

APPENDIX 2

Outcome of Members' Survey on Perceptions and Experiences of the Revised Governance Arrangements

| Question No. | Question | Working Group's Commentary | Recommendations |
|--------------|---|--|---|
| 1 | To what extent do you agree that you understand the role and purpose of Full Council? | <p>The Working Group noted that most Members agreed or strongly agreed that they understood the role and purpose.</p> <p>The last Members' comment alluded to Members' behaviour in Council meetings was unacceptable. The Working Group was making this its focus.</p> | <p>There is no training required around Members' understanding of the role and purpose of Full Council at this stage.</p> <p>After the Elections in 2014, training be made available to new Members and to those who have been re-elected. This should include a briefing on etiquette to be observed at Council meetings.</p> <p>A Protocol be drawn up that expressly states the behaviour expected and not expected from Members at Council meetings. The Protocol should be policed by Group Leaders/Whips.</p> |
| 2 | Since the Constitution was revised, do you feel that you understand the role of Full Council? | <p>The Working Group had identified that Members had difficulty in following the procedure at the Budget Council meeting.</p> <p>It was recognised that Mayors try very hard to ensure Council meetings are understood. Mayors all conduct the meetings fairly; however the task of chairing is made more difficult by the</p> | <p>The format of the Mayor's script for Council meetings be revised to include greater explanation of the proceedings and copies be provided for all Members.</p> <p>A review be undertaken to ascertain see what changes/improvements could be made to ensure members of the public better understand meetings of Full Council.</p> |

APPENDIX 2

| Question No. | Question | Working Group's Commentary | Recommendations |
|--------------|---|---|---|
| | | <p>behavior of some Members.</p> <p>It was noted that it was appropriate that as part of the Council's drive to improve, an assessment was required to ensure that the public were able to understand meetings of Full Council and therefore better engage.</p> | |
| 3 | How effective is Full Council in fulfilling its role? | <p>Some Members felt that the manner in which Cabinet Member reports were presented at Council meetings was staged.</p> <p>The Working Group raised a number of concerns about questions to Cabinet Members and the way they were responded to.</p> | The way in which Cabinet Member reports are managed be reviewed to help ensure the time available is utilised and the opportunity to question Cabinet Members encouraged. |
| 4 | <p>Thinking about meetings of the Full Council prior to the new Constitution, do you feel that:</p> <p>New Full Council meetings are better?</p> <p>New Full Council meetings are worse?</p> <p>New Full Council meetings are about the same?</p> | <p>The Working Group noted that a lot of Members considered that meetings are worse or the same since the new Constitution was adopted.</p> <p>It was recognised that the arrangements were still being embedded and this result will need to be carefully considered should a similar survey be conducted in the future.</p> | N/A |

APPENDIX 2

| Question No. | Question | Working Group's Commentary | Recommendations |
|--------------|--|--|---|
| 5 | When considering Full Council, how important do you consider Portfolio Updates? | <p>The Working Group noted that a lot of Members liked the Portfolio Updates.</p> <p>There was a comment that questions were 'planted' and this was obvious to everyone. It was thought that they would reduce as Cabinet Members became more confident.</p> | See recommendation to 3 above. |
| 6 | When considering Full Council, how important do you consider Reports from the Chairs of Policy and Performance Committees? | <p>The Working Group was aware that up to now there had been little input from Chairs of Policy and Performance Committees.</p> <p>There was a lot of focus on the Leader and the Executive at Council meetings but not as much focus on back benchers as there should be.</p> | <p>The facility to ask questions of Chairs of Policy and Performance Committees be included in the Mayor's script.</p> <p>The review referred to at 3 above, be extended to cover reports of Chairs of Policy and Performance Committees</p> |
| 7 | When considering Full Council, how important do you consider Notices of Motion? | <p>The Working Group's view was that Notices of Motion should be around the Council's areas of influence.</p> <p>The Mayor had the discretion to decide which Notices of Motion were debated at Council meetings and which were referred to Policy and Performance Committees.</p> | <p>That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) in future Notice of Motions must be about matters the Council has control and influence over; and (b) the Mayor considers Notices of Motion against a set criteria when deciding which Notices of Motion are debated at Council meetings or referred. |

