

Standards Committee

29 July 2021



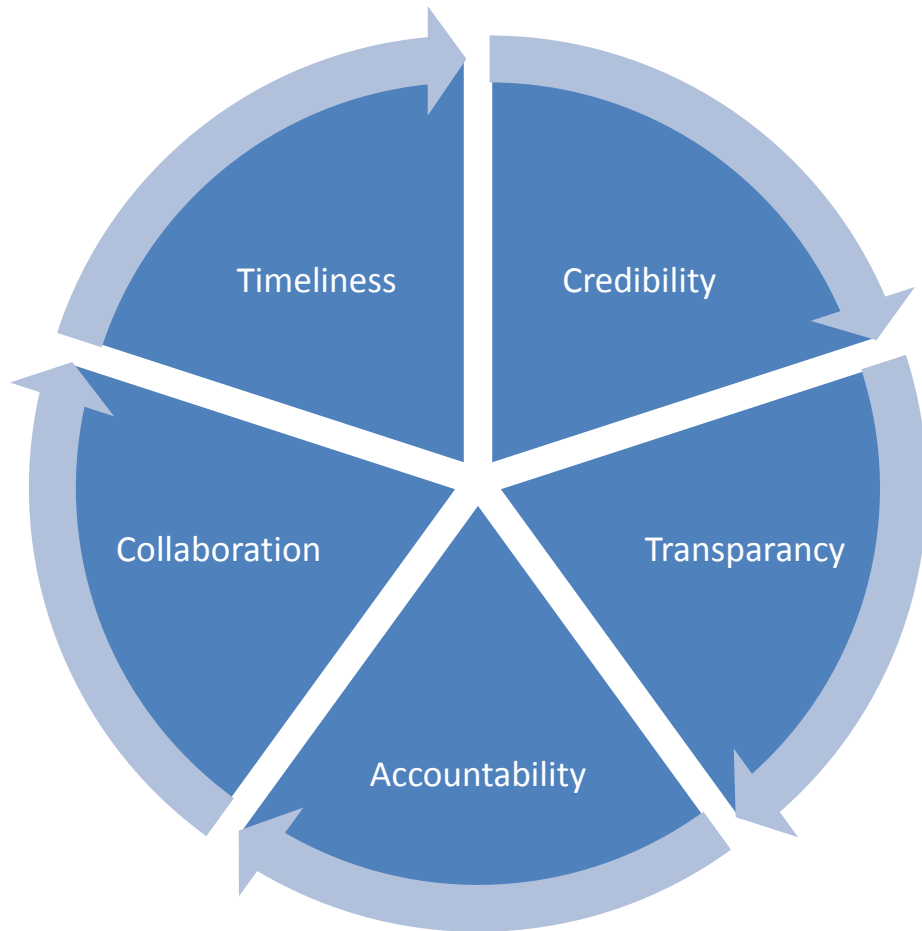
Title	Committee System Working Group and terms of reference
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	Victoria Statham, Group Head of Corporate Governance
Ward(s) Affected	All wards
Exempt	No
Corporate Priority	This item is not in the current list of Corporate Priorities but still requires a Committee decision
Recommendations	Committee is asked to: Establish a Committee System Working Group (CSWG) with the terms of reference set out in the report at Appendix A and to agree the membership of the group
Reason for Recommendation	To ensure the monitoring of the committee system to ensure the objectives are being achieved and to recommend any necessary amendments.

1. Key issues

- 1.1 On 30 July 2020 this Council resolved: “to implement a change in decision making governance arrangements, comprising the cessation of the current Leader and Cabinet model of governance and the implementation of a Full Committee model of governance. This is to be developed during 2020 with a view to the arrangements taking effect at the earliest opportunity, but no later than the commencement of the next Council Municipal Year in May 2021, subject to a legally and constitutionally robust process. The changes are to be debated and agreed by the Council”.
- 1.2 On the 25 March 2021 the Council made the formal resolution to adopt a committee system of governance. At the Annual Council Meeting in May 2021 this came into operation.
- 1.3 In order to prepare for the transition a Leader’s Committee System Working Group was established with a membership of all the Group Leaders. This working group meet weekly to develop the committee system and their work was reported to Council for adoption. It was agreed at the last meeting of this group that there should be periodic meetings of such a group during the first year of implementation to monitor whether the system was meeting the

objectives set by the Council and to recommend to this committee any changes required.

- 1.4 As the previous group was a Leader's working group, this needs to be re-established as a committee working group.
- 1.5 The Council's objectives with the system are:



- (a) **Accountability** – responsibilities and accountability about who does what should be clear, within the Council and to residents;
 - (b) **Credibility** – governance should assist good decision making, which involves proper and early scrutiny of policies and proposals;
 - (c) **Transparency** – the decision-making process should be open and transparent to Members, officers and to the public;
 - (d) **Collaboration** - decision making should be collaborative across parties and less combative;
 - (e) **Timeliness** – decision making should be both quick and effective and, when necessary, allow for urgent decision-making.
- 1.6 No agreement was reached at the Standards Committee on the 28 July 2021 as to the composition of the CSWG. It was resolved that this matter would be deferred until a further meeting and that the Monitoring Officer would consult with the political group leaders as to a solution.
2. **Options analysis and proposal**

- 2.1 The recommendation is that the CSWG is set up with the proposed terms of reference to allow for consideration of whether the objections are being achieved and to enable discussions on any amendments that may be required.
- 2.2 If this CSWG is not established officers would still monitor whether the system is fulfilling the objectives and would propose changes to this committee, but this would be without that vital Councillor discussion forum.
- 2.3 Comments have been received from the political group leaders on the options. The responses are:
- (a) Independent Spelthorne - The terms of reference are clear and are monitoring the objectives approved by the Council
 - (b) Independent Labour - The CSWG should comprise of all Leaders and Deputy Leaders. The Committee system should be reviewed at six months along with the constitution.
 - (c) Independent Group – Group Leaders but with two suggested options:
 - i) Option 1 (1 additional Conservative and 1 additional LibDem/Green)
 - ii) Option 2 (1 additional Conservative and 1 additional of the Independent Green Councillor)
 - (d) Liberal Democrat – The task group should represent all parties and the review should be in 6 months. Agreed that proportionality is key and increasing the size is not the answer. If the Group Leader is not available could a Deputy be sent
 - (e) Independent Green Councillor – agree with option 2 above
 - (f) United Spelthorne Group – questioned whether the Mayor was permitted to sit on a working group. It was confirmed that he was able to
 - (g) Labour - The task group should represent all parties and the review should be in 6 months

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 There are none expected

4. Other considerations

- 4.1 There are no other considerations to highlight.

5. Equality and Diversity

- 5.1 This does not have any direct equality and diversity impacts.

6. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 This does not have any direct sustainability/climate change implications.

7. Timetable for implementation

- 7.1 The consultation for the delegations will take place as soon as possible after the committee decision to ensure that this inquiry is commenced quickly.

Background papers:
There are none.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Terms of reference

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