a view to modernising and developing its role.

Pitched as the Cinderella of modernisation, Full Council is ripe for a 'makeover' or at least a series of well thought-out improvements that will tackle the undercurrents of disengagement and raise its profile. The Panel conclude that change is overdue and anticipate that the adoption of their recommendations will bring about a more enthusiastic attitude towards Full Council amongst its membership.

The Panel's recommendations should be considered as a whole package. Whilst they are not impossible to implement individually, the Panel believe that as a whole they represent a comprehensive solution for the Full Council Meeting.

"Revolution is wrong, we need evolution."

Comment from member discussion

² Institute of Local Government Studies

Recommendation

1. That Council accept the need for change and acknowledge that doing nothing is not an option - based on the strong body of evidence accompanying this review.
2. The Panel's recommendations should be considered together as a whole package, for maximum positive effect.

3.2 The Role of the Modern Council Meeting

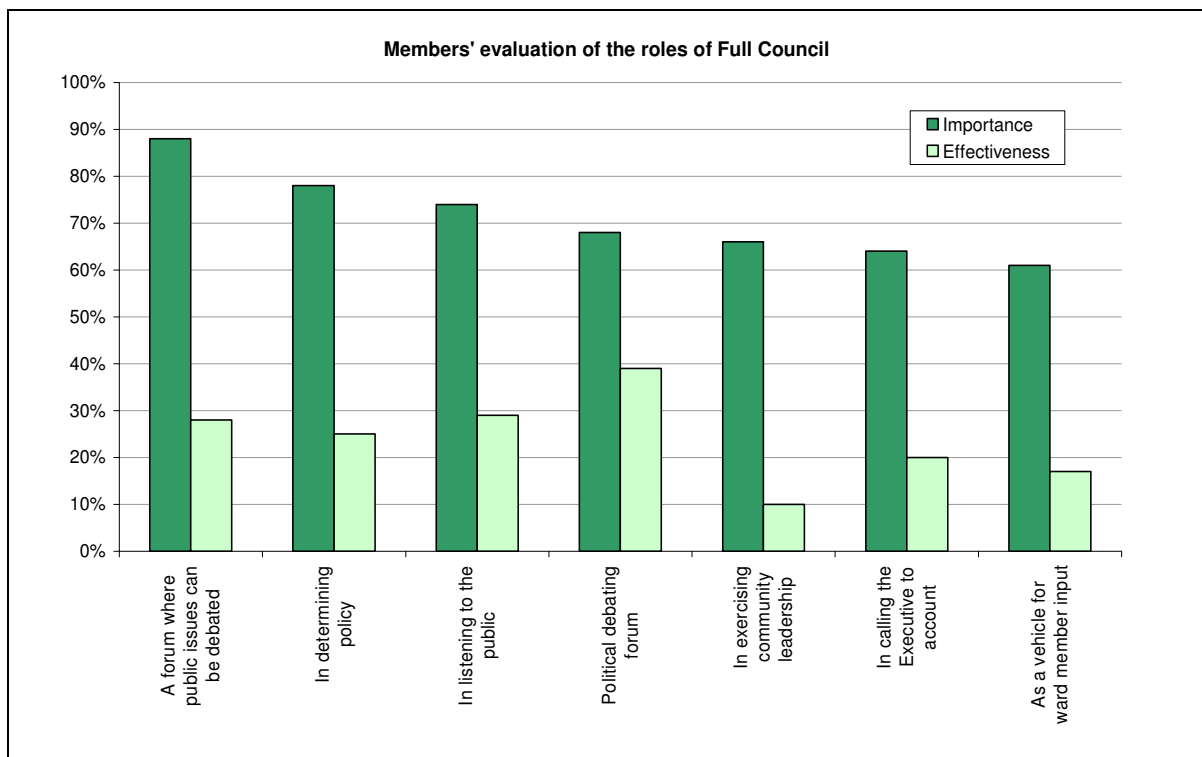
"It has been too readily assumed that the Council Meeting must follow the pattern that has been inherited from the past, rather than considering what its role could be"

Local Government Association (LGA), June 2000³

Written at the dawn of modernisation this LGA report goes on to urge Councils to prioritise three key roles in their reconsideration of the Council Meeting. These are:

- a. How the Council will consider and decide on the policies of the authority
- b. How the Council will hold the Executive to account (*i.e. how will it monitor what the Executive does on its behalf*)
- c. How the Council can play a part in supporting the role of the Authority in Community Leadership.

Throughout the review the Panel have encouraged Members to look beyond their experience and to look at the potential held within the walls of the chamber when all 65 Members are assembled. They have repeatedly asked the question – What is the Role of the Full Council in the community of Bath & North East Somerset?



Above, the Councillors' collective assessment of the roles of our Full Council Meeting encapsulates the need for increased effectiveness in Council's role in exercising

³ A Role for all Members – The Council Meeting; The Local Government Association June 2000

community leadership. Community leadership encompasses all the roles of the Council and of its individual Members in debating public issues, listening to the public and acting as a vehicle for ward member input. This wide deviation between importance and performance is also seen when assessing the role of the Council in **calling the Executive to account** and in **determining policy**. The only role where the effectiveness of Council is seen in a more favourable light is when it acts as a political debating forum, though there is still clear room for improvement.

Recommendations

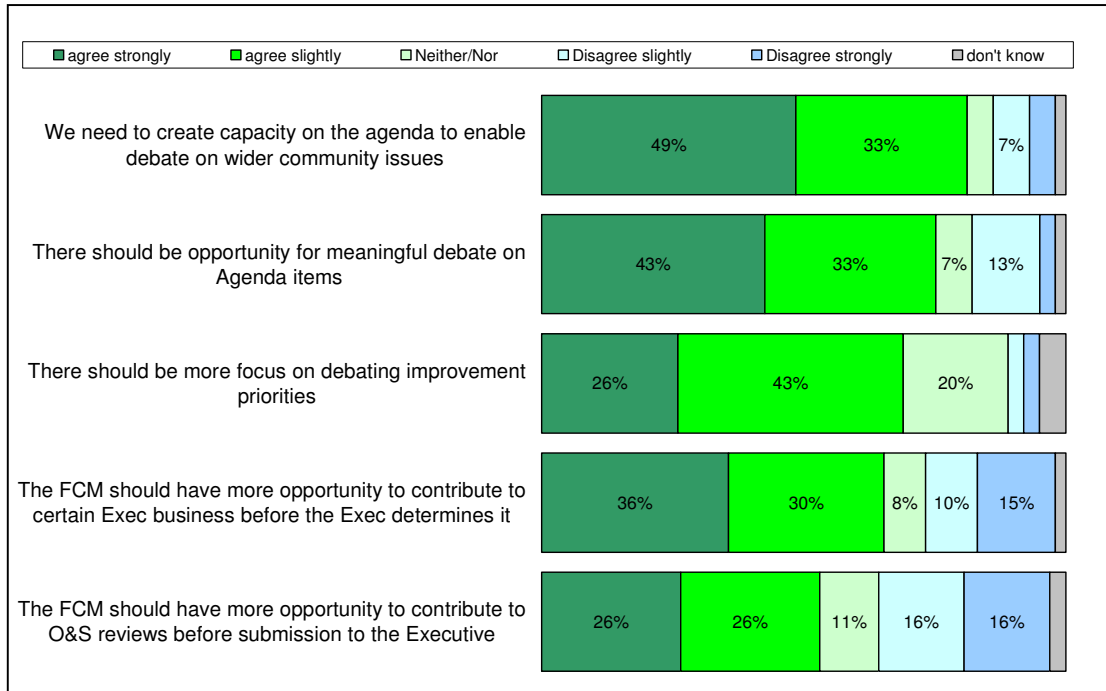
1. That the Council officially recognise and endorse its three key roles:
 - a. Considering and deciding on policy
 - b. Monitoring actions taken by the Executive on behalf of the Council, as well as their ongoing performance and
 - c. Demonstrating community leadership.
2. That Council actively seek to develop its role as community leader (*suggestions for this are included in section 3.6 Acting as Community Leader*).

3.3 Creating Capacity on the Agenda for innovation

Why we need to make room on the Council Agenda

82% of Members said they want to create capacity on the Agenda for debate of wider community issues.

Left as it is, there is little opportunity for the Council meeting to develop to become more engaging and relevant to all of its core purposes. The Panel has identified that, if the Council is going to change to embrace all aspects of its role, then capacity needs to be created on its agenda to make room for new, innovative items. The table below illustrates some of the evidence offered on this.



How to Create Capacity

Throughout an average Council year it is estimated that around two thirds of Council 'debate' time is spent on Policy and Budget Framework items. These are the plans and strategies that must legally come to the Full Council together with those that the Council has itself determined should be submitted for approval. The remainder of Council time is divided mainly between Member motions and reports on council business.

A key opportunity for creating capacity on the agenda lies in reducing the number of these plans that need to come to council. Whilst this range of plans has provided Members with an opportunity to air issues concerning important subject areas, the reality is that these discussions are rarely spontaneous, usually follow the lead of the Executive recommendation and present a mere 'rubber stamping' of the plans.

Only 11 of the 26 plans that currently come to Council are required by legislation to be approved by the full Council. When asked what should happen to each of the 15 "local choice" policy items, the majority of Members felt that Council did not need to make the final decision. In ten of these cases there were more Members who thought that these plans shouldn't come to Council at all than those who thought they should be debated before being passed to the Executive.

At present, all Policy and Budget Framework Plans are submitted to Council on a recommendation from the Executive. Many will have also been considered in advance through the Overview and Scrutiny route.

Policy & Budget Framework items	
Required items	"Local choice" Items
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Community Strategy - Early Years Development Plan - Education Development Plan - Local Plan - Structure Plan - Children and Young People Services Plan - Community Safety Strategy - Youth Justice Plan - Public Library Position Statement - The Corporate Plan - The Local Transport Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing Strategy - Sustainable Economic Development Framework - Waste Strategy - Consultation Strategy - Long-term Office Accommodation Strategy - Corporate Asset Management Plan - Customer Care and Complaints Strategy - Health Improvement Plan - Cultural Strategy - School Organisation Plan - Quality Protects Management Action Plan - LEA Asset Management Plan - Corporate Equalities Strategy - Electronic Government Strategy - Adult Learning Framework

Recommendations

1. **That Full Council receive for decision only those Policy and Budget framework items that the Government require it to, with the remaining being determined by the Executive**
2. **That any ten Members or the relevant O&S Panel be entitled to refer any of the discretionary plans to Council for decision.**

3.4 Opportunity for More Active Policy Development

Traditionally the Council has been the final stop for policy papers making their way through the various mechanisms of Member approval. The current system takes a Policy and Budget Framework item through Overview & Scrutiny, on to the Executive and then to Full Council for final decision.

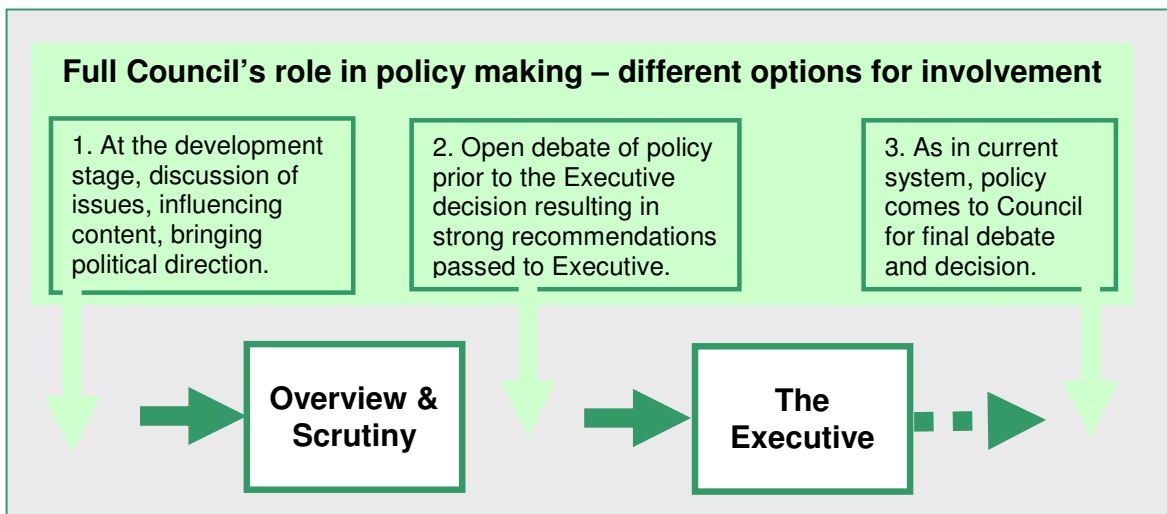
Members have expressed a desire to be more involved in policy making, particularly in order to have an input prior to the final polished version coming to Council. A good opportunity for an individual Member to have input in policy development is via the Overview & Scrutiny panels, and Members should be encouraged to get involved at this stage with those policies that interest them.

In determining important policy at Council the political groups may apply a party line with group voting, and this is normal and must not be negated. Yet the Panel have heard many Members bemoan the fact that many policy debates are predetermined and Full Council rarely affords Members the pleasure of an open debate with an unknown outcome.

“It scares me to think no matter how much we debate or feel strongly about issues or policies raised at Full Council Meetings, the decisions on their outcomes were chosen well before the meeting and largely down to party policies”

Questionnaire respondent

The answer could lie in introducing different ways of looking at policy. The Panel sees three different stages at which Full Council might have an input into policy development, as illustrated below: these would be alternatives, not additions.



“We've lost the power of deliberation without the pressure of final decision”

INLOGOV Seminar

Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council is in fact developing a system by which Council can influence policy at various stages of development, using informal breakout sessions for the early development stage. A similar system was presented at an INLOGOV seminar called 'Modernising Full Council'. These systems advocate that by influencing policy earlier Members acting as the Full Council could bring strong steers to those who are developing the policy. Also, for those items that are determined by the Executive the Council could make strong recommendations to those who hold the final decision.

Looking at policy at different stages of development allows for greater engagement and awareness of local policies amongst Councillors and also encourages wider, more engaging debate as the pressure of a final decision is removed.

Recommendations

1. **That opportunities be created for the Council to be involved in policy development at earlier stages:**
 - a. **For key policy that is determined at Executive level - Council be given the opportunity to debate and to offer a general steer to the Executive before decision**
 - b. **For all policy, that there be opportunity for Council to debate it at the developmental stage (wherever the final decision lies), the results of which may be fed into Overview & Scrutiny.**
2. **That Political Groups recognise that group voting may not always be appropriate on items where the Council is making a recommendation rather than a decision.**

(Issues concerning how these policies are chosen are picked up in section 3.8 Planning the agenda).

3.5 Monitoring Executive Activity

Currently the Council monitors Executive activity through Member submissions and the Leader's Report. In 'A Role for all Members – the Council Meeting' the LGA advocates that the Council meeting is the main setting for holding the Executive to account. Although much of this responsibility is devolved through the Overview & Scrutiny process, the Panel believe there are unexplored avenues for this role of Council.

Recommendation

1. **That the Head of Democratic Services be asked to report to the Corporate Issues and Partnerships Panel through the Working Group (See Section 3.11 Next Steps) within three months, suggesting ways in which the Council could develop its role in monitoring**
 - a. **Executive activity on its behalf; and**
 - b. **the ongoing performance of the Executive.**

Member Questions and Statements

Member submissions serve two main purposes:

- a. They can be an important element for non-Executive Members to hold the Executive Members to account through public challenge or probing
- b. They can also be an effective tool for local councillors to raise ward issues in the high-profile arena that is the Full Council.

By Member submission we mean petitions, statements and, most commonly, questions. Traditionally most submissions require some form of Executive consideration or action.

63% of Members felt that too much time was spent on Member submissions. What is more, the Panel's consultation has highlighted that Member question time is one of the greatest sources of frustration amongst Councillors. The Panel believe that the time spent on Member submissions needs to be more efficient and interesting.

Members want the opportunity to engage their colleagues and the Executive in matters that are important to them with 51% saying there should be an opportunity to debate Member submissions at Full Council. In consequence there needs to be a more effective way to deal with question time so that where appropriate, wider engagement can take place.

"Don't bar Members from speaking to Full Council, but O&S might be the place for Councillors to get some real responses."

Questionnaire comment

The Panel recognise that it would be neither practical nor appropriate to apply this to all submissions at all meetings. A mechanism needs to be found to select those submissions that are to be debated, ensuring the time spent on them is limited yet satisfactory.

On balance, the Panel also consider that Member submissions could occur at a different point on the agenda. Unlike public submissions, it is not necessary for these to be taken at the start of the meeting, given that Members are expected to remain in attendance throughout the meeting. 47% of Members believed that Member submissions should come at the end of the agenda, though 39% disagreed.

When considering the Council meeting as a whole, the Panel conclude that the optimum time at Council should be used for the most important business. Member questions, though of individual importance to the Members, do not warrant the same level of consideration as policy items or community interest items.

Recommendations - Member Questions & Statements

- 2. That live supplementary questions during Member question time be abolished, with Member questions at Council being routinely answered only in writing.**
- 3. However, that at each Full Council Meeting there should be provision for a small number of Member questions /statements designated for time-limited discussion; that these be determined by the Chairman drawing lots, on a 'first out of the hat - first to be discussed' basis**
- 4. That the Chairman has discretion over how long be allowed for each discussion, with a maximum of 10 minutes for each, with the total time for Member questions and statements not exceeding 30 minutes.**
- 5. That Members be encouraged to use other avenues to pose their questions, particularly the Executive Meetings and Overview & Scrutiny, where Panels have certain rights to call Executive Members to attend their meetings.**
- 6. That Member submissions are moved to the end of the Council Agenda.**

3.6 Acting as Community Leader

As soon as a Councillor is elected they step into the role of a community leader. Not only is this role demonstrable in the context of their local ward but it takes on a new, more strategic dimension when played out by the whole Council as a corporate body. Bath & North East Somerset Council by its very nature is acting in its role as community leader, both at street level and also at strategic level in leading on the Local Strategic Partnership and the Community Strategy. The Full Council Meeting, as the gathering of community representatives, is arguably the most important public face for this role within the Local Authority, and should therefore demonstrate this leadership effectively and inclusively.

The next Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) is likely to be looking for evidence to show how well Councils lead their communities. According to the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) there are seven characteristics of effective Community Leadership.

Characteristics of effective community leadership - IDeA

- Listening to and involving local communities
- Building vision and direction
- Making things happen
- Standing up for communities
- Empowering local communities
- Accountability to communities
- Using community resources effectively.

During the Panel's visit to observe Kirklees Metropolitan Borough's Council Meeting, they were able to take part in an informal session where Members discussed together what it meant to be a community leader. The following is an extract from their briefing note:

Councils are increasingly seen as the focal points within their locality, developing a vision and helping to bring together a range of partners to achieve it. The focus of the CPA assessment will move from the Council as an organisation to the locality and the impact we have on it. It will look at how Councils champion the needs of their area and differing communities within it and the overall strategic vision.

88% said that Full Council Meeting should be a forum where public issues are debated

By creating capacity on its agenda the Council meeting can afford to add different items onto the agenda to encourage and demonstrate the Council's role as community leader. These need to be items that listen to and act on behalf of local people whilst building vision and direction within the local community.

Below is a simple diagram that represents the Council's sphere of community leadership.



Receiving issue-based items on the agenda also creates opportunity for more flavoured discussion and more engaging debate, where the outcome is unknown, and Members do not necessarily feel constrained in how they exercise their judgement or vote. The opportunity for meaningful debate is clearly a valued and important one to Members and can often be taken as a measure of the success of the meeting.

The Panel are clear that the objective of community leadership items will be to provide a steer to an outside body or to demonstrate accountability and direction to the community on issues the Council is responsible for delivering. It is hoped that these items will bring the life and 'buzz' back into the Full Council Meeting through connecting with the community, and fostering lively discussion on community interest matters.