APPENDIX 2

| Question No. | Question | Working Group's Commentary | Recommendations |
|--------------|--|---|-----------------|
| 8 | When considering Full Council, how important do you consider Policy Council? | <p>The Working Group noted that a lot of Members considered the Policy Council meeting to be very important or fairly important. Coherent policy agreed by the majority of the Council provided a clear vision going forward.</p> <p>A Member of the Working Group raised concerns about the policy development sessions held at the Floral Pavilion. The time (15 minutes) allocated to discuss matters was too short and also felt that the decisions had already been made. The issue of how appropriate these sessions were was raised.</p> <p>Another Member of the Working Group considered that policy development must be considered holistically.</p> <p>It was important that Members thought about developing policy all year round as there was a limit over what could be done in Council meetings.</p> <p>Another Member informed that there had been different formats used for the policy development sessions.</p> | N/A |

APPENDIX 2

| Question No. | Question | Working Group's Commentary | Recommendations |
|--------------|---|--|---|
| 9 | To what extent do you agree that changes to the Constitution provide better opportunity for challenge and healthy debate at Full Council? | The Working Group considered that Members misused the system and that there was not enough time available for debate etc. Concerns were raised over the use of the 'Guillotine'. | The Mayor be asked for his opinion on how the Council meetings have operated under the new Constitution and where improvements could be made. |
| 10 | Do you have any recommendations to improve the effectiveness of Full Council meetings? | <p>The Working Group noted that only 29 Members had answered this question. The comments received were on procedures, protocols, etiquette, structure and time available at Council meetings.</p> <p>It was noted that Cheshire West and Chester Council webcast its meetings.</p> | The possibility of Council meetings being webcast be explored to determine its viability. |
| 11 | To what extent do you agree that you understand the role and purpose of the Cabinet? | The Working Group noted that most Members agreed or strongly agreed that they understood the role and purpose. | N/A |
| 12 | Since the Constitution was revised, do you feel that you understand the role of the Cabinet? | There was no issue arising. | N/A |
| 13 | How effective do you feel that the Cabinet is in fulfilling its role? | Most Members thought it was effective. The comment that the Cabinet was still remote from backbenchers was discussed at length and it was agreed that Question Time at Council meetings helped. | Where possible, pre decision scrutiny should be encouraged. Communication between Cabinet Members and Policy and Performance Committee Members be encouraged and strengthened. |

APPENDIX 2

| Question No. | Question | Working Group's Commentary | Recommendations |
|--------------|---|--|---|
| | | | Cabinet Members could be invited to Policy and Performance Committee meetings periodically to provide brief overviews in respect of their portfolios. |
| 14 | Thinking about Cabinet meetings prior to the new Constitution, do you feel that: They are better? Worse? About the same? | <p>The Working Group noted that six Members had skipped these questions and there was no significant positive answer.</p> <p>Cabinet and Committee agendas were still too big.</p> <p>At least one of the Policy and Performance Committees was too big.</p> <p>The Policy and Performance – Families and Wellbeing Committee had a significant remit and would need to meet more frequently in order to deal with issues in more depth.</p> | <p>If a similar survey is undertaken again Members should be asked 'What do you expect from the Cabinet meeting?'</p> <p>Relevant responses to the survey questions be sent to the relevant Committees for their consideration.</p> |
| 15 | To what extent do you agree that there is accountability and an audit trail of decision making at Cabinet meetings? | <p>The Working Group noted that a lot of Members liked the Portfolio Updates.</p> <p>There was a comment that questions were 'planted' and this was obvious to everyone. It was thought that such questions would reduce as Cabinet Members became more confident.</p> <p>The Working Group noted that Cabinet</p> | Cabinet be asked to consider the Working Groups comments. |

APPENDIX 2

| Question No. | Question | Working Group's Commentary | Recommendations |
|--------------|---|---|---|
| | | <p>Members could change the recommendations set out in reports but it was queried whether this should be done in public. Some Members considered it to be best practice, in the interests of openness and transparency, for the reasons for doing so to be also given in public.</p> | |
| 16 | <p>To what extent do you agree that the Cabinet is open and transparent?</p> | <p>The Working Group noted that the responses to this question contradicted those to question 15.</p> <p>The idea of a mixed Cabinet was considered as there had been a comment received that a one-party Cabinet could not be as open and transparent as an all party one.</p> <p>However, it was recognised that it is where there is a majority Group it is not uncommon for the majority Group to occupy the Cabinet seats.</p> | N/A |
| 17 | <p>To what extent do you agree that the Cabinet is capable of making quick and effective decisions?</p> | <p>The Working Group was aware that decision-making did take a long time.</p> <p>There was a comment that delegation made things better but some decisions still seemed to take an age.</p> | <p>Cabinet Members be encouraged to utilise their delegation powers more.</p> |

APPENDIX 2

| Question No. | Question | Working Group's Commentary | Recommendations |
|--------------|--|--|--|
| 18 | When considering Full Council, how important do you consider Policy Council? | <p>The Working Group noted that 29 Members had chosen to skip this question.</p> <p>There had been a significant number of Special Cabinet meetings and it was not thought that this was down to the volume of work it had to get through but in order to respond quickly to certain situations.</p> | N/A |
| 19 | To what extent do you agree that Executive Delegated Decisions are open and transparent? | A high percentage of Members agreed with this. | N/A |
| 20 | To what extent do you agree that Executive Delegated Decisions are clear and understandable? | A high percentage of Members agreed with this. The Working Group agreed that it was easy to find the delegated decisions on the website. | N/A |
| 21 | To what extent do you agree there is accountability and an audit trail of Executive Delegated Decisions? | A high percentage of Members agreed with this. | N/A |
| 22 | To what extent do you agree that you understand the role and purpose of Policy and Performance Committees? | A high percentage of Members agreed with this. The Working Group considered this to be an encouraging response. | This response be referred to the Co-ordination Policy and Performance Committee for consideration. |
| 23 | How effective do you feel that Policy and Performance Committees are in fulfilling their role? | The Working Group was very concerned over the work load of the Families and Wellbeing Policy and Performance Committee. It has a very | This response be referred to the Co-ordination Policy and Performance Committee for consideration. |

APPENDIX 2

| Question No. | Question | Working Group's Commentary | Recommendations |
|--------------|---|---|--|
| | | <p>large remit and has very long meetings with lengthy agendas.</p> <p>However, it was agreed that the remit should not be split as it was the right approach to have cohesion between the subject matter. However, more meetings would help manage the work.</p> <p>The Working Group considered that continuity was needed for Policy and Performance Committees and that Political Groups bore this in mind for the next Municipal Year.</p> | <p>In respect of Families and Wellbeing, a review and analysis be carried out at the end of the 2014/15 Municipal Year of the last two years to ascertain whether or not the current arrangements are effective.</p> <p>Political Groups be requested to have regard to the need for continuity when allocating Members to Policy and Performance Committees, at the beginning of each new Municipal Year.</p> |
| 24 | <p>Thinking about meetings of Scrutiny Committees prior to the new Constitution, do you feel that Policy and Performance Committee meetings are: Better? Worse? About the same?</p> | <p>The Working Group considered that there was a need for training to help Members manage agendas more effectively.</p> <p>Also, the wide scope of the Families and Wellbeing Policy and Performance Committee needed to be addressed as set out above.</p> | <p>This response be referred to the Co-ordination Policy and Performance Committee for consideration.</p> <p>Appropriate Members' training be provided.</p> <p>See 23 above regarding Families and Wellbeing Policy and Performance Committee.</p> |
| 25 | <p>To what extent do you agree that Policy and Performance Committees provide the opportunity to influence policy?</p> | <p>Approximately one third of Members who had completed the survey had disagreed with this but had not made any comments explaining why.</p> <p>The Working Group acknowledged the</p> | <p>This response be referred to the Co-ordination Policy and Performance Committee for consideration.</p> |