Recommendations

1. **That where capacity is created on its agenda Council introduce items that will demonstrate its role as community leader, like those listed below**
2. **That Council be more proactive in providing opportunities for partner bodies to deliver presentations and to deal with Members' questions.**

3. **That Council receive an update and debate progress on specific improvement priorities**
4. **That Council make provision for topical, local public issues to be debated**
5. **That Council debate regional and national issues on behalf of the community and deliver a strong message to the appropriate Government agency**
6. **That the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council be asked to manage and champion these community leadership items, particularly in the context of agenda planning (*also see section 3.8 Planning the Agenda*).**

Public Submissions

Listening to members of the public at Council meetings is a grassroots demonstration of community leadership.

Members of the public who answered the Panel's questionnaire were generally positive about their experience of a Full Council Meeting. They are greeted and given advice on the process of the meeting. There is also a tracking process in place to ensure that Executive Members respond within a reasonable period.

Nevertheless the public questionnaire did indicate a need to improve the way that public submissions are dealt with. At present they are received and often referred for an Executive Member to consider or are merely noted. 64% of Members felt there should be an opportunity to discuss public submissions at the meeting.

Also the public normally address the meeting from the edge of the dais. The Panel felt that making them more central would show greater respect.

Recommendation - Public Submissions

7. **That following a public submission, there be an opportunity for a meaningful time-limited debate.**
8. **That Council use Overview and Scrutiny to enable more detailed consideration to be given to a matter raised in a public submission**
9. **That the member of the public be allowed to address Council from a more central position on the Dais, next to the Chairman.**

"It would be of some comfort ...if individual Councillors were able to comment in support of the matter raised"

Member of the Public

3.7 Informal Sessions

Following on from the introduction of community leadership items there is an argument advocating that the Council's approach to new items need not necessarily follow traditional lines. The Panel believe that informal sessions do not take away from the ceremony and importance of Full Council but provide an alternative avenue for the assembly of Members to use their time together. This time could be used to achieve outputs that the formal meeting is not designed to deliver.

Informal sessions would allow for robust discussions, facilitated idea sharing, all-Member briefings and training opportunities. They would pave the way for more inclusive and productive working amongst Members as the leaders of the community. Additionally, they can provide a forum for facilitated discussion at policy development level where Members could work together to shape ideas on how the Council should address particular issues.



The definition of an informal session is a time during which the procedural rules governing the meeting are waived, the session is minuted but not formally, and there is greater flexibility in how the time is managed and organised. Informal sessions would be Member-led and conducted in politically balanced breakout groups or as a whole group of Members. It is suggested that such sessions occur as an adjournment of the formal Council meeting. Most informal sessions would be open to the public to observe.

In the questionnaire results Members were divided as to whether they thought the Council Meeting should include informal sessions. Nonetheless, in considering the evidence of their investigation as a whole, the Panel are convinced that informal sessions go some way to providing a solution to the dissatisfaction Members are feeling with Council meetings. The body of evidence in the report so far has gone a long way in supporting their cause.

Members spent time focusing on this at the workshop hosted by the Panel looking at the advantages and disadvantages of holding such sessions. Most groups found the advantages outweighed the disadvantages and discussed ways to overcome the problems of informal sessions. Suggestions included ensuring that the sessions were properly planned and managed, that as far as possible they were non-political and that there should be a clear linking of the outcomes of the sessions with regular Council business.

The Panel agree that, depending on the item, there should be a mechanism by which outputs of informal sessions are reported back to the formal meeting of Council and referred on to the appropriate Executive Member, O&S Panel, service area or external body.

When the Panel consulted with Heads of Service a strong message came across. Full Council could be used as a place where all Members are briefed together on important developments in large or cross-cutting Council projects. Currently it is difficult to get a time where a majority of Members can attend.

Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council - Informal Sessions

The Panel witnessed a successful and engaging informal session at Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council. What Kirklees have accomplished in modernising their Full Council Meeting has been cited as demonstrating best practice by the Improvement & Development Agency (IDeA).

The Formal Council meeting was convened and then adjourned for informal sessions to take place. Members were divided into four groups and effective Member-led discussions were held on what it meant to be community leaders both at ward level and Council level.

The session was interactive and enjoyed a high level of attendance and participation from Councillors who were enthusiastic about the new ways of working together.

Informal session outputs were reported back to Council and in some cases topics were opened up for optional, more detailed discussion in an alternative setting.

Recommendations

- 1. That the Council meeting include an informal session after the start of the meeting and that the meeting start time is brought forward to 3:45pm to accommodate this. (full recommendations on restructuring the Council Day can be found in section 3.10)**
- 2. That the Chairman and the Vice Chairman take a lead role in choosing suitable subjects for informal sessions. (The ongoing work planning of these sessions is covered in Section 3.8 Planning the Agenda.)**

3. **That informal sessions be Member-led and recorded by officers with a view to their outcomes being fed into the appropriate body and reported back to the Council.**

3.8 Planning the Agenda and the Meeting

If the scope of the content of Full Council Meetings is set to expand, the Panel see the need for agenda planning to be improved to help manage the developing agenda content of the Council. They believe that there is an important role for the Chairman in facilitating this agenda planning and contributing to the pre-planning of the meeting.

The Current System of Planning the Council Agenda

The content of the agenda is currently largely governed by Policy and Budget Framework items which come with a recommendation from the Executive. The Executive Forward Plan indicates which policies will come to the next Council Meeting. This system does not necessarily facilitate any long term planning of the Council agenda, and there exists no forward work plan for all Full Council business. This leads to some very long agendas.

Agenda planning needs to be revised to make provision for more innovative ways of dealing with business and a more issue-based agenda. There needs to be provision for the wider Council membership to be more involved in shaping future Council agendas. Members want to be able to contribute at an earlier stage. If this were facilitated through Group meetings it might also serve to re-invigorate Political Group attendance.

Recommendations – Planning the Council Agenda

1. **That the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council be involved in the pre-planning of the agenda, particularly in ensuring**
 - a. **space for community leadership items and**
 - b. **a balanced and engaging agenda (*see also section 3.9 below*)**
2. **That a draft Council agenda be made available to Political Groups well in advance of the normal lead in / despatch date for the agenda, in order to provide an opportunity for the wider membership to have some influence over the agenda.**
3. **That the Chief Executive, together with the Administration Leaders, the Chairman and the Vice Chairman of Council, devise an outline annual workplan for Council including:**
 - a. **Policy and Budget Framework Items for decision**
 - b. **Policy items for developmental debate**
 - c. **Community leadership Items**
 - d. **Content of informal sessions**

but allowing sufficient capacity for Member influence of each agenda through the process described above and acknowledging the impartiality of the Chairman or Vice Chairman at the meeting.
4. **That this annual workplan go out for consultation to the Members (or Groups)**

The Current System for Planning the Meeting

The Chief Executive and the Leaders of the Political Groups forming the current Administration are responsible for pre-planning the Council meeting. On the morning of Council, they discuss how each item on the agenda is likely to be dealt with. This is a time

of negotiation between the Political Groups. The Chairman of the Council is presently not involved in these discussions.

A yellow briefing sheet is produced for the Chairman and all Councillors that acts as a prompt for the meeting, setting out how each item will be handled, though clearly not prescribing outcomes.

Case law has created a robust framework of roles for the Chairman of a meeting. These include a responsibility for the Chairman to have a clear understanding of the objectives of the meeting and consequently what likely outcomes might be aimed for. This would suggest that the Chairman should be involved in the pre-planning of the meeting and should have an opportunity to influence discussions about how the agenda business should be dealt with.

The questionnaire results suggest that Members feel that this is an important process with 83% agreeing that pre-planning facilitates the efficient conduct of the Full Council Meeting and 80% saying it helps in Group discussion beforehand.

In the light of strong evidence in favour of more open ended debates at Council, the Panel believe that these pre-meetings need to identify those agenda items which can allow for such debate - – particularly in light of the new types of items potentially coming onto the agenda.

75% of Members said that there should be a more structured agenda with estimated timings for each item; this should also form part of the pre-meeting planning.

Member Motions

67% of Members say that Group motions should be made before a cut-off point on the day of the Council Meeting. This would aid the officers who need to verify the legality and accuracy of the content of these motions and enable the other Political Groups to establish their position on the matter.

Drafting of motions also needs to improve to avoid confusion that can lead to delays during the Meeting while clarity is sought or advice given. Without stepping into Political Group sensitivities, the Panel believe officers can and should offer direct advance help to Members in the drafting of motions. This will ensure that proposals have the best chance of being understood in the context of the core issue to be debated.

Recommendations – Planning the Meeting

- 5. That Council accept that pre-planning of the meeting is important and that the Chief Executive and the Administration Leaders continue to play a central role in this, together with the Chairman and/or Vice Chairman**
- 6. That in this process consideration be given to whether group voting is appropriate on those items where the Council is making a recommendation rather than a decision**
- 7. That the Council agenda include guide timings for each item**
- 8. That Members be urged to enlist the support of Officers in the drafting of Member debating motions well in advance of the meeting**
- 9. That Members be urged to issue all debating motions to the Chief Executive and other Political Groups by no later than 12 noon on Council Day.**

3.9 The Culture of the meeting

The Role of the Chairman and Vice Chairman

The role of the Chairman of the Council is the most influential at Full Council Meetings and the incumbent has a significant part to play in its success. Responsibility lies with Political Groups in making appropriate nominations to the offices of Chairman and Vice Chairman.

An overwhelming 97% of Members agreed that the Chairman should receive obligatory training to empower them to manage the meeting effectively. In order to deliver this training in good time the Panel believe that notice needs to be given of the Chairman and Vice Chairman appointments well in advance of their term in office.

The Council is a high-profile, large assembly that has many procedural rules governing its business and the management of the debating process. 70% of Members agreed that the Council Meeting is constrained by these procedural rules. Occasionally important debating points are crowded out, and the position of those who offer alternative views is lost, because insufficient time was allowed for points to be aired.

A competent, trained Chairman should have the authority to facilitate the meeting by exercising a high level of discretion in managing debate/discussion. 59% agreed that the Chairman should have the freedom to conduct the meeting as (s)he feels appropriate.

There is also room to develop the role of the Vice Chairman particularly in managing the timing of agenda items and monitoring speakers.

Recommendations - The Role of the Chairman

1. **That Political Groups make considered choices in nominating Members to be the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council, in view of the critical nature of the role in the context of the Council meeting.**
2. **That as a matter of routine (though not in an election year) Council agrees the Chairman and Vice Chairman designate at the January Council meeting prior to the beginning of their term.**
3. **That the Chairman and Vice Chairman receive obligatory training prior to their term of office.**
4. **That the Chairman of the Council should have more power to**
 - a. **relax rules if debate is going well – e.g allow more time and more speakers**
 - b. **curtail debate if not constructive and quality poor as long as there is sufficient balance in contributions**
 - c. **waive some procedural rules and thus exercise wide discretion in the management of debates and discussions**
5. **That the Vice Chairman take a more active role in Council meetings, accepting responsibility for time management of agenda items, whilst the Chairman presides over the proceedings.**

Member Conduct

At the beginning of this report the Panel expressed concern about the effect a poor perception of the Full Council Meeting could have on the reputation of the Council as a whole. This concern was echoed by informal discussions with Members and past Chairs.

The conduct of Members at Council meetings speaks volumes to the outside world, who are constantly judging whether the Council will manage the local area effectively and professionally. People will only follow those they respect. There is little doubt that the

manner of dress, Members' comportment while seated in the Chamber, and the amount of movement around the Chamber during debates all contribute to the perceptions of the people who attend Council meetings.

It is anticipated that the changes suggested in this report will go some way to improving the quality and atmosphere of Full Council. More opportunity for meaningful debate and more engaging content should overcome some Councillor frustration. Also, the provision of a Council Tea will contribute to sustained concentration levels during the meeting.

The enhanced role of the Chairman together with a timed agenda should also facilitate a more efficient meeting.

Nevertheless, each individual Member is responsible for conducting themselves in an appropriate manner that adequately reflects their position in the local community. This responsibility is more pronounced when that Councillor is 'on show' at a Full Council Meeting.

Not only do Members lead their communities they also set an example for officers in the Council who are consistently encouraged to demonstrate the Council's culture principles of being efficient, effective and courteous at all times.

Recommendations - Member Conduct

6. **That there Members respect the role of the Chairman and Vice Chairman and that abide by the Chairman's ruling at all times**
7. **That Members respect the formality of the meeting and conduct themselves in an efficient, effective and courteous manner**
8. **That all-Member training sessions be held to cover the following subjects:**
 - a. **Effective debating**
 - b. **The role and working of Full Council**

(These could be undertaken as part of an informal session.)

"Massive paper work needs to be put into better English and condensed."

Questionnaire respondent

Agenda Papers

There is evidence to suggest that some Councillors and members of the public find the agenda papers for a Council Meeting frustrating and unclear. The Panel believe that work needs to be done to improve the readability of papers both for the Members and for the public. This is true of individual reporting style as well as agenda content, structure and design.

An overwhelming 90% of Councillors say that there should be an executive summary before each item, with 83% finding agenda papers not user-friendly.

Recommendations - Agenda Papers

9. **That Council commission a review of agenda paper style and content by the Head of Democratic Services.**

3.10 The Council Day and Venue

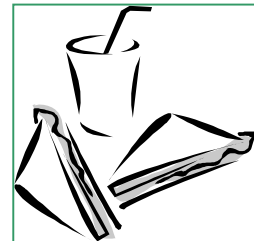
The Panel have explored the possibility of organising the Council Day in a different way in order to make more effective use of the time available. In a workshop hosted by the Panel, Members were asked to design their ideal Council Day and Meeting. The outcome of most

groups was to bring the start of Council proceedings forward to accommodate new ways of working.

If all Councillors booked out more time in their diaries at the beginning of a Council Session then more could be achieved in the typical Council Day. The Panel are advocating that the Council Day be seen by Members as a whole package rather than as just a formal evening meeting. This package could be made up of an informal session, a Council Tea, Group meetings and the formal Council Meeting.

A Council Tea

The Panel is persuaded that an important factor in the Council Day should be to maintain interest stamina and concentration by providing timely refreshments. A Council Tea as an event would enable all councillors to meet informally before the start of the formal meeting. It could be an important contributor in continuing to foster good relationships between Councillors and offers an informal opportunity for networking and catching up on business with colleagues.



From the Panel's consultation with Members it is obvious that most Members would support this notion.

The average cost of providing eight Council Teas in a year would be approximately £4800.

Venue

67% of Members believe that all Full Council Meetings should be held in the Chamber in the Guildhall. The Panel agree that in terms of location and design it is the most appropriate venue within Bath & North East Somerset, in spite of its physical shortcomings.

Many Members are dissatisfied with the comfort of the seats and the impracticality of the tables. There is frequent criticism of the audibility of speakers and the alleged inadequacies of the microphone system.

Nevertheless, it is a prestigious room purposefully designed for a full assembly of elected Members. It originally housed the 48-Member Bath City Council but is less suited to the 65-Member current Council. Until a superior alternative is found, Council should make what improvements it can to facilitate a productive meeting environment within the heritage limitations of the room.

Recommendation

1. **That Council agree to introduce the Council Tea as an all Member event (rather than as refreshments served in group rooms)**
2. **That the length of the Council activity on Council day be extended and follow the following pattern**

3:45pm Start of formal proceedings (any urgent items taken here)

4:00pm Adjournment for informal session

5:00pm Break for Council Tea

6:00pm Group Meetings

6:30pm Formal part of Council meeting reconvenes

10:00pm (latest) Close

3. **That the Council Chamber continue to be the meeting venue but that new technology be explored for**
 - a. **Visual presentation and**
 - b. **Improved audio equipment,****with a working trial of optional schemes before the end of the current Council year**
4. **That a radio microphone be available in the Chamber for the duration of the meeting to assist public speakers and other attendees.**

3.11 Next Steps

The Council's consideration of this report is the starting point for change. Assuming these recommendations are accepted, the Panel believes that a further paper needs to outline the practical measures and decisions that must be taken to give effect to these changes. When the Council has that implementation plan, it will be in a better position to determine the timescale for change.

The Panel hope that these changes can be delivered within a framework that avoids the need for constant updating of the Constitution and that the implementation plan will outline ways of achieving this. The Plan should be produced by the Head of Democratic Services in consultation with a small subgroup of this Panel.

Recommendations

1. **That following the acceptance of these recommendations the Head of Democratic Services report back to the next meeting of Council with a full implementation plan including any resource implications**
2. **That the implementation plan contain provision avoiding the need to alter the Council Constitution to reflect agreed changes, until the next planned review of the Constitution**
3. **That a working group meeting six-monthly be set up to**
 - a. **Initially to assist in the development of the implementation plan**
 - b. **To review the implementation of the agreed recommendations after an appropriate period of operation; and**
 - c. **to work towards further improvement.**

That this working group comprise the Steering Group for this review and that it report to the Corporate Issues and Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Panel.

4. List of Appendices

1.	Briefing presentation from Head of Democratic Services
2.	Results of question asked of other Council Member Support functions concerning improvements to Full Council
3.	Lessons from visit to Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council
4.	National guidance on 'Modernising Full Council' – INLOGOV Seminar
5.	Results of open discussions with Members (O&S, Council Executive and individuals)
6.	Results of Member questionnaires
7.	Extract from O&S Chairs meeting notes
8.	Results of Public questionnaires
9.	Head of Service discussion of Full Council Meeting
10.	All Member workshop outcomes
11.	Workshop with past Chairmen of Council
12.	Review Terms of Reference

For a copy of these appendices please email scrutiny@bathnes.gov.uk or call 01225 396053

Review Steering Group

Cllr. Martin Veal

Cllr. Hattie Ajderian

Cllr. Keith Kirwan

Graham Russell (Head of Democratic Services)

Anna Burgess (Overview & Scrutiny Project Officer)



South Tyneside Council

Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating & Call-in Committee

Date: 2 September 2008

Scrutiny Commission on the role of Borough Council: Scoping Report

Report of the Executive Director Regeneration and Resources

Council Leader: Councillor I Malcolm

Why has the Report come to Scrutiny?

1. This report seeks Members' approval on the proposed scope for the Commission on the role of Borough Council.

How is this linked with the Community Strategy aims and objectives?

2. 'Involving people to have a greater voice and influence over decision-making and the delivery of local services' is a top ten-priority objective. It is intrinsic across all of our priority themes with specific objectives detailed in the 'making communities safer and stronger' theme.

What are Members asked to do?

3. Members are asked to consider the proposals detailed in the report, which include agreeing the terms of reference and scope of the Commission.

How will Members' views make a difference?

4. Members' views are important to ensure that the Commission focuses on the areas they feel are the most important. The involvement and experience of Members and their role as civic leaders is crucial to involving people to have a greater voice and influence over decision-making and service delivery.

Performing Together Reference: S2 – Empowering people to have a greater voice and influence

Contact Officer: Jacqueline Appleton, Scrutiny Policy Officer, 424 6022

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Introduction

5. At an extraordinary meeting of Borough Council, held on 24 January 2008, it was requested that the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating and Call-In Committee undertake a scrutiny commission to examine the role and function of Borough Council, examining best practice in other authorities.
6. At the Scrutiny Work Programme Workshop held on 13 June 2008, to discuss the Committee's future Work Programme, Members considered the request and agreed to undertake a review within the 2008/09 Municipal Year.

Background Information

7. Over the last decade the Government has modernised the democratic system, which has included important changes in our participatory democracy. Local Councils have become more visible and accountable, with greater devolution to local neighbourhoods.
8. Consultation is ongoing on the White Paper, 'Communities in Control; Real People, real power', which centres on passing power into the hands of local communities, building on the work still in progress from the 2006 White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities.
9. Members will already be aware of the changes brought about through the Local Government and Public Involvement In Health Act 2007, which aims to develop and strengthen the overview and scrutiny function. Some functional changes in terms of Scrutiny Committee have already been implemented to assist in accommodating the Act.
10. Due to the changes required in response to the 2007 Act, there are a number of pieces of work being carried out, involving various aspects of the Council, committees and the constitution. In addition to the Commission to be undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Members should be aware of:
 - The 4 * Plus Project 'to implement appropriate and meaningful initiatives to increase public involvement in Council meetings, Scrutiny and CAFs in consultation with partners.'
 - The Local Government Act 2007 – Steering Group.
 - A comprehensive review of the Constitution.