APPENDIX 2

| Question No. | Question | Working Group's Commentary | Recommendations |
|--------------|--|--|--|
| | | fact that a fair number of Members did not agree. It was 'early days' and it was not possible to analyse why as no comments had been made. | |
| 26 | To what extent do you agree that Policy and Performance Committees provide the opportunity to undertake pre-decision scrutiny? | The Working Group noted that Members thought that the capacity was there to undertake pre-decision scrutiny. | This response be referred to the Co-ordination Policy and Performance Committee for consideration. |
| 27 | When thinking about the information available to Policy and Performance to hold the Cabinet to account, do you think that it is: Too much? Too little? About right? | The Working Group noted the response. | This response be referred to the Co-ordination Policy and Performance Committee for consideration. |
| 28 | How do you think Scrutiny can be improved? | The Working Group noted the response. | This response be referred to the Co-ordination Policy and Performance Committee for consideration. |
| 29 | To what extent do you agree that you understand the role and purpose of the Audit and Risk Management Committee? | The Working Group noted the response. | This response be referred to the Audit and Risk Management Committee for consideration. |
| 30 | Since the Constitution was revised, do you feel that you understand the role of the Audit and Risk Management Committee? | The Working Group noted the response. | This response be referred to the Audit and Risk Management Committee for consideration. |

APPENDIX 2

| Question No. | Question | Working Group's Commentary | Recommendations |
|--------------|--|--|--|
| 31 | How effective do you feel that the Audit and Risk Management Committee is in fulfilling its role? | The Working Group noted the response. | This response be referred to the Audit and Risk Management Committee for consideration. |
| 32 | Thinking about meetings of the Audit and Risk Management Committee prior to the new Constitution, do you feel that Audit and Risk Management Committee meetings: Are now better? Are now worse? Are about the same? | The Working Group noted the response. | This response be referred to the Audit and Risk Management Committee for consideration. |
| 33 | Do you have any recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the Audit and Risk Management Committee? | <p>The Working Group noted that the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 would have an impact on the Council. Regulations were expected by early summer and subsequent arrangements would have to be put in place by the end of the year. This may mean that the Chair would need to be independent of the Council.</p> <p>The Working Group was concerned about the Members training that had been provided. It considered that it needed to be better tailored to Members' needs. It was noted that member training was being reviewed to</p> | <p>All Members' to undergo a Training Needs Analysis.</p> <p>The Organisational Development Team to draw up a Members' Training and Development Programme that caters for the different needs and levels of training that Members require e.g. basic, advanced, refresher etc.</p> |

APPENDIX 2

| Question No. | Question | Working Group's Commentary | Recommendations |
|--------------|---|--|-----------------|
| | | address issues and concerns that have been raised. | |
| 34 | To what extent do you agree that you understand the role and purpose of the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee? | The Working Group noted the response. | N/A |
| 35 | Since the Constitution was revised, do you feel that you understand the role of the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee? | The Working Group noted the response. | N/A |
| 36 | How effective do you feel that the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee is in fulfilling its role? | The Working Group noted the response. | N/A |
| 37 | Thinking about meetings of the Standards Committee prior to the new Constitution, do you feel that Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee meetings are: Now better? Now worse? About the same? | The Working Group noted the response. | N/A |

APPENDIX 2

| Question No. | Question | Working Group's Commentary | Recommendations |
|--------------|---|--|--|
| 38 | Do you have any recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee? | <p>Only eight Members had answered this question and 36 had skipped it.</p> <p>A comment that 'It needs teeth and is weak to deal with wrongdoers' was noted.</p> | N/A |
| 39 | I treat fellow Councillors with dignity and respect. | The Working Group noted the response. | This response be referred to the Political Groups for their consideration. |
| 40 | I treat Council Officers with dignity and respect. | <p>The Working Group referred to the comment that 'Sometimes it can be difficult to treat Officers with respect when they are clearly dissembling or not prepared to answer questions which in itself is disrespectful to Members and our role.'</p> <p>It was recognised that concerns about officers needed to follow due process and officers were entitled to be treated with respect.</p> | This response be referred to the Chief Executive for consideration. |
| 41 | I am treated with dignity and respect by other Members. | The Working Group noted the response. | This response be referred to the Political Groups for their consideration. |
| 42 | I am treated with dignity and respect by Council Officers | The Working Group noted the response. | This response be referred to the Political Groups for their consideration. |

APPENDIX 2

| Question No. | Question | Working Group's Commentary | Recommendations |
|--------------|---|---|--|
| 43 | I am encouraged to express my views on issues which are important to me, irrespective of the forum. | The Working Group noted the response. | This response be referred to the Political Groups for their consideration. |
| 44 | At times I have been discouraged from effectively expressing my views on issues. | <p>The Working Group noted that there was a 10% difference in the answers provided to question 43 and 44 and was of the view that this was down to Party Politics.</p> <p>There was an undercurrent that some Members felt repressed.</p> | This response be referred to the Political Groups for their consideration. |
| 45 | I feel I have personally discouraged a fellow Councillor or officer from expressing their views in the course of my role. | The Working Group noted the response. | This response be referred to the Political Groups for their consideration. |
| 46 | I have witnessed or am aware of a fellow Councillor or Officer being discouraged to express their views. | The Working Group noted the response. | This response be referred to the Political Groups for their consideration. |
| 47 | To what extent do you agree the revised Constitution promotes and fosters good relationships between Members? | The Working Group noted the response. | N/A |
| 48 | To what extent do you agree that the revised Constitution promotes and fosters good relationships with Officers? | The Working Group noted the response. | N/A |

APPENDIX 2

| Question No. | Question | Working Group's Commentary | Recommendations |
|--------------|--|---|---|
| 49 | Overall, to what extent do you agree that the revised constitutional arrangements promote democracy in action? | The Working Group noted the response. | N/A |
| 50 | Please provide any further comments that you would like to make about the revised Constitution. | The Working Group noted the response. | N/A |
| 51 | The Localism Act requires the promotion of high standards of conduct amongst Members. What traits/characteristics do you think an Elected Member demonstrating high standards of conduct would have? | The Working Group noted that 30 Members had answered the question whilst 14 had skipped it. | The Organisational Development Team be requested to consider this as part of the Members' Culture and Behaviour Programme. |
| 52 | How can high standards of conduct be achieved amongst all Members? | The Working Group noted that 30 Members had answered the question whilst 14 had skipped it. | The Organisational Development Team be requested to review the Members' training offer and examine how Members' attendance can be improved. |
| 53 | Do you think Group Leaders have a specific responsibility to promote high standards of conduct amongst their Political Group Members? | The Working Group noted that 36 Members had answered the question whilst 8 had skipped it. | This response be referred to the Political Groups for their consideration. |
| 54 | What should Group Leaders do to fulfill this responsibility? | The Working Group noted that 24 Members had answered the question whilst 20 had skipped it. | This response be referred to the Political Groups for their consideration. |

APPENDIX 2

| Question No. | Question | Working Group's Commentary | Recommendations |
|--------------|--|--|---|
| 55 | To what extent do you understand the obligations under the Members' Code of Conduct? | The Working Group noted the response which was positive. | N/A |
| 56 | To what extent do you agree that the Members' Code of Conduct satisfactorily sets out the required standards of behaviour and conduct for Elected Members? | The Working Group noted the response which was positive. | N/A |
| 57 | Please identify any elements of the current Code of Conduct that lacks clarity or could be better explained. | The Working Group noted that only 8 Members had answered the question whilst 36 had skipped it. | N/A |
| 58 | What behaviour or conduct has not been addressed in the Members' Code of Conduct? | The Working Group was concerned that some Members were seen to be acting with impunity on social networks and in emails. No action was being taken in respect of this. | <p>As part of the Work Programme for the 2014/15 Municipal Year, the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee be requested to look at subjective aspects of Members' conduct and behaviour and provide clarity on what is and what is not acceptable.</p> <p>In doing this the Committee is requested to provide clear parameters in respect of internet media etc.</p> |
| 59 | In which environment would you consider Elected Members' behaviour and conduct could be improved? | The Working Group noted the response. | See 58 above. |