The role of Council

11. Borough Council is a meeting that all 54 Members are entitled to attend and to speak and vote. The Council is responsible for the determination of its Budget and Policy Framework. It is responsible for regulatory and other non-Cabinet functions and has a role in holding the Cabinet to account.

Purpose of the Commission

12. All Scrutiny Commission work undertaken by Members has a key role in our performance management framework.
13. The Commission will give Members the opportunity to examine the role of Borough Council, ensuring that, in line with the Constitution it:
- Facilitates the community leadership role of the Council.
 - Promotes partnership working with other public bodies, residents and stakeholders.
 - Provides enhanced opportunities for residents to be involved in decision-making.
 - Assists in achieving improvements in services and the drive for Best Value.
 - Helps the Council to deliver its vision and top 10 priorities.
14. In order to examine the role of Borough Council, Members may wish to consider the following terms of reference:
- Investigate how other authorities operate full Council meetings.
 - Examine what initiatives are being used to increase public involvement.
 - Assessment of current performance and associated costs and evaluate how we compare to other authorities.
 - Examine national policy drivers and advice from leading academics in this field.

Consultation

15. The Commission will gather information from a variety of sources, including information provided by Members, Officers and external partners.
16. A significant part of the information gathering will involve Members investigating how other authorities conduct full Council meetings,

including methods employed to create opportunities for residents to be involved.

Timetable

17. The Commission will be conducted over a number of meetings. Time will be programmed to allow Members to visit other authorities. The timescales relating to the visits will be dependant upon the availability, cooperation and meeting dates and times of the authorities Members agree to visit.

Financial and value for money Implications

18. The Scrutiny Committee will not make any decisions with financial implications; their role is to make recommendations to Cabinet.

Legal Implications

19. The Scrutiny Committee will not make any decisions with legal implications; their role is to make recommendations to Cabinet.

Risk Implications

20. There are no risk implications at present.

Equality and Diversity Implications

21. We must provide enhanced opportunities for all of our residents to be involved in decision-making. To facilitate the community leadership role of the Council we should ensure that, if residents do want to be involved in decision-making, meetings are accessible and do not have a negative impact or discriminate in any way.

Environmental and Sustainability Implications

22. There are no environmental and sustainability implications at present.

Recommendations

23. Members are asked to consider the report and agree the proposed scope and timetable of the Commission.

24. Members are also asked to consider whether they wish to call anyone else to provide further evidence or to employ any other methods to gather information during the Commission.

Scrutiny Commission on the role of Borough Council Scoping Report

Report of the Executive Director Regeneration and Resources

The following is a list of the background papers (excluding exempt papers) relied upon in the preparation of the above report:

Background Paper	File Ref:	File Location
Nil		



South Tyneside Council

Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating & Call-in Committee

Date: 7 October 2008

Scrutiny Commission on the role of Borough Council: programme

Report of the Executive Director Regeneration and Resources

Council Leader: Councillor I Malcolm

Why has the Report come to Scrutiny?

1. This report follows on from the agreement of the scope for the Commission on the role of Borough Council to consider a programme for the commission.

How is this linked with the Community Strategy aims and objectives?

2. 'Involving people to have a greater voice and influence over decision-making and the delivery of local services' is a top ten-priority objective. It is intrinsic across all of our priority themes with specific objectives detailed in the 'making communities safer and stronger' theme.

What are Members asked to do?

3. Members are asked to consider the programme to see whether they feel it will fulfil the agreed terms of reference and scope of the Commission.

How will Members' views make a difference?

4. Members' views are important to ensure that the Commission focuses on the areas they feel are the most important. The involvement and experience of Members and their role as civic leaders is crucial to involving people and ensuring that they have a greater voice and influence over decision-making and service delivery.

Performing Together Reference: S2 – Empowering people to have a greater voice and influence

Contact Officer: Paul Baldasera, Scrutiny Policy Officer, 424 6022

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Introduction

5. At the last meeting of the committee, the scope of the commission on the role and function of Borough Council was agreed.
6. The terms of reference for the commission are to
 - Investigate how other authorities operate full Council meetings.
 - Examine what initiatives are being used to increase public involvement.
 - Assess current performance and associated costs and evaluate how we compare to other authorities.
 - Examine national policy drivers and seek advice from leading academics in this field.
7. This report gives further suggestions as to how the commission can be undertaken.

What we need to find out

8. To answer the above questions, we will need to undertake the following pieces of work

Question	What we need to do	How are we going to do it
How do other authorities operate full Council meetings?	We need to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Conduct a survey of councils asking a number of key questions about the operation of their meetings – Visit councils who Members feel have something innovative to see Look at what we could consider changing to make council meetings more effective	Survey to be developed in consultation with members and sent to all councils in England Analysis of returns and visits to innovative councils Visit To Birmingham who undertook a similar Scrutiny Review in 2005 Desk research into innovative ideas such as

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Submission of Leader's / Lead Member Reports – Leader's Question Time – Annual State of the Borough Address – Assembly Session with Partners – Themed Debates – Dealing with the "pink" reports for decision on the budget and policy framework – Debate on "notices of motion" – Debating petitions at the Council meeting – Deputations / representations from individuals or organisations – Presentations / presentation of awards – Civic Advisory Panel – Physical improvements – Timing of meetings – Webcast of meetings
<p>What initiatives are being used to increase public involvement?</p>	<p>Find out what we are doing to attract people to council meetings</p> <p>Look at any good practice in this area</p>	<p>Presentation from Julie Turner (Senior Area Manager) Tracey Moore (Youth Participation Officer) Russ Cochrane (Democratic Services Manager)</p> <p>Summary of good practice from beacon councils for Youth Engagement in the Democratic process</p>

		(Gateshead, Lancashire, Lewisham, Derwentside, Wakefield, West Sussex, Wirral)
What are our performance and associated costs and how do we compare to other authorities?	<p>Find out our own costs and what measures of success we use. We can include questions in council survey</p> <p>Find out what members think about the council meetings</p> <p>Find out what the public thinks</p>	<p>Analysis of costs/performance based on questions to be included in survey</p> <p>Workshops asking members about council meetings – what is good, what can be improved</p> <p>Survey forms to be handed out at council meetings in October and November</p>
What are the national policy drivers and advice from leading academics in this field.	<p>We need to look at the implications of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 2006 White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities/ The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. – The White Paper, 'Communities in Control; Real People, Real power' <p>We also need to find out what academics in the field say about what councils should be doing.</p>	<p>Brian T.Scott (Head of Corporate Governance)</p> <p>Discussion about new legislation/guidance and how the constitution needs to change.</p> <p>Coordinating approach with other South Tyneside panels and groups looking at the implications of this legislation/guidance</p> <p>Contact is being made with IDeA/Inlogov with a view to a “leading light” in the field to come and give views to the commission</p>

Timetable

9. Given the breadth of work that needs to be undertaken and the time to undertake survey work, the following timetable is suggested:-
- October to December
 - Agree Survey
 - Send out and analyse results
 - Determination and Benchmarking of costs
 - Agree councils to contact/visit with Members
 - Survey of people attending council meetings
 - Desk research
 - Brian T Scott – present “witness” statements to the committee
 - Tracy Moore – present “witness” statements to the committee
 - Russ Cochrane – present “witness” statements to the committee

 - January to February
 - Asses and evaluate good Practice from Beacon councils
 - Visit to other councils
 - Leading academic to be invited to a meeting of the commission
 - Member Workshops

Financial and value for money Implications

10. There are costs associated with this activity, particularly visiting other councils. The thorough analysis of survey information and desk research will ensure that Members will only be asked to visit other councils where there is clear value in doing so.

Legal Implications

11. The Scrutiny Committee will not make any decisions with legal implications; their role is to make recommendations to Cabinet.

Risk Implications

12. There are no risk implications at present.

Equality and Diversity Implications

13. We must provide enhanced opportunities for all of our residents to be involved in decision-making. To facilitate the community leadership role of the Council we should ensure that, if residents do want to be involved in decision-making, meetings are accessible and do not have a negative impact or discriminate in any way.

Environmental and Sustainability Implications

14. There are no environmental and sustainability implications at present.

Recommendations

15. Members are asked to consider the report and agree the proposed programme and timetable for the Commission.

16. Members are also asked to consider whether they wish to call anyone else to provide further evidence or to employ any other methods to gather information during the Commission.

Scrutiny Commission on the role of Borough Council: programme

Report of the Executive Director Regeneration and Resources

The following is a list of the background papers (excluding exempt papers) relied upon in the preparation of the above report:

Background Paper	File Ref:	File Location
Nil		



South Tyneside Council

Overview Scrutiny Co-ordinating and Call-in Committee

Date: 27 February 2009

Scrutiny Commission on Full Council: Survey Results

Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating and Call-in Committee

Cabinet Portfolio/Lead Member: Deputy Leader, Cllr Alan Kerr

Purpose of Report

1. This report gives details of the full council survey that closed on 30 January 2009

Why Has the Report Come to Scrutiny?

2. The survey will give Members a picture of how other councils run their council meetings, what reviews have taken place around this area in other council areas and whether there are any areas of good practice or innovative arrangements that would warrant further investigation.

What Are Members Asked To Do?

3. Members are asked to consider the result of this survey, discuss the conclusions and how we can use the information to shape our development of council meetings and advise officers on further follow up work.

Performing Together Reference: M5 1/1

Contact Officer: Paul Baldasera ext.6002

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Background

Summary of survey results

4. Appendix 1 shows the full results of the survey. These are summarised as follows
5. 199 councils responded to the survey out of 375 sent the survey link by email. This represents a response rate of 53%, which is quite favourable for a survey of this type.
6. In terms of the type of councils that responded, this was as follows

type of council	number	percentage
County council	22	11.1%
District council	120	60.3%
Metropolitan council	14	7.0%
Unitary Authority	31	15.6%
London Borough	9	4.5%

7. In the light of the heavy bias of district councils in the response, the results of the survey need to be taken in that context.
8. Only 10 responding councils had an elected mayor.

Timing of meetings

9. The large majority of councils (73%) hold full council meetings every two months with around 13% holding them every month and 10% holding them every quarter.
10. 126 or 63% of councils held their meetings on an evening (start time after 5.30) with 35 (17.5%) holding them in the afternoon and 25 (12.5%) in the morning. Interestingly, one council alternates between a 2pm and a 7pm start time.

Restrictions on motions

11. 149 (75%) of councils had some restriction on motions and when they can be proposed. Most of these restrictions related to time limits in which motions must be submitted. These range from 5 to 15 days before the meeting (ours is 8). Many mentioned that this only applies to motions with notice. Standard motions (i.e. amendments, procedural motions, accuracy of minutes) can be moved without notice, as is the case in South Tyneside.

12. Other restrictions mentioned include:

- Motions must only be about matters for which the council has responsibility or affects the area;
- Motions with financial implications cannot be moved except at the budget meeting;
- One motion per political group;
- Must be at least two Members (ours is five);
- Cannot rescind or amend any resolution which has been passed in the previous six months or be the same motion rejected within the previous six months;

Features in Council meetings

13. The following table shows how many councils include the following features within their meetings:

State of the Borough Debate	39	19.6%
Leader/Mayor's annual speech (addressing policy areas for the year)	70	35.2%
"Green paper" policy debates	10	5.0%
Leader's question time	85	42.7%
Lead Member/Portfolio holder question time	123	61.8%
Themed Debates	34	17.1%
Debating petitions	34	17.1%
Annual meeting with partners	11	5.5%
Public Questions	141	70.9%

14. Nearly three quarters of the responding councils fielded public questions, two thirds had a Lead Member question time and nearly half had a Leader's question time.

15. Respondents were further questioned as to whether they thought these measure were effective. Most of the measures generally were positively rated. The measures that seemed to work best were.

- Leader/Mayor's annual speech;
- Leader's questions time;
- Lead Member question time.

Style of minutes

16. Only three (1.5%) councils from the respondents used verbatim minutes. The majority either recorded "debate summary and decision" or "questions/answers and decisions".

17. "Other" answers mainly referred to various forms of summarised styles. One council produced a full sound recording on the website supplemented by a very concise minute.

Council meeting and Scrutiny reports

18. Only 14 councils (7%) had featured a debate on a scrutiny report before it went to the Executive.

Attendance at council meetings

19. The vast majority of councils (149 or 75%) said that they had an average of 1-10 members of the public at council meetings. 11 councils said they attracted more than 30.

Webcasting meetings

20. Webcasting full council meetings is still a relatively new innovation, with only 19 councils providing this service. However, quite a few more councils said that they do plan to bring this in.
21. Given our own council chamber's inaccessibility to wheelchair users, it may be worth pursuing these councils to see how they organise this service, its cost, how effective it is and what the take up of the service is.

Innovative ideas

22. A high percentage of respondents reported that they have either undertaken or are planning to undertake a review of the constitution, council meetings, scrutiny or area working.
23. Full details of the results can be seen in the appendix to this report (see results to Q11). Some of the more interesting ideas are as follows
- 15 minutes of public questions with a time limit of three minutes for any person speaking. Written replies received. (Devon, Bath and NE Somerset, North Warwickshire);
 - Opposition topics for debate at alternate meetings (Wychavon);
 - "Hot topic" debates (Ossendale);
 - Sound recordings of council meetings available on website (Sutton, Cornwall);
 - An annual policy council meeting held in November to debate and decide the Council's corporate plan priorities for the forthcoming year (Orley);
 - Annual portfolio holder reports (NE Lincs);
 - Themed debates from partner organisations (South Bucks, Castlepoint);
 - Leader reports on work of cabinet (Wiltshire, Rochford);
 - Council sometimes meets in "committee mode" which allows more freedom for debate, officers to give advice etc (Calderdale);

- Question time which allows councillors to raise ward issues (Mid Beds, Lewes);
- Questions time for portfolio holders (Warwick);
- Presentation of petitions by public (Maidstone, Huntingdonshire Dorset);
- Agenda and recommendations displayed on screens (Sunderland, Sutton, Derbyshire, Shrewsbury);
- Youth Council regular report to council (Arun);

Reviews undertaken

24. The appendix gives the answers in full when councils were asked to give details of reviews that have been or are being undertaken.
25. As you would expect in the light of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, most had either reviewed or were reviewing their constitution (173 or 97%) and Scrutiny (129 or 65%). Just under half (91 or 46%) had reviewed their Area Committees or area based working.
26. As for reviewing the full council meetings, 57 (29%) said that they had completed a review and a further 30 (15%) said they were planning to do so.
27. When asked to elaborate on these reviews, the most interesting ones in terms of looking at the full council meeting were as follows:
- Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead recently undertook a review of the Council's decision-making processes, mostly relating to the Cabinet/Scrutiny relationship, procedures for handling petitions, debate at Cabinet, etc;
 - Some councils who have done reviews of full council meetings have removed the reporting up of Cabinet and Committee minutes to the Council agenda which has freed up time for more meaningful debate. (North Dorset, Alnwick, Chorely);
 - Review of Standing Orders to remove some of the restrictions on debate (Exeter);
 - Brent Council Members have asked that a review of the operation of Full Council is carried out in order to reduce the number of meetings (currently 8 which includes 2 in May) and to remove some of the less productive items;
 - A Democratic Commission has been set up to examine the democratic process as a whole as Redcar & Cleveland. A series of six workshops comprising multiple sessions will cover: Effective & Ethical Governance, Forthcoming Legislation, Neighbourhood Working, Member Development, Models of Localism and a Final Report;

- Milton Keynes have a Constitution Commission whose role is to review the Constitution and particularly the Council Meeting;
- Review of Constitution and Council meetings planned for June in Surrey County Council;
- Hull County Council did a scrutiny review of council meetings in 2007;
- An overview and scrutiny review of the Full Council meeting was done by Bath NE Somerset Council in 2006, as a result of which a number of changes were introduced to the operation of the meeting. These were modified following changes to the democratic structure following the May 2007 election;
- Northampton have reviewed their council meeting as part of a constitutional review;
- Liverpool Council have completed their review of council meetings;
- Oxford have undertaken a review which has resulted in the rewriting of their constitution in plain English, and Council meeting procedures tightened up in an attempt to reduce the time taken for meetings;
- Worthing have very recently streamlined their Council meeting process to move away from "doing Committee work in Council" to concentrating on the more strategic, Policy Framework issues;
- October 2006, Sedgemoor Council reviewed their Council meetings;
- Blackpool reviewed the role of the Council meetings several years ago which led to the change in frequency of meetings from fortnightly to the current system and the introduction of the Executive Reports;
- Newcastle: review of their City Council is ongoing.

Reviews sent as a result of the survey

28. Three Councils sent copies of their reviews. These were:

- Birmingham (which we have already seen);
- Hyndburn Borough Council;
- Kensington and Chelsea.

What can we conclude?

29. Clearly, from the strength of response and the amount of interest this survey has generated, this is a "hot topic" for councils up and down the country, with the majority actively looking at how they can develop their democratic systems to meet the challenges of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

30. Some specific issues to consider:

- Many councils seem to favour evening meetings. That was one of the issues that led to Council setting up the Commission.
- Not all Councils meet on a monthly cycle. It might be worth considering when the Council needs to meet to carry out statutory business.
- There are some measures that other councils operate which they say work well. We need to look at whether we should consider them, in particular:
 - Leader/Mayor's annual speech;
 - Leader's questions time;
 - Lead Member question time.

This would need to be considered in conjunction with our current practice of including Cabinet, Scrutiny and Standards Committee minutes on the agenda.

- Verbatim minutes are not popular and do provide difficulties for those who have to record them. But two Councils do sound record the meetings and some Councils have arranged web casting.
- Attendance at our council meetings is similar to a number of councils. We may wish to look at those councils that have 30+. Measures we could take could include taking the council to different venues, screens showing agendas/resolutions etc.
- There are a number of innovations that appear in results that Members may wish to discuss and possibly follow up with individual councils.

What shall we do as a result?

31. Members will want to look at the result of this survey, draw some conclusions and point out areas that they wish to pursue, particularly looking at the innovations in para. 22.
32. We may also wish to contact those councils who are either doing or have completed a similar review to benchmark Members views against.

Legal Implications

33. We can reach and advise officers on further follow up work. Any changes must be reflected in the council's constitution and be within the national legal framework for the operation of Local Government.

Risk Implications

34. There are no risk implications at present.

Equality and Diversity Implications

35. We must provide enhanced opportunities for all of our residents to be involved in decision-making. To facilitate the community leadership role of the Council we should ensure that, if residents do want to be involved in decision-making, meetings are accessible and do not have a negative impact or discriminate in any way.

Environmental and Sustainability Implications

36. There are no environmental and sustainability implications at present.

Financial Implications

37. None at this stage

What Are Members Asked To Do?

38. Members are asked to consider the result of this survey, discuss the conclusions and how we can use the information to shape our development of council meetings and advise officers on further follow up work.

Scrutiny Commission on Full Council: Survey Results

Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating and Call-in Committee

The following is a list of the background papers (excluding exempt papers) relied upon in the preparation of the above report:

Background Paper	File Ref:	File Location
Results from National Survey of Councils	Survey Results	Democratic Services, Town Hall, S Shields

Council Meeting Survey

Actual Results – Base = 199

South Tyneside Council is undertaking a scrutiny commission on the role of the full council meeting with a view to making some recommendations on how it can be improved.

To help us get a full understanding of how other councils operate their council meetings and to make sure we capture best practice and experiences in this area, we are conducting a survey of councils across England.

We would be grateful if you could spend some time answering a few short questions on how your full council meetings are organised and conducted.

We will send the results of the survey to all participating councils so that we can share the learning as widely as possible.

Q1 What type of council are you?

- 22 *County council*
- 120 *District council*
- 14 *Metropolitan council*
- 31 *Unitary authority*
- 9 *London borough*

Q2 Do you have an elected mayor?

- 10 *Yes*
- 185 *No*

Q3 How often does your full council meet?

- 26 *Every month*
- 145 *Every two months*
- 21 *Every quarter*
- 0 *Twice a year*
- 0 *Annually*

Q4 Which day of the week does your full council meet and at what time?

197

Q5 Are there any restrictions on who can propose motions and when they can be proposed?

- Yes*
- 149
- 46 *No*

Q5a If yes, please specify.

144

Q6 Do your council meetings include the following? (please tick as appropriate).

- 39 *State of the Borough Debate*
- 70 *Leader/Mayor's annual speech (addressing policy areas for the year)*
- 10 *"Green paper" policy debates*
- 85 *Leader's question time*
- 123 *Lead Member/Portfolio holder question time*
- 34 *Themed Debates*
- 34 *Debating petitions*
- 11 *Annual meeting with partners*
- 141 *Public Questions*

Q6 And, if so how well do you think they work:

	<i>Never works well</i>	<i>Sometimes works well</i>	<i>Works well more than not</i>	<i>Mostly works well</i>	<i>Always works well</i>
State of the Borough Debate	2	10	10	9	5
Leader/Mayor's annual speech (addressing policy areas for the year)	0	5	8	33	17
"Green paper" policy debates	0	1	2	5	2
Leader's question time	1	11	9	47	13

	Lead Member/Portfolio holder question time	1	14	22	65	17
	Themed Debates	0	9	2	19	3
	Debating petitions	0	10	8	13	2
	Annual meeting with partners	0	0	2	8	1
	Public Questions	6	27	26	60	19
Q7	Which of the choices below best describes the style of minute taking used for your full council meetings at present?					
	<i>Debate summary and decisions</i>					
	117					
	60 <i>Questions, Answers and Decisions</i>					
	3 <i>Verbatim</i>					
	31 <i>Other</i>					
Q7a	Other (please specify)					28
Q8	Thinking about the last 12 months, has your council meeting featured a debate on any scrutiny review report before it went to the Executive?					
	14 <i>Yes</i>					
	180 <i>No</i>					
Q9	Thinking about the last 12 months, on average, how many members of the public attend your full council meeting?					
	6 <i>None</i>					
	149 <i>1-10</i>					
	23 <i>11-20</i>					
	7 <i>21-30</i>					
	11 <i>30+</i>					
Q10	Does your council webcast full council meetings?					
	19 <i>Yes</i>					
	175 <i>No</i>					
	1 <i>Some meetings</i>					
Q11	Are there any innovative features you have introduced that you feel improved your council meetings? If so, please give us details below.					78
Q12	Are you or have you done a review of:					
		<i>At present/done</i>		<i>Planning to</i>		
	Constitution	134		39		
	Council meetings	57		30		
	Scrutiny	109		20		
	Area Committees/Area based working	71		20		
Q13	If you have done or are doing a review in any of these areas, please give details below.					157
Q14	Your contact details:					195

Thank you for completing this survey.

Please complete by Friday 30th January 2009

Council Meeting Survey

Percentage Results – Base - 199

South Tyneside Council is undertaking a scrutiny commission on the role of the full council meeting with a view to making some recommendations on how it can be improved.

To help us get a full understanding of how other councils operate their council meetings and to make sure we capture best practice and experiences in this area, we are conducting a survey of councils across England.

We would be grateful if you could spend some time answering a few short questions on how your full council meetings are organised and conducted.

We will send the results of the survey to all participating councils so that we can share the learning as widely as possible.

Q1 What type of council are you?

- 11.1% *County council*
- 60.3% *District council*
- 7.0% *Metropolitan council*
- 15.6% *Unitary authority*
- 4.5% *London borough*

Q2 Do you have an elected mayor?

- 5.0% *Yes*
- 93.0% *No*

Q3 How often does your full council meet?

- 13.1% *Every month*
- 72.9% *Every two months*
- 10.6% *Every quarter*
- 0.0% *Twice a year*
- 0.0% *Annually*

Q4 Which day of the week does your full council meet and at what time?

99.0%

Q5 Are there any restrictions on who can propose motions and when they can be proposed?

- 74.9% *Yes*
- 23.1% *No*

Q5a If yes, please specify.

96.6%

Q6 Do your council meetings include the following? (please tick as appropriate).

- 19.6% *State of the Borough Debate*
- 35.2% *Leader/Mayor's annual speech (addressing policy areas for the year)*
- 5.0% *"Green paper" policy debates*
- 42.7% *Leader's question time*
- 61.8% *Lead Member/Portfolio holder question time*
- 17.1% *Themed Debates*
- 17.1% *Debating petitions*
- 5.5% *Annual meeting with partners*
- 70.9% *Public Questions*

Q6 And, if so how well do you think they work:

	<i>Never works well</i>	<i>Sometimes works well</i>	<i>Works well more than not</i>	<i>Mostly works well</i>	<i>Always works well</i>
State of the Borough Debate	1.0%	5.0%	5.0%	4.5%	2.5%
Leader/Mayor's annual speech (addressing policy areas for the year)	0.0%	2.5%	4.0%	16.6%	8.5%
"Green paper" policy debates	0.0%	0.5%	1.0%	2.5%	1.0%
Leader's question time	0.5%	5.5%	4.5%	23.6%	6.5%

Lead Member/Portfolio holder question time	0.5%	7.0%	11.1%	32.7%	8.5%
Themed Debates	0.0%	4.5%	1.0%	9.5%	1.5%
Debating petitions	0.0%	5.0%	4.0%	6.5%	1.0%
Annual meeting with partners	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	4.0%	0.5%
Public Questions	3.0%	13.6%	13.1%	30.2%	9.5%

Q7 Which of the choices below best describes the style of minute taking used for your full council meetings at present?

- 58.8% *Debate summary and decisions*
- 30.2% *Questions, Answers and Decisions*
- 1.5% *Verbatim*
- 15.6% *Other*

Q7a Other (please specify)

90.3%

Q8 Thinking about the last 12 months, has your council meeting featured a debate on any scrutiny review report *before* it went to the Executive?

- 7.0% *Yes*
- 90.5% *No*

Q9 Thinking about the last 12 months, on average, how many members of the public attend your full council meeting?

- 3.0% *None*
- 74.9% *1-10*
- 11.6% *11-20*
- 3.5% *21-30*
- 5.5% *30+*

Q10 Does your council webcast full council meetings?

- 9.5% *Yes*
- 87.9% *No*
- 0.5% *Some meetings*

Q11 Are there any innovative features you have introduced that you feel improved your council meetings? If so, please give us details below.

39.2%

Q12 Are you or have you done a review of:

	<i>At present/done</i>	<i>Planning to</i>
Constitution	67.3%	19.6%
Council meetings	28.6%	15.1%
Scrutiny	54.8%	10.1%
Area Committees/Area based working	35.7%	10.1%

Q13 If you have done or are doing a review in any of these areas, please give details below.

78.9%

Q14 Your contact details:

98.0%

Thank you for completing this survey.

Please complete by Friday 30th January 2009

Council Meeting Survey

Results to Q4 – Which day of the week does your full council meet and at what time?

1. Thursday at 10.30 am
2. Usually Tuesday at 7pm
3. Wednesday 2 pm
4. Thursday at 10 am
5. Monday 2.00pm
6. Wednesday
7. Thursday 6pm
8. Monday Evening at 6.30 p.m.
9. Tuesday at 10.00am
10. Meet every three months apart from special meetings on a Tuesday at 7pm
11. Wednesday 7:30 pm
12. Tuesdays at 7.30pm
13. Tuesday 7.30pm
14. Tuesday, 10 am
15. Friday at 10.00am
16. Tuesday 6.30pm
17. Tuesday
18. Thursday - 7.30pm
19. Thursday 7pm
20. Friday 10.30am
21. Tuesdays 5.30pm
22. Wednesday 6.00pm
23. Tuesdays at 7pm
24. Wednesday 5.45pm
25. Thursday
26. Tuesday 19.30
27. Tuesdays at 7.30pm
28. Monday at 2.30 pm
29. Thursdays at 10.00am
30. Tuesday at 6.15pm
31. Thursdays - 6.15pm
32. Wednesday 10 am
33. Tuesday at 10.30am
34. Wednesday 7.00pm
35. Wednesday at 6:30 pm.
36. Tuesday at 7pm

37. Thursday at 6.30pm
38. Tuesday at 6.45pm
39. Mondays at 7pm
40. Tuesday 6pm
41. Monday 2.00pm
42. Wednesdays at 6 pm - meetings are held 8 times per year
43. Monday at 6.30pm
44. Monday at 7:15pm
45. Thursday at 4.30pm
46. Wednesday or Thursday - 4.00 pm
47. Monday 6.30pm
48. Wednesday 7.30
49. Generally Tuesdays at 7.00 p.m.
50. Tuesday at 6.30pm - in line with start time of other meetings
51. Wednesday 6.30 pm
52. Friday at 10.30 am
53. Tuesdays at 10.30
54. Thursday, 2.15pm
55. Usually Tuesdays at 7pm
56. Wednesdays at 4pm
57. Thursday at 7.00 p.m. (scheduled meetings)
58. Tuesdays at 6.00 pm
59. Wednesday at 6pm
60. Wednesday 7.30pm
61. Thursday at 2pm on a 6 weekly cycle
62. Thursday, 7.00 p.m.
63. Tuesday 5.30pm
64. Normally Tuesday commencing at 7.30pm
65. Tuesdays at 7.30 p.m.
66. Tuesday, every six weeks, at 10:30am
67. Monday at 6.30pm
68. Monday at 6.30 p.m.
69. Wednesday at 7pm
70. Thursdays at 2.00pm
71. Wednesday at 7pm
72. Wednesday at 6pm
73. The last Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm
74. Wednesday at 6.30 p.m.
75. Tuesday or Thursday, 7.30pm
76. Tuesday 7pm
77. Tuesday 6.00pm

78. Monday 2.00pm
79. Wednesdays
80. Monday at 10.00 am
81. Wednesday at 2pm
82. Tuesday 10.30am
83. Thursday 6.30 p.m.
84. Wednesday at 6pm
85. Wednesday 7.30pm
86. Thursday 6.45pm
87. Thursdays at 7.00 p.m.
88. 2pm on the 3rd Thursday
89. Monday at 2.00pm
90. Tuesday at 6pm with the exception of the budget meeting which starts at 4.30pm
91. Tuesday at 7.00 pm
92. Thursday at 6.00pm
93. Thursday 7.00pm
94. Wednesday at 6.00pm
95. Thursdays - 7.30 pm
96. Wednesday at 7.00pm
97. Thursdays at 6.30pm
98. Tuesday at 7.00 pm
99. Wednesday at 2.30pm
100. Thursday - every six weeks
101. Wednesday at 2.30 pm
102. Normally Wednesday - 7:00pm
103. Thursday at 10.00am
104. Wednesday 10.30am
105. Thursday - 6.30pm
106. Wednesday at 2 pm
107. Wednesday 6.00pm
108. Monday 7.30pm
109. Wednesday 6.45pm
110. Monday 6.30 p.m.
111. 6 weekly on a Monday at 6.30pm
112. Monday at 6 pm
113. Tuesday at 6.30pm
114. Wednesday 6.00pm
115. Wednesday at 2.00pm
116. Monday at 2pm
117. Thursdays at 2.00pm
118. Wednesday at 6.30pm
119. Monday 6.30 pm

120. Thursday at 7.30pm
121. Thursday 10.00am
122. Thursday at 10.30am
123. Thursday 2.15pm
124. Monday 6.30pm
125. Wednesdays at 5.00pm
126. Wednesday 6.30pm
127. Tuesday at 7pm
128. Wednesday at 7 pm
129. Thursday 11am
130. Tuesday 4pm
131. Thursday 6.30pm
132. Tuesdays at 10am
133. Wednesday at 6.30pm
134. Thursday's commencing at 7.30 p.m.
135. Monday at 6pm
136. Thursday at 7.30pm
137. Monday at 4.00pm or 5.00pm
138. Wednesday - 6.00pm
139. Wednesday at 1.30pm
140. Monday at 7.00pm (with reference to Q3, we actually meet 10 times PA)
141. Thursday 2pm
142. Friday 10.30 am
143. Tuesday at 7.30pm
144. Monday evening at 7pm
145. Monday, 7.00pm. (Accurate answer to Q3 above is 10 times per annum.
146. Tuesday 4.00pm
147. Tuesday or Wednesday at 7pm
148. Tuesdays at 6.00 pm
149. Wednesday 7.00pm
150. Thursdays at 7pm
151. Thursdays 7.30pm
152. Thursday
153. Tuesdays at 7.00 pm (cannot complete q3 as we have 8 council meetings per year)
154. Wednesday - 10.00 am
155. Monday
156. Thursday normally at 2.30pm
157. Wednesday 2.30pm
158. Wednesday, alternating between 2 pm start and 7pm start

159. Tuesday 6pm
160. Monday at 10.00am
161. Thursday at 7.15pm
162. Tuesday 6:45pm
163. Wednesdays at 6.30pm
164. Monday 7.30pm
165. Wednesday at 7.30pm
166. Thursday
167. Tuesday at 4.30pm
168. Tuesday at 9.30am
169. Wednesday 7.30pm
170. Wednesday at 6.30pm apart from Annual Council which meets on a Friday at 6.30pm
171. Thursday 7.30pm
172. Wednesday 5pm
173. Thursday 7:00 p.m. (Annual Council 2:30 p.m.)
174. Wednesday at 6pm
175. Thursday 10.00am
176. Usually Thursday 7.30 pm
177. Tuesday's - currently at 4.00pm
178. Thursday
179. Monday at 6.00 pm
180. Thursday 6:00pm
181. Any day Monday to Thursday, commencing at 7pm.
182. Monday at 7pm (except Statutory Council which is Wednesday at 7pm)
183. Thursdays at 7pm
184. Thursday at 6.00pm
185. Tuesday 7.30 pm
186. Thursday 7 pm
187. Thursday at 7.00pm
188. Wednesday 6pm (Annual Meeting: Mayor-making at 2pm)
189. Normally Thursday (occasionally Tuesday) at 6.30 pm
190. Thursdays in the evening
191. Wednesday 6 pm
192. Wednesday 6pm
193. Wednesday 7pm
194. Saturday
195. Currently Friday 10 am
196. Monday 7pm
197. Thursdays at 4pm

Council Meeting Survey

Results to Q5a – (Are there any restrictions on who can propose motions and when they can be proposed?) If yes, please specify.

1. Councillors only
2. Notice has to be given by noon on the seventh working day before the meeting
3. Notices of Motion for the Agenda (unless urgent) need receipt 14 days prior
4. See our Council Procedure rules on the interactive Constitution on our web site
5. See our Constitution published on web site
6. A Councillor can submit a motion 10 days before the date of a meeting
7. Must be delivered to Legal and Property Services at least 10 clear days before the meeting so can be put on the agenda.
8. Motions on Notice have to be submitted in writing 7 clear working days in advance of the meeting, in accordance with the Council's Constitution
9. Motions must be submitted in writing to the Proper Officer by 2 pm on the tenth working day before the meeting.
10. Motions must be about matters for which the Council has responsibility or which affects the District
11. Motions with financial implications cannot be moved except at the budget meeting when notice must be given. We have a proposal to disallow NOM at the annual meeting.
12. Motions have to be with us by noon on the Tuesday before Council
13. 10 days' notice must be given. Motions to amend decisions or a motion similar to one rejected cannot be moved unless 1/3 of the Council signs.
14. Motions must be received 7 clear working days before a Council meeting
15. Notice of motions and amendments is required
16. Motion have to be submitted more than 7 days before the meeting and must meet certain criteria
17. 5 working days notice for motions on notice
18. Any member can submit before a specified deadline
19. All Councillors can give notice of motion but should give notice by 5pm of the Thursday prior to the meeting
20. Must be proposed by Noon on the 9th day before the meeting (the Monday of the preceding week normally)
21. 14 days notice required for written questions and motions. Motions must relate to the Council or County in some way.
22. One motion per political group
23. Formal notices of motion have to be notified in advance. General debate motions need no advance notice
24. Must be submitted 7 clear days before the meeting

25. Motions can only be proposed by Councillors and have to be submitted at least 10 clear days before a Council meeting.
26. Notices of Motion to go on the agenda must be notified at least 5 days in advance of meetings. Any Councillor can propose a motion either in advance or on the night in relation to items on the agenda.
27. Motions must refer to issues relevant to the Council's powers and responsibilities
28. Constitution stipulates that motions are received 9 days in advance of the meeting.
29. There is only specific provision made for the leaders of the 3 main parties to submit motions for debate.
30. There is a deadline of 10am on the 8th working day before the Council meeting for Notices of Motions to be submitted, although motions can be made at the actual meeting should the need arise.
31. Motions have to be proposed and seconded and submitted 10 working days in advance of the meeting.
32. Must be submitted seven clear days prior to the meeting
33. Proposal of Motions is restricted to Councillors within certain time/printing deadlines
34. Any member can put forward motions - within timescales permitted by Constitution
35. Motions on notice need to be signed by at least 5 members and delivered to our Chief Executive not later than 10 clear days before the date of the meeting. These are then included on the agenda and are also entered into a book open to public inspection. Motions without notice are accepted but are limited to procedural issues such as appointing a chairman for the meeting, changing the order of business on the agenda, adjourning a meeting or amending a motion - that sort of thing.
36. Must be registered seven clear days before the meeting.
37. There are deadlines for submissions of motions, though not amendments
38. Subject to the rules of the constitution usually time related
39. Must be proposed immediately after the substantive motion and a vote is taken on alternative motion prior to the substantive motion.
40. Any Member of Council may submit Notice of Motion if seconded by another Member; deadline for submission applies - 6 working days before the date of the Council meeting.
41. Motions with notice must be signed by 2 members. Motions without notice only as per limited list in Procedure Rules.
42. Motions to be submitted 7 working days before meeting (other than procedural motions). Motions must be about matters for which the council has responsibility or which affect the borough
43. Within a timetable; signed by Group Leader or Group Secretary; or signed by two members
44. Motions can only be submitted by Councillors, noon seven days before the meeting. In addition, Councillors may submit Questions noon two days before the meeting.

45. Please see attached link:
http://idocs.blaby.gov.uk/external/admin/constitution/part_4_section_1.pdf
46. Except for motions which can be moved without notice, written notice of every motion signed by at least the mover and seconder of the proposed motion, must be delivered not later than seven days before the date of the meeting.
47. Motions can be submitted by any Member but they must be submitted 7 clear days before the meeting.
48. Only one per person per meeting and must be relevant to a matter on which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the County. Cannot rescind or amend any resolution which has been passed in previous six months or be the same as a motion rejected with previous six months.
49. Except for a number of specific motions they must be set down in writing 10 days in advance of the meeting.
50. Needs a proposer and seconder. When on notice must be 7 working days prior - emergency motions at Mayor's discretion.
51. Deadline for submission of notices of motion is 5 clear working days before the meeting
52. Limitations on the number per party and only one per councillor, and must be submitted the day before the agenda dispatch (although there is a facility for motions without notice)
53. Motions on Notice need the authority of at least 2 Members and must be delivered at least 5 working days in advance.
54. See Council Procedure rules in our interactive Constitution on the Council's web site
55. Motions on notice need to be notified not later than 7 working days before the meeting. Otherwise - standard procedural rules regarding motions
56. Written notice to be submitted to Solicitor to Council not later than 10.00am on the Monday in the week preceding Council.
57. Normal rules of procedure apply i.e. motions which can be moved without notice and motions which require notice - 14 clear days notice required. Please note, we will become a unitary authority on 1 April 09 and constitution is currently being reviewed which may involve notice periods for questions and motions. Re questions 6 below, State of Wiltshire debate meetings - one specific meeting per year (march) to inform the update to the corporate plan and budget preparations.
58. Notice required of at least seven clear working days before the meeting and signed. The motion will then be set out in the summons for the Council meeting.
59. Any member may give notice; 5 clear working days written notice is required
60. Must be in writing no later than 6 days prior to meeting & no more than 3 motions per member for each meeting.
61. Details in our constitution. There is insufficient room here to give details
62. Nature of the question and deadlines for submission

63. Motions which do not relate to Cabinet recommendations must be received at least seven clear days before the Council meeting for inclusion on the Agenda.
64. Motions need to be submitted 6 clear days before the meeting and must be about matters that affect the Borough
65. Motions have to be submitted in writing by 12.00 noon on the Friday before the meeting
66. Deadline of 7 clear days prior to meeting
67. Motions on Notice must be received not later than 15 clear days before the date of the meeting. Certain other motions may be moved without notice.
68. Motions on Notice are subject to the Council Procedure Rules
69. Motions must be on notice submitted 7 days before meeting (other than specified in the Constitution)
70. See p142 of NYCC Constitution on website:
www.northyorks.gov.uk
71. Must be submitted within agreed period of notice, i.e. 10 days before and motions must be in respect of a council responsibility or an affect on its area
72. Set period for notice of motions; other fairly standard restrictions as per constitution.
73. Signed written motion delivered to Chief Exec at least 7 days pre meeting
74. Motions on Notice have to be submitted by close of business 7 working days before the day of the meeting
75. 5 signatures from members and submitted by 12 noon, 5 clear days before the meeting.
76. Deadline for submission
77. Motions need to be submitted by Councillors 15 days before the council meeting if they have a financial effect and nine days otherwise.
78. Motions must be delivered to the Committee Services Team by not later than 7 working days before the date of the meeting. The CX may reject a motion if it is not a matter which the Local Authority has a responsibility or which affects the District, is defamatory, frivolous or offensive, same as a previous motion put to Council within the previous 6 months, requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.
79. Need to be signed by Mover and Seconder and received 5 clear days before the meeting
80. If you mean "when" then formal motions are received 8 days before the meeting. If on the day, then amendments to motions can be moved from the floor.
81. Motions on notice must be received 14 days before the Meeting
82. Motions must be from a Councillor and submitted 9 days before meeting
83. Any member may submit a motion providing the CX receives it in writing at least 7 clear days before the meeting.
84. To be submitted one week in advance of the Council meeting with limited exceptions that can be moved at the meeting itself

85. Motions must be submitted at least 10 working days before the meeting
86. No restrictions on who can propose but they must be seconded and submitted within 7 working days of the meeting
87. 7 working days prior to the meeting
88. Motions must be delivered to the Proper Officer not later than eight working days before the date of the meeting.
89. Must be received five working days before the meeting
90. Notice to be given
91. Motions on notice: any councillor can submit motions, submit in writing, signed by mover and seconder, by 9am 5 clear working days before council, one motion per group. Also may have motions without notice to deal with procedural matters such as re-ordering business on the agenda.
92. There are no restrictions on who but deadlines as to when
93. Only a deadline for submitting motions
94. Motions are submitted 2 weeks before the Council meeting unless of a specified procedural nature
95. Other than on accuracy of minutes and other procedural items, notice required by the Wednesday of the week before the Council meeting.
96. Only councillors. Motions are needed 8 working days before Council
97. Motions in the name of individual members usually need to be notified 8 days in advance of the meeting. Council Procedure Rules also limit the number of individual motions (termed as "White Papers") which can be debated at any meeting and also allow for the submission of motions, over and above that number, which shall be put to the vote without debate. For more detail Council Procedure Rules can be accessed as part of the Constitution on the Council's website.
98. Motions proposed and seconded by Members and delivered to the proper officer at least 9 clear working days before the meeting of Council.
99. Deadline for submission is 6 working days before meeting.
100. There is a deadline for notices of motion of noon on the Tuesday of two weeks before the Council meeting. Motions can be accepted with less notice if the Chairman decides the matter is urgent
101. Motions need to be received in writing or by electronic mail not later than 10.00am six clear working days before the date of the meeting
102. Written notice signed by at least one member to be delivered to the Chief executive no later than 5pm 7 clear working days before the day of the meeting.
103. Motions to be proposed and seconded by Members and to be received by the Proper Officer at least 9 clear working days prior to the Council meeting.
104. Motions must be submitted seven working days before meeting, amendments up to 6 hours before meeting
105. Only 1 Motion per Member - notice to be given in writing or electronically 7 working days before the meeting

106. Minimum notice period of 5 working days and must relate to the Borough or issues that the council has powers over
107. Notice of motions for debate must be submitted 7 working days before meeting and signed by at least one member
108. Elected members only by 5pm on the Monday of the week before the meeting
109. Timescale and content
110. Motions can be proposed by anyone but must be received the Thursday lunchtime before the meeting
111. There is a deadline by which motions have to be submitted by members.
112. Deadline for submission/can not repeat a subject or issue covered in last 6 months
113. Motions, except in exceptional circumstances, must be received not later than seven working days before the date of the Council meeting
114. By Elected Members only. Except for motions which can be moved without notice, written notice of a motion to be detailed on the Council Summons must be signed by the mover/seconded and delivered to the Managing Director not later than mid-day of the 7th working day before the date of the meeting. The motion can be rejected if its not a matter which the local authority has a responsibility or is defamatory, frivolous or offensive, or is the same motion put to Council in the last 6 months or requires disclosure of confidential/exempt information.
115. Barring certain procedural motions (such as appointing a chairperson, changing the order of the agenda etc), written notice of every motion, signed by members proposing it, must be delivered to the Executive Director or Head of Legal and Democratic Services at least eight days before the meeting
116. In accordance with our constitution, several specific motions can be moved without notice, but those not set out as able to be passed without notice must be passed to the relevant officer at least 5 clear working days before the meeting. The motion is then entered in a book open to public inspection.
117. No member may sponsor more than one motion for main or general debate.
118. Council Procedure rules specify motions which can be moved without notice but other motions have to be received no later than 7 days before the meeting for inclusion on the Council summons
119. Motions on notice (at least 6 working days before the meeting) can be proposed by any member. Motions without notice may also be moved in relation to certain elements of business and in response to reports on the agenda, again by any member.
120. One per political group per meeting
121. Motions must be received seven working days before date of meeting unless urgent circumstances
122. Motions must be signed by at least one member and delivered 6 working days in advance of the meeting.

123. Apart from the standard motions which may be moved without notice (e.g. amendments, procedural motions, accuracy of minutes etc), motions may only be made by Members and should be given in writing, signed by the mover and seconder, and submitted to the Chief Executive (usually via Committee Services) at least 7 clear working days prior to the meeting in order that it can be set out in the Summons. If the subject comes within the remit of any Panel, Board or Committee, it stands referred to that body without discussion unless the Mayor considers it conducive and convenient to the despatch of business to allow it to be dealt with at the Council meeting. Every motion should be relevant to some matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the Borough.
124. Specific agenda item and must not conflict with responsibilities of Cabinet
125. Every notice in writing & proposed/seconded. Eight working days notice of Motion.
126. Any member can propose but normally must serve notice by eighth working day before meeting (to ensure compliance with Access to Info legislation)
127. 7 working days notice has to be given of a motion if this relates to a new proposal
128. Constitution - time limits and must be relevant to borough council responsibilities.
129. Written notice of a motion, signed by at least two Elected Members, must be delivered to the Chief Executive no later than noon 7 clear working days before the date of the meeting.
130. There is a deadline for motions of 10am 6 working days before the meeting
131. It must be on matters for the Council has a responsibility or which affect the District. It must not have been submitted in the previous six months.
132. A Motion given on Notice must be given in writing to the Director of Corporate Services at least seven clear working days (that is not counting the day of the meeting or the day of delivery) before the relevant meeting, and be signed by the Members giving notice. Certain Motions may be moved without notice, and details may be found in Darlington Borough Council's Constitution at http://www.darlington.gov.uk/dar_public/documents/Corporate%20Services/Democratic/Constitution/Part%203.1%20-%20Council%20Procedure%20Rules.pdf
133. Must be received by 10 am 6 clear working days before meeting - for other restrictions see App 1 of Councils constitution on www.norwich.gov.uk
134. Each Member is restricted to moving and seconding one written notice of motion.
135. Motions need to be delivered to the Chief Executive not later than seven clear days before the meeting and must relate to matters which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the Borough

136. Members or Council in accordance with Standing Orders 15 (Inclusion on the Summons) and 16 (Motions and Amendments which may be moved without Notice)
137. 2 types of Motions - without notice and with notice (latter required in writing, signed by at least 1 member and received no later than 10 days before the meeting)
138. There is a time limit for notice of motions. 9 days before the council meeting. No restrictions on who can propose.
139. Time limit for submission
140. Any Councillor can raise a Notice of Motion, but it has to be received by 5pm on the Monday prior to the agenda being distributed on the Tuesday (5 days before the meeting)
141. Copy of Council Procedure Rules attached
142. Written notice of every motion must be delivered to the Chief Executive not later than 10 clear working days before the date of the meeting
143. Written motions must be submitted by midday on the day before agenda publication
144. Motions that require notice must be delivered to the Chief Executive by not later than 5pm at least 7 clear days before the date of the meeting. These will then be included in the agenda. There are 20 motions that can be moved without notice which are included in the constitution.

Council Meeting Survey

Results to Q7a – (Which of the choices below best describes the style of minute taking used for your full council meetings at present?) Other: please specify.

1. General Summary, any motions moved, recorded vote if required, decisions
2. Verbatim on questions and statements, outline discussion on other items
3. Debates are summarised; for most other items the decision is recorded; questions and answers are reproduced verbatim.
4. Formal questions and answers are included verbatim. Committee debates are minuted very formally - recommendation moved, amendment moved - result of the vote at the end of the debate.
5. Primarily decisions only.
6. Not exactly verbatim, but as much detail as possible including all questions and any supplementary questions and answers.
7. Formal record of decision and issues discussed/raised. Does not include summary of debate/responses.
8. Very limited content
9. For question time, record the supplementary questions and responses. Rest of the meeting, record procedure and decisions only.
10. Please visit following website address to view example of minutes: http://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/main/Minutes_Agendas/Full_Council.asp
11. Full sound recording published on website and very concise minutes produced recording decisions.
12. Just decisions and any recorded votes
13. Very basic, decisions only
14. Moved, seconder and decision with exceptions in respect of motions and questions submitted by Councillors
15. Motion, Amendment (if any) and Decision
16. Recommendations/summary from report and decision agreed.
17. The item topic/heading and the decision - plus any named votes/ amendments made to resolution.
18. Decisions but no record of questions
19. There are formal minutes of Council in the very traditional style which do nothing more than to list that which was put, the formal decisions and details of votes where requisitioned. In addition there is a verbatim report of the meeting.
20. Simple record of the issue before council and the decision.
21. While the minutes note questions, answers and decisions of the Full Council, they also note any areas of concern as expressed by Members, and any other information that may be relevant to both the discussion and the decision.
22. Mayor's announcements quoted at length; no debate recorded, just decisions

23. Brief summary of the item, any amendments moved and outcome, and decision.
24. Précis of agenda item plus resolution
25. Short intro & then council decision. No appendices.
26. Some items minutes in detail, others not!
27. Minutes contain an overview of the submitted report, general notes on debate and resolution
28. Shorter - some highlighting of debate topics - mainly decisions

Council Meeting Survey

Results to Q11 – Are there any innovative features you have introduced that you feel improved your council meetings? If so, please give details below.

1. We are looking at webcasting, we project the agenda and reports at the meeting to encourage greater use of technology and Members laptops
2. The introduction of a 15 Minutes Public Speaking period has proved most successful. Members of the Public receive written replies to any questions they pose, as each Members of the Public who registers to speak can speak for three minutes only.
3. Cabinet and outside body reports to Council have been introduced and work well.
4. Holding a Council meeting in a large venue to debate major proposals for Gravesend Town Centre
5. Several that have been tried but none as yet which have been embedded - see <http://www.hants.gov.uk/decisions/decisions-index/index-mtg-271.html>
6. Opposition debate - alternate meetings the opposition can choose a topic for debate - as the members have got used to this it has developed into a useful forum for debate about topics that the opposition feel are a priority for the Council
7. Hot topic for debate has been introduced at each Council meeting.
8. PowerPoint slides showing written questions and motions
9. No
10. Sound recordings of Council meetings are available on the web site. A digital projector is used for presentations at Council meetings.
11. We hope to introduce webcasting in due course. The move is towards debating more major issues, policies etc rather than concentrating on decisions made by committees. Members if the public are able to attend to speak on issues for up to three minutes. They can also speak on petitions that are presented to the Council.
12. More staff from Democratic and Member Services in attendance. Ask for amendments to motions to be written down. Ask for apologies and declarations in advance of the meeting. Planning meetings in advance of Council. Training the Mayor in chairing Council meetings - can be a volatile.
13. No
14. The introduction of web casting in the autumn of 2008 has helped.
15. Use of microphones at meetings and computers for Members to use at meetings
16. Still trying to think of some!
17. Although I have said on a previous question that we hold green paper policy discussions, in actual fact this is an annual policy council meeting held in November to debate and decide the Council's corporate plan priorities for the forthcoming year. This then feeds into the budget process. This is relatively new but has

- worked well this year and certainly gives all members a better understanding and more involvement in strategic decision-making rather than this just being the remit of Executive Members.
18. We have been using the opportunity of having all of our Councillors together to give short presentations on key issues - these have included an up-date on 'systems thinking' and 'serving all our customers'. These last for about 20 minutes and are programmed at the end of the meeting. No formal decisions are made as a result of these presentations, which are for information only.
 19. Not innovative, but we are currently looking to allocate time for public speaking.
 20. Morning briefings on service developments/topics. Have also invited external bodies/partners to address the Council (either before or during meetings)
 21. We moved to Leader and Cabinet under the 2007 Act
 22. N/a
 23. Minutes of Cabinet, Committees etc are moved meeting by meeting with questions permitted only when the relevant minutes have been moved and seconded. This has been an improvement on a previous procedure of moving all minutes en bloc, and a further procedure of moving minutes individually. The introduction of Annual Portfolio Holder reports has been successful and informative. Questions on minutes of the Police and Fire Authorities are submitted in writing for response at meetings of Council. Public question time has had mixed levels of success; lack of community engagement with Council meetings remains a concern.
 24. The more regular introduction of either a themed debate or presentation from a Partner organisation to stimulate questions, answers and debate.
 25. Recently simplified debating protocols (less formal) and also abolished wearing of councillors' robes.
 26. State of the District debates are planned but have not yet been held.
 27. See above - Question Time and Themed Meetings
 28. No
 29. The Leader reports on the work of the cabinet over the previous period (which is when there is an opportunity to question the Leader/Portfolio Holders).
 30. Taking Council meetings "on the road" to encourage wider public participation
 31. We are looking at webcasting, we project the agenda and reports onto fixed screens in the Council Chamber to encourage more use of technology and more use by Members of their laptops
 32. In your earlier questions, you make reference to leader question time and Portfolio holders - we don't have a specific item on either as such. We do have a standard item 'Cabinet Business' which states - The Leader and/or Cabinet members to update council on any specific activities within their respective portfolios including: reporting on progress since the last county council meeting and

highlighting any particular significant forthcoming issues. We attach the latest version of the CFWP which for us covers all member bodies not just Cabinet which is attached for information and acts as a lever for cabinet members to refer to more significant past or more importantly forthcoming items. This also acts as a kind of announcement from the Leader and cabinet members. It's not intended for questions from the floor. These come under members' questions where formal notice is required or questions from minutes.

33. Introduction of Question/Answer session which has enabled Members to raise community issues. Also the ability for Members to make Ward presentations.
34. Council can meet in 'Committee' mode which allows more freedom for debate, officers to give advice etc
35. Questions by public and members of the Council proposed to be expanded to Cabinet meetings
36. No
37. Managing the agenda business to fit into four meetings a year is challenging. The O&S review in 2006 introduced a number of changes to operating procedures. They included streamlining the constitutional requirement for the number of plans and strategies which the Full Council as distinct from the Cabinet is required to consider. Questions and answers from councillors and the public are written and circulated at the meeting and there are no supplementaries permitted. Public statements and petitions are dealt with early in the meeting or immediately before the item they relate to and there is a 3-minute limit for each speaker. Petitions presented by councillors and any general statements from them about matters not on the agenda are dealt with at the end of the meeting.
38. Ward issues raised by councillors, councillor and public question times and petitions have proved to be popular slots on the agenda.
39. Topical presentations by the Council's partners and other organisations
40. Presentation of petitions by the public
41. Meetings of the full Council are combined with seminars on topical subjects
42. Full sound recording published on website. Area Committees always take place in the relevant community and venues are rotated throughout the year. Evening meetings are avoided for remote rural areas during winter months. Area Committee chairs tend to be very relaxed re public questions, inviting them even though notice has not been given.
43. Public can ask questions on any item on agenda without notice, or address the council on any other issue with notice. Electronic voting.
44. Presentations from Partner organisations.
45. Paperless, electronic meetings. Agenda and recommendations displayed on 3 large screens in Council Chamber during meeting.

46. Introduced Leaders Report and Leaders Question Time at each meeting together with Cabinet Member reports and question time. Each Cabinet Member is allocated 15 Minutes to present and answer any questions and brief comments on the report.
47. Evening Meetings have assisted members of the public and public questions
48. We are awaiting the installation of webcasting equipment in the next couple of months, following this all meetings will be webcast
49. No
50. Public Questions introduced 18 months ago has enabled more participation
51. None
52. Electronic voting and traffic lights for speaking web casting due
53. NB: q10 does not allow for our answer, which is that we record/film our meetings but do not broadcast them live
54. Debating petitions
55. No
56. The Youth Council are able to report into the Council Meeting on issues from their Council Meetings. The State of the District Debate involves the Local Strategic Partnership members
57. Following an extensive review some 2/3 years ago the only change of note was the introduction of more restrictive timing rules to secure earlier end of meeting times.
58. Nothing particularly springs to mind!
59. Ability to show agenda on two big screens in chamber.
60. We have recently introduced debates on major pieces of work undertaken by Select Committees
61. Nothing that comes to mind.
62. No
63. None
64. Presentation of Petitions (without debate) inviting Petitioners to speak on item for up to 5 minutes
65. Electronic voting including new speaker system.
66. PS We used to webcast Council meetings up until May 2008. Scrutiny reviews are undertaken by Review Commissions, reported to The Scrutiny Management Board and then straight to Council rather than Cabinet
67. Annual scrutiny committee reports
68. Not to the meeting itself, but we do carry out a training programme for Members relating to the rules of debate - this incorporates a role-play session. New Members in particular have found this useful - it helps to build confidence so Members feel able to contribute to the debate.
69. Leader's Question Time includes an update report of all business since last meeting
70. Annual Portfolio Holder Reports - Each Portfolio Holder produces a report around May - normally 2/3 pages setting out key achievements/issues to be addressed in the coming year - Members of the Council can then question the Portfolio Holders - this has worked well and introduced a further level of scrutiny.

71. Electronic timer for speeches
72. If mover/seconded agrees to accept amendments these can become part of a substantive motion without debate
73. None
74. Web cast of scrutiny meetings
75. The Executive question time. Each Cabinet Member submits a report on the progress of their portfolio since the last meeting. At the meeting every Councillor has the opportunity to ask a question or make a statement on any area of their portfolio. The Cabinet member then answers the questions, but when this is not possible a written response is circulated to Members
76. Questions are impromptu - they are not notified in advance
77. Council Assembly Meetings - see procedure rules
78. Minutes are taken via a laptop

Council Meeting Survey

Results to Q13 – If you have done or are doing a review in any of these areas, please give details below.

1. Constitution recently updated, remit and make-up of Scrutiny Panels changed and Area-based working currently under investigation.
2. New Constitution introduced March 2008 to coincide with move from alternate arrangements to Executive and introduction of Area Forums.
3. Trying to "refresh" scrutiny and make full council meetings more meaningful/worthwhile.
4. No and terms of reference of Scrutiny Committees under review. Local Area Forums recently introduced.
5. New interactive Constitution referred to earlier, revised scrutiny arrangements following peer review led by IDeA, Community Partnerships developing all the while following introduction a year ago.
6. The Constitution is reviewed annually by Cabinet, with recommendations about changes being submitted to full Council for debate. In reality however, any amendments are discussed by political group leaders prior to discussion at both Cabinet and Council, and a general acceptance of changes sought prior to formal debate. As far as scrutiny and overview is concerned, we will be undertaking a workshop for all Members in March on developing meaningful work programmes for Scrutiny Committees.
7. Constitution always under review. The Council's Solicitor is currently examining more innovative ways of utilising Council Meetings e.g. inviting public speakers. He hopes to make the meetings more informative in general, and less Committee structured. We currently have Area Advisory Groups which meet the Parishes regularly, but we do not have area based working. These informal meetings are most beneficial and have been commended during our very successful CAA. We are only one of a very few Councils to be regarded from weak to good.
8. Currently reviewing constitution in the light of new executive arrangements.
9. We review the Constitution every year.
10. We have recently abolished formal area committees and established ward based neighbourhood forums with freedom for ward members to decide how frequently they wish to meet and what they want to discuss. They each have been given a small budget that they control. We annually review our constitution through a member working party this is how area committees got abolished.
11. Recently undertake a review of the Council's decision-making processes, mostly relating to Cabinet/Scrutiny relationship, procedure for handling petitions, debate at Cabinet, etc.

12. We carried out a major review of the Constitution in 2006 and a review of scrutiny in October 2008.
13. Review of Scrutiny taking place; also annual review of Constitution.
14. Removing the reporting up of Cabinet and Committee Minutes and many references to from the Council agenda has freed time for more meaningful debate.
15. I do an annual review of the Constitution. This deals with a) changes resulting from experience during the year b) legislative change such as the 2007 Act c) review of authorisation levels for contracts etc. A review of Scrutiny was done two years ago, member led.
16. We review and update the Constitution annually and conducted a review of Area Governance two years ago.
17. We are currently undergoing a Decision-Making review, which will be reported back to Council in March.
18. Continual review of Constitution content and the effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny.
19. We undertake an annual review of the Constitution. In addition we have undertaken specific reviews of scrutiny and area committees.
20. We have introduced 3 Neighbourhood Area Forums on a pilot basis for 1year in partnership with Kent County Council. We have also set up two Working Groups (Member led) to look at the Overview Scrutiny function and the future format of Council meetings.
21. All done at least annually.
22. Constitution/area committees - part of annual review of the constitution.
23. Have a continuous scrutiny improvement initiative in operation. Council decided to scrap Area committees in 2003 following a review.
24. The County Council is always looking to improve its scrutiny and area based working arrangements and is implementing its review of scrutiny whilst its review of area working is still a work in progress. Share D'all leads on area working and Denise Holden leads on scrutiny if you wish to make direct contact.
25. O&S committee has a review of how it is working and what it is doing plus any training needs at least annually. Constitution needs revision to reflect changes in approach to our meetings (we still use a minute book to report to the Council and are working to change this!) We reviewed the way Council works a couple of years ago starting with an event facilitated by a SOLACE consultant - a scrutiny team then worked on suggestions for change - this is where the opposition debate came from.
26. Annual review of Constitution.
27. Under constant review.
28. All elements of the Council's democratic arrangements are reviewed every 4 years. Separate reviews of individual aspects (e.g. scrutiny) are also undertaken as required.
29. The Constitution is reviewed annually. The role of Full Council has been reviewed to include a "hot topic" at each meeting. Scrutiny arrangements have been reviewed to include Task and Finish

- Groups for specific items and also Response Groups to consider consultation documents (this has been classed as good practice by the Centre for Public Scrutiny). A review is being undertaken on neighbourhood management.
30. Reviewing Area arrangements to improve community engagement and appointing Head of Scrutiny and reviewing scrutiny to shift focus from service review to scrutiny of Executive and policy.
 31. We undertake an annual review of the constitution via a member working party.
 32. The constitution is reviewed annually in February. Area Committees were reviewed under 2 years ago. Four area committees were changed into 6 local committees and representatives from local community groups invited to take an active part in the meetings.
 33. We have undertaken a review of Standing Orders to remove some of the restrictions on debate. We have also undertaken a review of Scrutiny Committees to improve their operation and provide more opportunity for consideration of policy issues.
 34. A review of the business which is presented to Council meetings has been made and, in future, only the minutes of Executive meetings will be submitted. Committee minutes, other than recommendations, will not be submitted. A question time for portfolio holders is also to be introduced. A new structure for overview and scrutiny committees has been introduced together with a procedure for undertaking scrutiny projects.
 35. A major review of the Constitution was carried out 18 months ago. Will be undertaking a lighter touch review over the forthcoming months. Did a short review of what other Authorities did re Council but concluded that no further action was needed.
 36. The new constitution was reviewed following its first year of operation and since then updates are reported to Council in May and November. Members have asked that a review of the operation of Full Council is carried out in order to reduce the number of meetings (currently 8 which includes 2 in May) and the items put to it some of which are felt to have turned out to be a bit pointless.
 37. We revised our constitution to enable the adoption of the Leader & Cabinet model from May 2008, and will be undertaking a 6 and 12-month review.
 38. Introduced a number of changes in dealing with Portfolio reviews to make it more effective. No major changes to the Constitution but still considering recommendations on change to call-in arrangements and criteria for the election of the Mayor.
 39. Copies of new Constitution and report on Scrutiny can be made available if required.
 40. Constitution - most authorities' constitutions are based on the model - we would like to review the Council procedure rules, in particular which are difficult to follow. Scrutiny - an improvement plan was formulated some time ago; whilst achieved, it is regularly monitored - I will send you the latest version.

41. In the last year we have reviewed the scrutiny function to a very simple one - an overarching O & S Committee and task groups set up to undertake reviews as and when (we usually have at least 3 on the go at any one time). Council meetings have changed format and been streamlined in that there is less reporting of decisions of other Committees - more of a summary of the work of the Executive and O & S - also the introduction of a Policy Council as mentioned above. The constitution has undergone a number of changes over the last 2 years - but isn't complete as yet. We have reviewed Council procedure rules to account for changes, had a review of Committees to reduce the number of meetings and updated/reviewed financial/contract procedures rules and Executive delegations. We still need to look at officer delegations. We are moving to neighbourhood working and in doing so have got rid of our Community Forums. This is as a result of a scrutiny review and recommendations adopted by the Executive.
42. We up-date the constitution each year and the amendments are referred to the annual meeting. We have been looking to improve the scrutiny function and are considering various means of doing this - pre meetings, question preparation, the possibility of a dedicated scrutiny officer, agenda control to make sure that it has meaty issues and time to discuss.
43. Currently carrying out a full review of the constitution with the assistance of Inlogov. It is proposed that a new constitution is put before full council at the annual meeting in May.
44. See also submission to Boundary Committee.
45. All considered during the consultation on moving to Leader with Cabinet.
46. General update undertaken.
47. Constitution is subject to annual review, together with Standing Orders governing Council meetings.
48. Council - in addition to steps mentioned above are about to move Council meeting from first floor Council Chamber to fully accessible meeting venue on ground floor. Scrutiny - seek suggestions from the wider public for issues for scrutiny review (mainly via website).
49. Constitution evolves and is under constant review.
50. Democratic Commission has been set up to examine the democratic process as a whole as Redcar & Cleveland. A series of six workshops comprising multiple sessions will cover: Effective & Ethical Governance, Forthcoming Legislation, Neighbourhood Working, Member Development, Models of Localism and a Final report.
51. We reviewed the scrutiny functions of the Council with a view to improving Member involvement/activity and to address perceived gaps in the previous Committee structure. This resulted in the Council moving away from three O&S Committees to a single O&S Committee.
52. We have a Constitution and Members Services Scrutiny Panel which reviews parts of the Constitution on a regular basis. The review of Council meetings led to proposals for state of the District

- debates. Our Area Committees only consider planning applications and the review has considered the extent of areas, the membership of the committees and the frequency of meetings.
53. We have a Constitution Commission whose role is to review the Constitution and particularly the Council Meeting. We also have an Overview & Scrutiny Review Group which is looking at best practice elsewhere.
 54. Scrutiny - due to finish in March, Constitution and Council Meetings - review planned to take into account LGPIH Act changes coming into place in June 09.
 55. Constitution and Scrutiny being reviewed in the light of the new requirements under the LGIPH Act.
 56. Annual Report on Scrutiny activity to full Council. Area Committees considered March 2006 - decided not to proceed because of costs
 57. Revised Constitution issued in November 2008.
 58. Area working was looked at in 2007 and ruled out.
 59. Contents of constitution tends to be reviewed each year at the beginning of each administration.
 60. Constitutional review underway - taking in members and officers requirements. There are also proposals to reorganise Area Committees later in the year to create better local liaison and make it "two way".
 61. Review the Constitution on an annual basis.
 62. Constitution and Council meetings reviewed during previous municipal year in context of moving to new political structure (cabinet working). Area committees introduced as part of new structure (and subject to scrutiny). Scrutiny reviewed over an earlier municipal year.
 63. See earlier comment about our Constitution, we have undergone a Peer Review of our Scrutiny Process led by the IDeA and we are continually developing our Community Partnerships.
 64. We have reviewed the way in which our Overview and Scrutiny Committees operate in an attempt to make them more effective. We are also developing a scrutiny protocol.
 65. Annual report on constitution submitted to Council picking up any changes/revisions needed which includes changes to the Council meeting. Review of scrutiny undertaken and report approving changes agreed 19th March 2008. Report on locality governance to be submitted to Cabinet in Feb 2009.
 66. Constitution - going unitary as previously mentioned - undertaking a review of the Constitution in order to reflect the added responsibilities 'inherited' from the soon to be former district councils and to reflect the new decision making structure. Council meetings - am starting to think about how we can improve council meetings and introduce any changes from the new council. Would therefore be interested in the results of your survey. Scrutiny - consultant engaged in this work and cross council scrutiny involvement in this work which once agreed by the IE would be incorporated into the new constitution. Area Committees/Area Based working - Will have area based committees for new council

- for development control and possibly licensing. Will have Area Boards (community boards) which are being developed and piloted at the moment.
67. Please ignore answers to Q12. Attempts to change the answers were unsuccessful. The Council is in the process of reorganisation of Bedfordshire local government from two tier to unitary.
 68. Constitution being reviewed in the context of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The Scrutiny structure is being reviewed having regard to Local Area Agreement and changes to the Council's management structure. Area Forums were introduced from May 2008 and will be reviewed in April this year.
 69. Adopted new constitution 29 May 2008 - plan to review in 2009.
 70. Main points of constitution i.e. Committee terms of reference, Officer Delegation Scheme and Financial Regulations revised at the last Annual Council Meeting.
 71. Constitution revised in May 08 but will be updated in May 09, Scrutiny review of Council meetings in 2007, Scrutiny review in March 08 and further review prior to May 09 & Area. Committees/Area working currently being reviewed.
 72. Insufficient space for this.
 73. The Constitution is reviewed annually a draft is with members prior to being submitted to Council for adoption. The structure of overview and scrutiny and the involvement of partners is currently being reviewed, also in relation to the scrutiny of the LAA. A pilot of area working arrangements is currently underway.
 74. Review of Constitution and Procedure Rules relating to Council and Scrutiny meetings currently in progress - depending upon resources it is hoped that the review will be completed in the next six months.
 75. We are just introducing Area Committees (Neighbourhood Boards). Constitutions reviewed at least every six months. Scrutiny undertakes an Annual Review at the start of each Municipal Year.
 76. Scrutiny was reviewed in May 2007 and as a consequence we moved from having 2 full O&S Committees to having 1 but allowed them to constitute small Task Groups to help them in their review work.
 77. Constitution redrafted to bring decision making into one place, refresh delegations and standardise committee procedure rules.
 78. Annual review of the Constitution.
 79. An overview and scrutiny review of the Full Council meeting was done in 2006 as a result of which a number of changes were introduced to the operation of the meeting. These were modified following changes to the democratic structure following the May 2007 election. A review of the scrutiny function is proposed for later this year in the context of the promised Government Regulations and other changes affecting health scrutiny and partnership working.
 80. South Beds District Council will cease to exist on 31 March 2009 and the Constitution for Central Bedfordshire is being written and

- will be agreed by the Central Beds Shadow Council on 26 February.
81. Amendments are regularly made to the Constitution as required and to ensure that it is kept up to to date. A review of the Ward Issues slot was undertaken at the end of 2008.
 82. The Constitution is review annually. Scrutiny at SDDC went through a major review in 2007, following a change in political control. This is comprised of a focus session, a baseline assessment and it is planned to have an external assessment in the coming months.
 83. Fundamental review currently being undertaken.
 84. Constitution reviewed and updated May 2008.
 85. On-going review of the Constitution.
 86. Elements of our Constitution are constantly reviewed and updated i.e. when an issue/problem arises, updated monthly. Council meetings are currently the subject on an equality impact assessment. Area Committees have not been operating for many years, and so I would consider that they are 'done' for the time being, but will be reviewed at some future point.
 87. The Scrutiny Function was reviewed and an improvement plan implemented the Council is currently reviewing the operation of the Area Committees.
 88. Area Committees disbanded in favour of a Community Forum approach in liaison with District Councils. Constantly monitor Constitution and update, e.g. Leader administration.
 89. Review of constitution done every 1-2 years. First phase of recent review of community engagement concentrated on area committees after eight years of operation.
 90. Review of the constitution undertaken to take account of the move to executive arrangements and following internal reorganisation of the Council. Neighbour meetings currently under view to increase public attendance and involvement. Pilot of new arrangements to be undertaken at the end of February.
 91. Currently doing review of scrutiny of performance management.
 92. A review of the decision making process has been undertaken which resulted in changes to the scrutiny committee structure and constitution. The constitution is also being currently reviewed and updated.
 93. We are in the middle of a Constitutional review having just completed Council Procedural Rules and Financial and Contracts Procedural Rules. Remainder due to be done. As part of this we have reviewed our Council meetings. A Scrutiny review was completed last summer and arrangements are also currently under review.
 94. On-going review, rolling programme.
 95. Full review of the constitution including financial standing orders currently being undertaken.
 96. Constitution, held workshops for members, debated Area Committees, voted to retain.

97. Constitution - complete full review underway, Council meetings - underway, about to approach members, scrutiny - completed, except call which is due in Feb.
98. All the above are under review at present so don't have final proposals available at this stage. The reviews are interlinked.
99. Constitution reviewed and updated after each Council meeting. Area meeting arrangements are being reviewed with the intention that any changes proposed be implemented following the Annual Council meeting.
100. Recently updated the Constitution to take account of changes to the Scheme of Delegation and reviewed how the two Overview and Scrutiny Committees operate. Will be reviewing the Council meeting in respect of public question time and petitions.
101. Community partnerships review is currently taking place via a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group; Constitution review was carried out via a working party of the Standards Committee which then made recommendations to Council.
102. Constitution - currently doing. Council Meetings - done, Scrutiny – Annually.
103. As a 4th option authority we have had mini reviews of all of the above in the last 6 years.
104. In preparation for the new Unitary Authority that will be created for Wiltshire we are currently undertaking a Pilot Phase of Area Board meetings. These include partnership working and closer working with Parish and Town Councils and Community Partnerships.
105. Not finalised as yet.
106. Scrutiny recently changed its committee structure.
107. Plan to review Council Meetings as you are doing and regularly review Constitution but plan to undertake a more comprehensive review.
108. Minor amends to the Constitution only.
109. Merely updating of elements of the constitution, including standing orders, financial regulations, terms of reference etc. Proposing to look at format of Council meetings and review style of minutes.
110. Constitution rewritten in plain English. Council meeting procedures tightened up in an attempt to reduce the time taken. Scrutiny Committees reduced from 5 to 2. Area based working being reviewed in terms of planning applications dealing and localism (Sustainable Communities Act etc).
111. We have an ongoing review of the Constitution. The Area Committees are administered by the County Council and their terms of reference have been reviewed in the past year to allow for more delegated decision-making.
112. The Constitution is reviewed annually in advance of the Annual Council in May. All of the elements of Q12 are embodied in the Constitution and can therefore be subject to review as part of the constitutional review. For review of Council meetings also see response to Q11. Also Scrutiny is currently the subject of an external Audit review by KPMG.

113. Scrutiny has been reviewed quite extensively in recent years until a good working model has been achieved. The Constitution is reviewed periodically, but this tends to be in a piecemeal fashion and a more comprehensive review might be a worthwhile exercise for the future.
114. Review of layout of Constitution plus objective to remove unnecessary sections to reduce overall size.
115. Over the last eight years we have reviewed each of these areas at least once and are currently undertaking a second review of scrutiny prior to our elections in June 2009.
116. The Constitution is under ongoing review by the Constitution Working Party. Recent reviews have resulted in minor amendments to the Council and Committee Procedure Rules and the Scrutiny Procedure Rules.
117. The Constitution is reviewed annually.
118. Scrutiny has been reviewed quite extensively over the last few years in order to achieve the most effective model for undertaking effective scrutiny. The Constitution is constantly under review, although this tends to focus on smaller discrete areas as opposed to a thoroughgoing review of the entire document.
119. Constitution reviewed annually.
120. We have very recently streamlined our Council meeting process to move away from "doing Committee work in Council" to concentrating on the more strategic, Policy Framework issues. Members have an opportunity [time limited] to put questions to Cabinet Members and Committee Chairmen. We will be looking at involving community groups in Council meetings [tried previously but not much take-up] and also introducing an annual State of the Borough meeting.
121. Scrutiny review done with IDEA. Led to greater interest by members in setting their scrutiny agenda. Area Committees considered some years ago and not adopted for reasons of geographical layout of Borough and cost v benefits.
122. We are constantly refining the scrutiny process, but have not yet looked at full council.
123. Committee Structure.
124. Review of procedures carried out two years after scrutiny set up in 2007.
125. Constitution: this is reviewed to a degree annually in terms of appointments etc but there will be a larger scale review following the CC elections in June 2009. Scrutiny: structure to be reviewed following the CC elections. Area working: currently under review and development with our district council partners.
126. Had an Independent review of Overview and Scrutiny/changing governance model from Mayor and Council Manager to Leader and Cabinet so complete rewrite of the constitution required.
127. October 2006 reviewed Council meetings - please email me if you would like to receive a copy of the report.
128. Committee procedures were totally reviewed in September 2001 and reviewed as and when necessary.

129. Area working no longer being pursued due to local government reorganisation etc.
130. All District (and one County) Councils within Shropshire are currently undertaking a Local Government Review, the end result of which is a unitary authority. Local Area Committees were established to assist this process. As a result of the Local Government Review, all committees will be reviewed to establish the preferred procedures for the new Authority.
131. Robert Sheppard has sent you the review of Council meetings. The Constitution is constantly being updated, the latest reprint was issued in November and is on our website.
132. Periodical reviews of parts of the Constitution but not complete Review.
133. Constitution revised in 2007.
134. Constitution reviewed and up-dated annually.
135. Difficult to provide details in limited form allowed.
136. Scrutiny Structure Review - intended to improve O&S working practices to improve outcomes.
137. The operation of Area Forums was reviewed 12 months ago with some minor changes made to improve them in terms of encouraging the public to attend. This review was reported back to our Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board and is available on the Council's website. We are currently commencing our annual review of the Constitution to pick up any in-year changes and consider any new changes required to improve methods of working arising from problems experienced during the year and to pick up any new legislative requirements.
138. Currently working on timetable to review all indicated to complete by September 2009.
139. Annual Review of Constitution / corporate Governance - Review of Council Meeting process reviewed each year - minor tweaks agreed. Major restructure of O&S Committee Structure for 2007/08 - Move to Neighbourhood Working planned for 2009 known as "Connecting People, Connecting Places Programme".
140. Council meetings - merged agenda & minutes into one booklet for members. More streamlined & cut cost of printing.
141. Constitution is reviewed annually.
142. Constitution - annual review. Full Council - revised agenda layout and changes to format. Revised Scrutiny arrangements to improve effectiveness.
143. Recently changed the way in which policy development is carried out and separated it from scrutiny.
144. Constitution recently revised. A review of Scrutiny was done two years ago.
145. Constitution is due to be reviewed once a decision taken on parish councils etc. Scrutiny was reviewed by the new administration after the 2006 elections as was area based working, though the latter may be reviewed again to devolve some decision-making to area committees.

146. Call in process. Use of a Scoring Matrix and PICK principles by all Scrutiny Committees to prioritise topics for consideration and inclusion within the work programme. Responding to Councillors Call for Action (when guidance is issued).
147. Please see Corporate Governance Report at the attached link: www.darlington.gov.uk/democracy/political+management/Meeting.htm?id=679
148. First one has been reflected in Appendix 1, contact our scrutiny officer re 2.
149. The Constitution and scheme of delegation is reviewed annually.
150. Constitution - Annual review. City Council - ongoing. Revised Scrutiny arrangements agreed at October 08 Council - implemented Nov 08. Neighbourhood/Ward Committee structure in place also Strategic Commission Areas.
151. Looking to simplify constitution and in process of setting up LAPs.
152. As a new unitary we are operating in a Shadow year so everything is being 'reviewed'.
153. We review the role of the Council meetings several years ago which led to the change in frequency of meetings from fortnightly to the current system and the introduction of the Executive Reports. We review the Constitution annually and are in the process of updating/ reissuing. We are in the process of reviewing our Area Panels, which were revamped 12 months ago.
154. These areas always under review. From March 2009 Council meetings will focus on future policy issues rather than debating issues on which decisions have already been taken. £2 million pa has been allocated over two years to be spent on ward initiatives promoted by ward members.
155. Constitution Review Working Party - Cross Party - reports direct to Council; maintains constant brief to review effectiveness of constitution. Review of Governance arrangements in 2008.
156. All the above are or will be under review as the six Councils in Shropshire will merge to form a unitary authority on 1 April 2009. Details of the Local Committee Pilot can be found at [http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/committee.nsf/0/0EFF296D847E4612802573F6003D9F9A/\\$file/29%20Feb%20local%20meetings.pdf](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/committee.nsf/0/0EFF296D847E4612802573F6003D9F9A/$file/29%20Feb%20local%20meetings.pdf)
157. Our 'Overview and Scrutiny (Corporate)' and 'Overview and Scrutiny (Services)' Committees were reconfigured into a Scrutiny Committee and Quality Services Committee.

Council Meeting Survey

Results to Q14 – Your contact details.

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South Tyneside Council

Overview Scrutiny Co-ordinating and Call-in Committee

Date: 3 March 2009

Scrutiny Commission on Full Council: Key areas for further investigation

Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating and Call-in Committee

Cabinet Portfolio/Lead Member: Deputy Leader, Cllr Alan Kerr

Purpose of Report

1. Following the meeting on 27 February 2009 where Members considered the results of the Full Council survey and the views of Professor Leach, this report is to clarify areas for further investigation for the commission.

Why Has the Report Come to Scrutiny?

2. Members need to decide which features of the council meeting they wish to investigate further.

What Are Members Asked To Do?

3. Members are asked to agree the suggested areas contained within this report.

Performing Together Reference: M5 1/1

Contact Officer: Paul Baldasera ext.6002

scrutiny scrutiny scrutiny **scrutiny** scrutiny scrutiny scrutiny

Suggested areas for further investigation

4. Following the discussions at the meeting on 17 February, which considered the council survey results and the views of Professor Steve Leach from De Montfort University, the following areas are suggested for further investigation.

Leader and Lead Member questions time – as a means by which the Executive can be held to account.

- How does it work in other places?
- How frequently does it happen?
- How are questions put?
- Should supplementary questions be allowed?

Possible councils to consult with:

NE Derbyshire, Manchester, Cambridgeshire, Sutton, Woking, Surrey, Mansfield, North Yorkshire, West Sussex, Worthing, Newcastle, Warwickshire

Green paper debates - providing an opportunity for council to influence policy making at an early stage.

- How would policies be chosen?
- Will it impinge of the role of select committees?
- At what point of development would a policy have the debate?
- How would it affect the rest of the council agenda?

Possible councils to consult with:

NE Derbyshire, Sutton, Chorley, Blaby, Cumbria, Wansbeck, Christchurch,

State of the borough address – celebrating successes and highlighting the priority areas for the forthcoming year.

- Who would present it?
- What would it cover?
- When in the year would it be?
- What would happen as a result?

Possible councils to consult with:

Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Richmondshire, North Herfordshire, Sunderland, West Norfolk, Worthing, Hackney, Colchester, Ashford, Liverpool, Wigan.

Dealing with public questions – making sure that the council fully operates its community leadership role in listening to public concerns.

- Are Select Committees better places for public to ask some questions?
- Should we do more to raise the profile of Select committees and the work that they do?
- How do we strike a balance between allowing appropriate questions and eliminating misuse of questions?

Possible councils to consult with:

Devon, Bath and NE Somerset, North Warwickshire

Themed/"hot topic" debates – opportunity to debate a current or emerging issue.

- How would we choose them?
- How long would they last?
- Who could take part?
- Could it be in "committee mode"?
- What would happen as a result?

Possible councils to consult with:

Buckinghamshire, Ossendale, Castlepoint, Oxfordshire, N Somerset, Slough, West Norfolk, Sutton, Devon, South Bucks, Epping forest, Milton Keynes, Mid. Beds, Mansfield, Bournemouth, Ashford, Essex

Timing of meetings – to ensure that meetings are held at the best times for both Members and the public.

- Would later meetings be more popular with Members?
- Would they be more popular with the public?
- Should we alternate start times between afternoon and early evening?

Possible way forward

Survey/ask Members and ask community groups/people who attend meetings

Webcasting – to make the business of council more accessible and transparent

- What are the practicalities/cost of doing this?
- Would webcast be live or recorded or both?
- What are the downsides?

Possible councils to consult with

Mole Valley, Blyth Valley East Sussex, Cannock Chase, Hounslow, Hull, Castlepoint, Cherwell, West Sussex, Hertsmere.

Private Members Bill – greater flexibility for Members to raise issues

- What criteria would be used?
- Does anyone else do this?

Possible way forward

Desk research as to whether anyone else has implemented this and if it has worked.

Focusing council business – making sure that agendas are productive and reports are fit for purpose

- Do we need the minutes of scrutiny/scrutiny minutes to go to the council meetings?
- Can reports be written in a more summarised way?
- Are there any other features of the council agenda that could be streamlined?

Possible way forward

Examination of council past agendas and debate about whether we can make any changes

Legal Implications

5. We can reach and advise officers on further follow up work. Any changes must be reflected in the council's constitution and be within the national legal framework for the operation of Local Government.

Risk Implications

6. There are no risk implications at present.

Equality and Diversity Implications

7. We must provide enhanced opportunities for all of our residents to be involved in decision-making. To facilitate the community leadership role of the Council we should ensure that, if residents do want to be involved in decision-making, meetings are accessible and do not have a negative impact or discriminate in any way.

Environmental and Sustainability Implications

8. There are no environmental and sustainability implications at present.

Financial Implications

9. None at this stage

What Are Members Asked To Do?

10. Members are asked to consider the list of areas that appear in paragraph 4 and agree on further follow up work.

Scrutiny Commission on Full Council: Survey Results

Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating and Call-in Committee

The following is a list of the background papers (excluding exempt papers) relied upon in the preparation of the above report:

Background Paper	File Ref:	File Location
Results from National Survey of Councils	Survey Results	Democratic Services, Town Hall, S Shields

Opportunities for changing the decision making powers of Council Assembly

Introduction

At the meeting of the Democracy Commission held on Monday 12 July 2010 Councillor Mohamed, Chair of the Commission, requested a paper outlining the following issues:-

- i) what decisions currently undertaken by Cabinet could possibly be undertaken by Council Assembly instead;
- ii) what decisions currently undertaken by Cabinet could be devolved down e.g. to community councils; and
- iii) are there any decisions which are presently undertaken by Council Assembly that could be devolved elsewhere e.g. to community councils.

Background

As outlined at the meeting of 12 July, the decisions Council Assembly can undertake is largely governed by what responsibilities the Cabinet are given under the Executive Arrangements.

Part II of the Local Government Act 2000 ('the 2000 Act') provides for the discharge of a local authority's functions by an executive (Cabinet) of the authority, unless those functions are specified as functions that are not to be the responsibility of the authority's executive.

Under section 13 (3) of the 2000 Act the Secretary of State was empowered to make provision for those functions that are not to be the responsibility of the authority's executive.

The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000

These are the detailed regulations which the Secretary of State made under section 13 of the 2000 Act.

Section 13(2) of the 2000 Act makes it clear that any function which is not specified in the regulations (which are the majority of functions) are the responsibility of the executive.

They divide functions into three categories:

A. Functions which are not to be the responsibility of an authority's executive (i.e. functions which the executive can not exercise).

B. Functions which may be the responsibility of an authority's executive (i.e. functions which can, but do not need to be exercised by it).

C. Functions which are not to be the sole responsibility of an authority's executive (i.e. functions which may be exercised by the executive subject to the limitations set out in the regulations).

A. Functions which are not to be the responsibility of an authority's executive (i.e. functions which the executive can not exercise). These are set out in Schedule 1 of the regulations.

The first set of functions referred to in the regulations (**those which cannot be exercised by the executive**) are excluded because they are either subject to a separate and specialised statutory regime (such as planning) or they require an evaluation (which may be quasi-judicial) of the merits of an application (as in licensing) or are functions which are exercised by the full council (council assembly) or would otherwise be constitutionally unsuitable for exercise by the executive. They fall into the following categories (under each category there are numerous specific functions):

- (a) functions relating to town and country planning and development control;
- (b) licensing and registration functions;
- (c) functions relating to health and safety at work;
- (d) functions relating to elections;
- (e) functions relating to name and status of areas and individuals (i.e. name changes, community governance reviews and conferring honorary titles);
- (f) powers to make, amend, revoke or re-enact by-laws;
- (g) powers to promote or oppose local or personal Bills;
- (h) functions relating to pensions of local government employees;
- (i) miscellaneous functions including appointment of staff, making standing orders, and various functions relating to highways and footways.
- (j) various consequential functions, such as imposing conditions or limits on licences granted in exercise of one of the functions specified in (a) to (i) above;
- (k) making arrangements for the discharge of functions by a committee or officer (under section 101 LGA 1972);
- (l) making appointments to committees under s.102 Local Government Act 1972 ('LGA 1972');
- (m) the function of making, amending, revoking or replacement of a members' allowances scheme;
- (n) the function of determining the amount of any allowances payable to members of the authority;
- (o) any other function which, under any public or local Act or any subordinate legislation, can only be discharged by an authority (i.e. which can only be discharged by the full council).

Under Southwark's Constitution these functions are already exercised by a combination of Council Assembly, committees e.g. the planning committee and the licensing committee, a Pensions Advisory Panel and the Electoral Registration Officer.

B. Functions which may be the responsibility of an authority's executive (i.e. functions which can, but do not need to be exercised by it). These are set out in Schedule 2.

The functions set out in Schedule 2 (**which may be the functions of an executive but do not have to be**) are a miscellaneous set of functions which relate to

education, police, and the environment. What they have in common is that they are viewed by the government as being the types of matter which a local authority could reasonably wish to make subject to arrangements other than being exercised by the executive. These are known as the 'local choice functions' and a local authority may decide that they are to be exercised by a committee with a degree of specialist expertise or by an officer.

The functions in Schedule 2 are as follows:-

Any function under a local Act other than a function specified or referred to in regulation 2 or Schedule 1 of the 2000 Regulations.

The determination of an appeal against any decision made by or on behalf of the authority.

The appointment of review boards under regulations under subsection (4) of section 34 (determination of claims and reviews) of the Social Security Act 1998.

The making of arrangements in relation to appeals against the exclusion of pupils from maintained schools.

The making of arrangements pursuant to sections 94(1), (1A) and (4) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Act ('the 1998 Act') (admissions appeals).

The making of arrangements pursuant to section 95(2) of the 1998 Act (children to whom section 87 applies: appeals by governing bodies).

The making of arrangements under section 20 (questions on police matters at council meetings) of the Police Act 1996 for enabling questions to be put on the discharge of the functions of a police authority.

The making of appointments under paragraphs 2 to 4 (appointment of members by relevant councils) of Schedule 2 (police authorities established under section 3) to the Police Act 1996.

Any function relating to contaminated land.

The discharge of any function relating to the control of pollution or the management of air quality.

The service of an abatement notice in respect of a statutory nuisance.

The passing of a resolution that Schedule 2 to the Noise and Statutory Nuisance Act 1993 should apply in the authority's area.

The inspection of the authority's area to detect any statutory nuisance.

The investigation of any complaint as to the existence of a statutory nuisance.

The obtaining of information under section 330 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as to interests in land.

The obtaining of particulars of persons interested in land under section 16 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

The making of agreements for the execution of highways works.

The appointment of any individual—

(a) to any office other than an office in which he is employed by the authority;

(b) to any body other than—

(i) the authority;

(ii) a joint committee of two or more authorities; or

*(c) to any committee or sub-committee of such a body,
and the revocation of any such appointment*

The making of agreements with other local authorities for the placing of staff at the disposal of those other authorities.

Any function of a local authority in their capacity as a harbour authority (to the extent that the function does not fall within paragraph 1 of this Schedule.

Functions under sections 106, 110, 111 and 113 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 relating to local area agreements.

C. Functions which are not to be the sole responsibility of an authority's executive (i.e. functions which may be exercised by the executive subject to the limitations set out in the regulations). These are set out in Schedule 3.

The functions set out in Schedule 3 **are not to be the sole responsibility of an authority's executive.** These are the various plans and strategies which the council now has to produce i.e. the Annual Library Plan, Best Value Performance Plan, Children and Young People's Plan, Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy, Development plan documents, Licensing Authority Policy Statement, Local Transport Plan, Sustainable Community Strategy and Youth Justice Plan.

Certain actions in respect of these plans or strategies are excluded from being the responsibility of the executive. This applies to:

(a) formulating or preparing the plans or strategies listed in Schedule 3;

(b) formulating plans or strategies for the control of the authority's borrowing or capital expenditure;

(c) formulating or preparing any other plan or strategy whose adoption or approval is, by virtue of the 2000 Regulations to be determined by the authority.

Point (c) is a reference to Schedule 4 of the Regulations which contains another list of functions which would normally be the responsibility of the executive and provides that in the circumstances listed in the schedule these functions must be exercised by the authority itself and not the executive.

The actions excluded from being the responsibility of the executive are as follows:

(a) the giving of instructions requiring the executive to reconsider any draft plan or strategy submitted by the executive for the authority's consideration;

(b) the amendment of any draft plan or strategy submitted by the executive for the authority's consideration;

(c) the approval, for the purpose of its submission to the Secretary of State or any Minister of the Crown for approval, of any plan or strategy (including those in draft) where any part of the same is required to be submitted; and

(d) the adoption (with or without modification) of the plan or strategy.

Although the provision prevents the executive having sole responsibility for these plans, the way in which responsibility is shared between the executive and the authority is very much a matter for each individual authority. There could, for

example, be a process whereby, once the detailed plan is formulated by the executive, it is accepted by the authority with a minimum of scrutiny. Equally, it is open to the authority to set up a system which involves detailed examination and amendment where necessary of every aspect of the plan. In addition section 101 LGA 1972 does not apply to the functions which an authority has to assume as a consequence of the 2000 Regulations. In other words, the council cannot delegate the responsibility of discharging these functions to a committee, sub-committee, or an officer.

An executive has the responsibility of amending, modifying, varying or revoking a plan of the type referred to in the preceding paragraph where this is:

- (a) required for giving effect to requirements of the Secretary of State or a Minister of the Crown in relation to a plan or strategy (or part of the same) submitted for their approval; or
- (b) authorised by a determination of the authority when approving or adopting the plan or strategy.

The effect of this is that the executive is responsible for changing a plan to comply with a Minister's requirements or if specifically authorised by the authority to do this, when approving or adopting the plan.

The function of applying for permission to dispose of housing land under the Housing Act 1985 or the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993 is a function of the executive but the function of authorising the making of the application is not.

Some actions relating to the calculations required for setting an authority's council tax are the responsibility of the executive:

- (a) the preparation, for submission to the authority for their consideration, of – estimates of the amounts to be aggregated in making the calculation or of other amounts to be used for the purposes of the calculation and estimates of the calculation.
- (b) the reconsideration of those estimates and amounts in accordance with the authority's requirements;
- (c) the submission for the authority's consideration of revised estimates and amounts.

Other aspects of the function, such as the setting of an amount of council tax for a financial year, are however the responsibility of the authority.

Regulation 5 (1) and Schedule 4 specify the circumstances in which certain functions, that would otherwise be the responsibility of an authority's executive are not to be their responsibility. The circumstances the functions to which they relate are listed in Schedule 4 of the Regulations. An exception is however provided in regulation 5(2) for certain determinations that need to be made as a matter of urgency. In those cases, the determination can be made by the authority's executive only with the prior written agreement of a relevant overview and security committee or, in specified circumstances, of the chairman or vice-chairman of the authority.

Community Councils

Section 18 of the 2000 Act enabled the Secretary of State to make regulations to allow for discharge of functions which would normally be exercisable by the executive to be discharged by an area committee. An area committee is defined as a 'committee or sub-committee of the authority' which satisfies the following conditions:

(a) the committee or sub-committee is established to discharge functions in respect of part of the area of the authority,

(b) the members of the committee or sub-committee who are members of the authority are elected for electoral divisions or wards which fall wholly or partly within that part, and

(c) either or both of the conditions in subsection (5) are satisfied in relation to that part.

The conditions referred to in (c) are:

(a) that the area of that part does not exceed two-fifths of the total area of the authority.

(b) that the population of that part, as estimated by the authority, does not exceed two-fifths of the total population of the authority's area.

In Southwark 'area committees' are known as community councils. At present decisions on the following have been delegated in part to community councils; local planning applications, the cleaner, greener, safer capital programme, the community fund programme, traffic management, appointment of local education authority governors to local nursery and primary schools and community project banks. Community councils therefore take decisions which affect a relatively small area.

Delegation to officers

Statutory guidance (New Constitutions) states that delegation to officers "is a way of ensuring more efficient decision making and preventing the executive from becoming overwhelmed by a large volume of detailed managerial, operational and professional matters." The guidance states members should consider delegation carefully to ensure they have time to focus on broad strategic issues.

Conclusions

i) What decisions currently undertaken by Cabinet could possibly be undertaken by Council Assembly instead

The functions set out in Schedule 2 of the 2000 Regulations as detailed above might be areas for consideration. As indicated in the body of the paper where the executive does not currently discharge those functions they are instead exercised by a committee or an officer. However most of these matters relate to issues of requiring appeals, and operational or technical requirements. An example is control of pollution or management of air quality which previously was reserved to council assembly but then required council to receive an annual air quality report. This is now designated as an executive function to allow more efficient decision making. The functions in question are very specific in nature and not necessarily the kind of matters ordinarily reserved to Council Assembly.

Part 3B of the Constitution sets out the roles and functions of the cabinet. This list includes some of the plans and strategies that are currently the responsibility of the cabinet. These include:

- Asset management plan
- Employment strategy
- Enterprise strategy

- Food law enforcement plan
- Green travel plan
- Housing investment programme
- Housing renewal policy
- Housing strategy
- Local area agreement (LAA)
- Medium term resources strategy (including the housing revenue account)
- Renewal areas strategies
- Road safety plan
- Schemes for financing schools
- Special education needs action plan
- Statement of community involvement
- Supplementary planning documents
- Waste strategy
- Youth strategy.

As reported to the last meeting of the commission, Council Assembly can make additions to the policy framework and has done so in the past. Regulations allow a local authority to choose that other plans or strategies (statutory or non-statutory) are included in addition to those that must be adopted or approved by Council Assembly and are specified by the Secretary of State.

ii) What decisions currently undertaken by Cabinet could be devolved down e.g. to community councils

In short Cabinet has the power to delegate any of its functions to another forum, including community councils. However it would be necessary for the Cabinet to consider delegating those additional functions and whether the matter was appropriate for the local decision making role of community councils. The delegation of significant additional Cabinet functions would not necessarily fit in with the advantages identified in relation to executive arrangements i.e.

- Efficiency – in that a small executive can act quickly;
- Transparency – the executive arrangements enable the public to ascertain from the outset who is making decisions; and
- Accountability – the executive can be judged by whether it has implemented the policies on which it was elected.

However these advantages need to be balanced against the desire to increase democratic engagement.

iii) Are there any decisions which are presently undertaken by Council Assembly that could be devolved elsewhere e.g. to community councils.

Council Assembly has a number of statutory functions which were identified, with an asterisk, in the paper entitled 'Background information on the Council Assembly's role and scope for change' which accompanied Item 4 on the Agenda at the meeting held on 12 July 2010. It will not be possible to devolve those functions to a committee, sub-committee or officer.

However Council Assembly could for example consider delegating the following functions to community councils:-

- A greater responsibility for local planning matters;
- Responsibility for non-alcohol related licensing matters; and
- Responsibility for local street trading matters.

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Questionnaire for members of the public distributed at Council Assembly 14 July 2010

Responses

Notes:

Eight councillors have responded since the meeting (as of 27 July) and there were 8 other respondents who attended the meeting. Seven of those were members of the public who were specifically invited to the meeting and who also took part a focus group and 1 ordinary member of the public, plus one officer.

Results:

- TABLE 1: Qualitative responses from councillors
- TABLE 2: Qualitative responses from public (including 1 officer)
- TABLE 3: Quantitative responses from councillors
- TABLE 4: Quantitative responses from public

	Questions for Councillors	Replies / comments
3	The council assembly works well in its current format (comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partly because of the Local Government Act 2000 Council Assembly has become less effective and this needs redressing (R)
3.a	What works well? (about council assembly)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I find it difficult to answer these questions as it is only my second assembly meeting (N) Not much (R) Shortened duration in evenings when members tired after a days work (C) None (C)
3.b	What do you think should be changed? (about council assembly)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I find it difficult to answer these questions as it is only my second assembly meeting (N) More opportunity for public engagement / webcasting / different format of debates (R) Notify about the meeting (council assembly) / advertise more (N) More deputation Council Assembly should have more decision-making powers (R)
3.c	What could be done differently? (times, place to meet, venue, themes for debate, broadcast etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I find it difficult to answer these questions as it is only my second assembly meeting (N) Less security – freedom for people to enter Town Hall freely (C) Council Assembly should have more decision-making powers (R)
4	Your comments/ideas for enabling me and my constituents to make the most of the existing opportunities (awareness, information and help in attending council assembly)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More publicity re council assembly (C) Probably more Council Assembly meetings required if the above is to be achieved together with more decision-making (R) Move council Assembly across Borough, holding it in varied locations. Extend the powers and responsibilities of community councils (C)
5	Can you suggest any new ways for public and community to get involved with the Council Assembly?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could they submit queries e.g. through Southwark News (N) More young people involved (C) Youth Mayor for Southwark (C) Possibly two Council Assembly meetings per year to hear deputations (presentations) in a more informal manner Bring back deputations, let residents present petitions (C) Webcasting (C)
6	Have you any other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not yet (N)

	Questions for Councillors	Replies / comments
	suggestions for improving the Council Assembly?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor making should be different from constitutional assembly (C) • Less political grandstanding so that people are sure they will be listened to rationally especially at any informal meetings.
7	Have you got any other comments or suggestions for ways to involve members, residents and the community in the Democracy Commission?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like to give evidence to the Commission (R) • Deputations (C) • Petitions (C) • Better refreshments for members with health problems e.g. diabetic etc (C) • Use Southwark Life to call for ideas (R) • Genuine advertisements via local papers (C) • Ask all community councils to gather the views of local people in their local community council areas. (C)

	Questions to public	Replies / comments
2	Your comments/ideas for promoting council assembly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote through simple, cheap, effective Advertisement In schools, on public transport, etc
3	The council works well in its current format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not sure Don't know
3.a	What works well?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A more thought out sitting planning to get an overview of the assembly meeting Website shows meeting calendar and minutes Debate and democracy in action Everything (Officer)
3.b	What do you think should be changed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change seating arrangement Relationship and spaces Paper work Everything More democracy Less emphasis on national party politics I think it follows the mechanisms of any assembly The place, the time, day etc I am not familiar with how it works Nothing (Officer) Attitude and behaviour of the Councillors
3.c	What could be done differently?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everything Make process more transparent. Could broadcast proceedings on the web. Estonian government is a good example. Nothing To accommodate people with children, old and disabled people A list of names of Councillors present given to audience/delegates (Officer) Planning for the future and wellbeing of people, in a civilised and caring way, with respect to all
4	Your comments/ideas for enabling me and other people to make the most of the existing opportunities (awareness, information and help in attending council assembly)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bigger publicity It seems accessible enough, although the sheer amount of paper with agenda items and motions makes it difficult to follow. Not at this time. (Officer) Advertise in libraries and pensioners centres.
6	Can you suggest any new ways for public and community to get involved with the Council Assembly?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen printed posters / effective campaigns Make the meeting more friendly Get the residents involved, tell them when the meetings are planned and get their views Give members of public a voice. Q&As

	Questions to public	• Replies / comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well the space is so small so I think that publishing online the outcomes would be a good method of targeting more people. • To promote it with leaflets, adverts, etc • Emailed / written questions (Officer) • I'm sure people don't want to come to see such a circus.
7	Have you any other suggestions for improving the Council Assembly?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take assembly out of Town Hall into community. • Theme based meetings: education, regeneration, transport, green issues • Less sneering at each other, less speeches and less statistics (although this would amount to improving politics at large...) • No (Officer) • I was only sorry I voted for them. I have no respect nor admiration for people behaving so badly. Less talk and more action. I could not trust any of them!...God help us!!!
8	Have you got any other comments or suggestions for ways to involve members, residents and the community in the Democracy Commission?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online electronic voting. Gets electorates views on any issue. • Councillors make visits to public service centres: surestart, southwark pensioners, TRAs (Officer) • I have been so upset and shocked attending this meeting. The behaviour of the Councillors was an eye opener to me. This last 62 years that lived in England, I had great admiration for the English men, to me, they were gentlemen, and tolerant. But at this meeting these people were sarcastic, mocking everybody, laughing at people who were not there (Harriet Harman, Simon Hughes, etc). They painted everything in black. No hope, no love for the future. They behaved like morons.

COUNCILLORS		Disagree strongly	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Agree strongly
1	The community and my constituents are aware of the Council Assembly and the work it does.	1	3	0	5	0
2	We should do more to promote Council Assembly.	0	0	3	2	3
3	The Council Assembly works well in its current format.	0	5	2	2	0
3 (b)	I have suggested / plan to suggest that my constituents attend and/or participate in a council assembly meeting (either out of general interest or for a specific purpose).	0	0	2	5	1
4	I believe there is sufficient awareness, information and help available to enable me and my constituents to make the most of the existing opportunities?	1	2	1	2	1

PUBLIC		Disagree strongly	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Agree strongly
1	I am aware of the Council Assembly and the work it does.	2	1	3	3	1
2	We should do more to promote Council Assembly.	0	0	2	3	4
3	The Council Assembly works well in its current format.	3	2	2	0	2
3 (b)	I have attended / plan to attend or participate in a Council Assembly meeting (either out of general interest or for a specific purpose).	0	0	0	5	2
4	I believe there is sufficient awareness, information and help available to enable me and other people to make the most of the existing opportunities	2	5	1	1	1
5	We should make changes to council assembly to make people more willing and able to get involved.	1	0	0	3	6

Southwark democracy commission survey

1. About the democracy commission and the council assembly

Southwark Council has set up a democracy commission, with the aim of bringing the council closer to its residents, making it more accountable to them and more connected with their concerns. The commission consists of 7 councillors representing all three political groups: Labour, Liberal Democrats and Conservative.

For its first task the democracy commission will look at Southwark's council assembly. This is a public meeting of all 63 elected councillors sitting on the council, and is chaired by the Mayor of Southwark. It meets regularly to debate local issues and make decisions.

We would very much appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to fill out this questionnaire by 10 September 2010.

Southwark democracy commission survey

2. Getting to know you

We would like to know how you involve yourself in your local area.

1. Have you ever attended Southwark's council assembly?

yes

no

2. How active are you in your local community? Tell us about the different ways you have been involved in local activities and decision making.

I have:

attended a Community Council.

attended a local community group meeting such as a Forum, community group, or tenants and residents association.

sent a letter to a local newspaper or participated in a local online discussion board.

joined a political or campaigning group, including online

kept up with local news and events that interest me.

Other (please specify)

Southwark democracy commission survey

3. Your awareness of the council assembly

1. Tell us what you already knew about the council assembly before completing this survey.

- I didn't know it existed.
- I had heard of it but don't really know what it does.
- I had a basic understanding of its work.
- I had a good understanding of its work.

Other (please specify)

2. We should do more to promote council assembly so people know what it is and what it does. (please check the box that best reflects your opinion about the statement that follow)

- disagree strongly
- disagree
- don't know
- agree
- agree strongly

3. We would like to find out the best way of letting people know about the council assembly and how it works. Which of the following do you think would work? Do you have any other ideas for promoting council assembly?

- Articles in council publications (e.g. Southwark Life)
- Creation of a new 'brand' for the council assembly
- Promotion on council website
- Sending updates through social media (e.g. facebook, twitter, etc)

Other (please specify)

Southwark democracy commission survey

4. How you can get involved with council assembly currently

There are 4 main ways that the public can currently get involved with the council assembly.

1. Please check the box or boxes to describe your knowledge and views on each type of involvement.

	I didn't know I could do this	I knew I could do this
Attending the meeting in the public gallery as an observer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Formally asking a question to one or more of the councillors at the meeting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Presenting a petition to the council assembly on behalf of a group.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making a deputation to the council assembly (formerly raising an issue of concern on behalf of a group).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. I believe there is sufficient information and help available to enable me and other people to make the most of the above opportunities.

(please check the box that best reflects your opinion about the statement that follows)

- disagree strongly
- disagree
- don't know
- agree
- agree strongly

3. Can you suggest new ways for individuals and groups to get involved with council assembly?

Southwark democracy commission survey

5. Ideas for improving council assembly meetings

Council assembly meets 7 times a year in the evening in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall. We want to think of ways to make the meetings more interesting and easier to take part in.

1. What could be done differently ? (Please tick any you think might be a good idea)

- Have themed meetings.
- Meet at different times.
- Broadcast the meeting on the web.
- Broadcast the meeting on the radio.
- Meet in different places around the borough.
- Involve residents in the debates at the meeting.
- Involve residents in the debates online.

Comments and other ideas

2. We should make changes to council assembly to help people become more willing and able to get involved.

(please check the box that best reflects your opinion about the statement that follows)

- disagree strongly
- disagree
- don't know
- agree
- agree strongly

3. The council assembly works well in its current format.

(please check the box that best reflects your opinion about the statement that follows)

- disagree strongly
- disagree
- don't know
- agree
- agree strongly

Southwark democracy commission survey

4. If you have some experience of the council assembly please tell us here what you think works well.

5. If you have some experience of the council assembly please tell us here what you think doesn't work well.

Southwark democracy commission survey

6. Attending future council assembly meetings

1. I would consider attending a council assembly meeting in the future.
(please check the box that best reflects your opinion about the statement that follows)

- disagree strongly
- disagree
- don't know
- agree
- agree strongly

Southwark democracy commission survey

7. Democracy Commission monitoring information – Optional

London Borough of Southwark holds and manages data in strict accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. No personal information you have given us will be passed on to third parties for commercial purposes.

1. Are you male or female?

- male
 female

2. Do you consider yourself to have a disability or long term illness?

- yes
 no

3. What is your age group?

- 0 - 15
 16 - 29
 30 - 44
 45 - 64
 65 +
 prefer not to answer

4. What is your ethnic group?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> White - British | <input type="radio"/> Any other mixed background |
| <input type="radio"/> White - Irish | <input type="radio"/> Asian - Indian |
| <input type="radio"/> Other white background | <input type="radio"/> Asian - Pakistani |
| <input type="radio"/> Black - Caribbean | <input type="radio"/> Asian - Bangladeshi |
| <input type="radio"/> Black - African | <input type="radio"/> Any other Asian background |
| <input type="radio"/> Any other black background | <input type="radio"/> Chinese |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed White/Black Caribbean | <input type="radio"/> Other ethnic group |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed White/Black African | <input type="radio"/> Traveller |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed White/Asian | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to answer |

Southwark democracy commission survey

5. What is your religion or belief?

Christian

Buddhist

Muslim

other

Hindu

none

Sikh

Prefer not to answer

Rastafarian

Invite to 'Crystal Clear?' from Southwark Youth Council

Dear...

We are two representatives of Southwark Youth Council (SYC). As part of SYC we are hosting our first event as the re-established youth council. The event 'Crystal Clear?' is the annual youth conference for young people in Southwark taking place on the 23rd of August 2010 at the Keyworth Centre, Southbank University, SE1.

We would like to invite you to partake in this event specifically in one of our two big workshops, "Political Speed Dating" which is loosely based on the format of the game. Your role will be as one of the "dates" where young people from all over Southwark, rotate in groups of four around individual Councillors and council officers like yourself and have the opportunity to ask you about your role in Southwark and how it relates to us and how your work impacts on our lives.

This particular part of 'Crystal Clear?' will be from 12.30-2pm, although you are welcome to attend the whole day. Your participation will help us as Southwark Youth Council, to encourage young people to make a positive contribution to their community, while you will get a first hand opportunity to interact directly with everyday young people, hear what we really think and what we really want to know. We would be grateful for your response as soon as possible.

Yours Sincerely
Kirsten Mary Hamilton – Allison
And
Samiat Oshodi

On behalf of the Southwark Youth Council

DRAFT
Work plan of the Democracy Commission
 July to October 2010

July

- Officer desk research and preparation of evidence
- Commission establishes terms of reference and work plan
- Set up cross-divisional officer working group
- Preparation of communication platforms (website, mailing lists, texting lists, etc)
- Promotion of the democracy commission
- Identification and confirmation of witnesses
- Initial consultation of councillors (through political groups, presentations at existing training sessions, email)
- Set up opinion focus group for council assembly on 14 July and continue consult them as a sounding board
- Plan focus groups for councillors after council assembly on 14 July
- Make contact with groups, such as Forums and Tennant and Resident associations, and identify opportunities to gather views
- Update website with news from hearings, events and projects; facilitate and monitor online discussions
- Make contact with Schools with a view to consulting young people through School Councils, citizenship classes etc (Note that last day of school term is Friday 23 July.)
- Make contact with the Southwark youth council and the 8 local youth community councils

Specific dates and events in July:

6 July ¹	Agreement on terms of reference and work plan (closed meeting)
12 July	First public hearing: Strategic and legal perspectives on the relationship between Council Assembly and the public
14 July	Focus group attend Council Assembly
7 to 16 July	Make contact with the Youth Council and schools and identify opportunities to consult with young people

August

- Further officer desk research and preparation of evidence
- Outreach: Visit groups (BME, youth, older people, people with disabilities, communities of interest, resident groups etc) and gather views from summer events, summer schemes, etc
- Summer events include:
 - Sunday 1 August: Carnival del pueblo
 - Thursday 12 August: Rockingham Youth Festival, Elephant & Castle (contact Kevin Dykes / events team)

¹ Also that date: [Licensing Sub-Committee](#) 10.00 am

- Saturday 14 August: Southwark Youth Carnival, Peckham to Burgess Park (events team); The Mix, Burgess Park (events team)
- Saturday and Sunday 21 & 22 August: **Nunhead Community Week**, Nunhead Green (events team)
- Sunday 22 August: **Afrifest**, Peckham Rye Common (events team);
- Friday 27 August: **Picnic in the Park**, Burgess Park
- Sunday 29 August: **Children's Festival**, Dulwich Park, contact: events team
- Commissioners and other Councillors gather views from constituents
- Councillor and resident focus groups
- Ad hoc meetings of commission members and officers who are available to report on progress and identify any action needed
- Update website with news from hearings, events and projects; facilitate and monitor online discussions

Specific dates in August

02 August – Monday	Councillor focus group
05 August - Thursday	2 nd public meeting of Commission
07 August -Saturday	Outreach at Rockingham Youth Festival, Elephant & Castle (contact Kevin Dykes / events team)
10 August – Tuesday	Councillor focus group
18 August – Wednesday	Focus group / workshop / meeting
23 August -Monday	Commission to participate in Southwark Youth Council and Youth Community Councils Summer Event , Southbank University: The purpose of the event is for SYC and the YCCs to host an event where Southwark young people will: Have the opportunity to meet with decision makers, discuss their concerns and priorities for action; Be provided with a range of useful information; Promote young people’s involvement around decision making in their community.
Throughout August (Dates to be confirmed) – Thursday	4 area based focus group targeted at residents attending Community Councils

September

- Presentation of evidence (public hearings, one larger community focused event, themed workshops and one select committee style to agree final report)
- Outreach at Community Councils and community events
- Community events include:
 - Sunday 12 September: Eid Muslim Festival, Dulwich Park

- Sunday 12 September 12pm to 3pm: Community based fundraising event in support for "Help for Heroes" charity, Market Place, Southwark Park Road, SE16 3UQ (Bermondsey) - contact Carles Miralles
- Saturday 18 September: Bermondsey Street Festival
- Sunday 19 September Nunhead Green Day
- School based projects (debates, themed assemblies, citizenship curriculum)
- Commissioner visits (other authorities that have successfully engaged the public with their full council meetings)
- Assess evidence and draft report and recommendations
- Update website with news from hearings, events and projects; facilitate and monitor online discussions
- Attend meetings of the Multi Faith Forum management committee and the Disability Forum (September meeting dates to be confirmed)
- Note that Ramadan starts around 10th August and Eid is expected to be on Friday 10 Sept and first day of school term is Wednesday 1 September

4 September (Saturday)	<p>Community focused Conference</p> <p>Speakers, panel discussions, workshops, 'cafe conversations' etc to engage the public and community in the Democracy Commission and improving the Council Assembly</p> <p>Workshops could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using communications to enhance engagement – webcasting, social media, radio, TV ● Decision making – How does the Council Assembly relate to other decision making bodies (Community Councils etc) and what role & powers should it have to engage the public effectively? ● Engaging wider public and harder to reach communities
<p>Tuesday pm 7 September</p> <p>OR Saturday am 11 September</p>	<p>Present and review evidence gathered (including conclusions drawn from workshops and focus groups so far, audio / video footage and feedback from events and outreach activities).</p> <p>Receive background to report on Council Assembly and consider recommendations</p>
9 September (Thursday, 6.30pm)	LGBT forum meeting -request agenda item to get views
18 September	4 th public meeting of Commission to gather input, assess

(Saturday)	and produce recommendations. Draft report with background information circulated
23 September	5 th and final commission meeting to approve and make amendments to draft report and recommendations on Council Assembly

October

- Draft report finalised and reviewed by CMT (if necessary) and constitutional support in time for dispatch date.

1 October	Final report and recommendations drafted
8 October	Council Assembly agenda dispatched: report to be distributed to all members
19 October	Presentation of report to Cabinet
20 October	Presentation of report to Council Assembly

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