Committee Model Working Group
Agenda

Date: Friday, 24 February 2023
Time: 11.00 am
Venue: The Puerto Morazan Room (Library), 1st Floor, City Hall, BS1 5TR

Distribution:

Councillors: Jenny Bartle (Chair), Geoff Gollop (Vice-Chair), Nicola Beech, Marley Bennett, Richard Eddy, Lorraine Francis, Helen Holland, Gary Hopkins, Tim Kent, Mohamed Makawi, Steve Pearce and Guy Poultney.

Issued by: Democratic Services
City Hall, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TR
Email: committeesystem@bristol.gov.uk
Date: 16 Feb 2023

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Agenda

1. **Welcome, Introductions, and Safety Information**

2. **Apologies for absence**

3. **Declarations of interest**

4. **Minutes from the previous meeting**

5. **Public Forum**

NB. up to 30 minutes is allowed for this item

Any member of the public or councillor may participate in Public Forum. The detailed arrangements for so doing are set out in the Public Information Sheet at the back of this agenda.

Please note that the following deadlines will apply in relation to this meeting: Questions - Written questions must be received 3 clear working days prior to the meeting. For this meeting, this means that your question(s) must be received via email at the latest by 5 pm on 20 February 2023.

Petitions and Statements - Petitions and statements must be received on the working day prior to the meeting. For this meeting this means that your submission must be received via email at the latest by 12.00 noon on 23 February 2023.

6. **Scrutiny**

7. **Community Engagement Feedback**

8. **Work Programme - for noting only**

Committee Model Working Group

Minutes from the meeting on 27th January 2023

Attendees: Councillor Jenny Bartle (Chair), Councillor Marley Bennett, Councillor Nicola Beech, Councillor Richard Eddy, Councillor Lorraine Francis, Councillor Helen Holland, Councillor Gary Hopkins, Councillor Mohamed Makawi, Councillor Steve Pearce, Councillor Guy Poultney and Councillor Mark Weston (substituting for Councillor Geoff Gollop).

Apologies: Councillor Geoff Gollop

1. **Welcome, Introductions, and Safety Information**

The Chair welcomed those present and introductions were made.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor Geoff Gollop with Councillor Mark Weston substituting.

3. **Annual Business**

The following matters were discussed:

- Members noted the Membership as set out in the Annual Business Report.
- The Working Group confirmed the dates for meetings, as detailed in the accompanying papers.
- Councillor Eddy moved that the Terms of Reference be approved, and this was seconded by Councillor Bartle.
- Councillor Eddy moved that Councillor Bartle be elected as Chair, and this was seconded by Councillor Beech. As there were no other nominations this was carried.
- Councillor Weston moved that Councillor Gollop be elected as Vice Chair and this was seconded by Councillor Pearce. As there were no other nominations this was carried.

RESOLVED:

- **That the Membership of the Group for 2022/23 be noted.**
- **That the meeting dates set out in the report be confirmed.**
- **That the Terms of Reference be approved.**
- **That Councillor Jenny Bartle be elected Chair of the Committee Model Working Group for the remainder of the 22/23 Municipal Year.**
- **That Councillor Geoff Gollop be elected Vice Chair of the Working Group for the remainder of the 22/23 Municipal Year.**

4. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Public Forum

The following public forum business was received for the meeting.

No.	Name	Question
PQ01	Suzanne Audrey	As far as I am aware, four members of the working group voted against holding the governance referendum, two members wrote articles during the run-up to the referendum saying they opposed the committee model, and two members (including the Chair) currently serve in the Mayor's Cabinet, some members of which continue to make disparaging remarks about the committee system. What reassurance can you give to the public that those members of the working group who opposed the governance referendum and/or the committee model are now working positively to develop the new committee model of governance for the city? Answer: This is a question for individual Councillors and should be directed to them as appropriate, however anyone in attendance at the meeting may choose to respond.
PQ02	Suzanne Audrey	The Vice-chair of the governance working group appeared to suggest that only '12 nerds' across the city were interested in the early meetings of the committee model working group. I disagree, and the public engagement meeting I attended would suggest that there are plenty of people who are keen to understand and improve local democracy. However, it is not always easy for people to attend meetings or to get their voices heard. In what ways will the working group engage citizens in the development and understanding of the new committee model of governance? Answer: The Committee Model Working Group has prepared a Communications and Engagement Strategy which sets out Members' commitment to engaging with the public and the ways in which they will do this. In addition to the activities set out in the Strategy, meetings of the CMWG will now be held in public, which provides residents with the opportunity to submit statements and ask questions, even if they are not able to attend in person.
PQ03	Joanna Booth	How have they ensured that scrutiny will be done outside the committees themselves so that those performing executive functions do not also scrutinise their own actions? Answer: The Committee Model Working Group will be considering the approach to scrutiny at a future meeting.
PQ04	Joanna Booth	How is the committee ensuring that the system that will come into place in May 2024, will have sufficient resources (i.e., won't be affected by the Labour administration's cuts to Democratic Services) to perform its functions? Answer: Discussions about the resources required to support the committee system will take place when more details about the potential structure are available.
PQ05	Joanna Booth	At a recent public meeting, the chair, Cllr Helen Holland, implied the group was looking at how to create a 'strong leader' model. This is not what Bristol voted for. How is the committee planning to make sure we have a committee system, which the people voted for, and not a leader and cabinet system? Answer: The referendum on the Council's governance will result in a move to the Council being run by 'one or more Committees made up of elected Councillors.' Councillor Holland may wish to comment further on this question.

PQ01. Councillor Beech responded to advise that she was not aware that the Labour Group had criticised the decision to move to a Committee Model following the referendum and that Members were working together to deliver a system that reflected the needs of local residents.

Supplementary question from Suzanne Audrey: Do you agree that existing funding should be retained to support the Committee system?

Councillor Holland responded to confirm that she had effectively supported several governance structures during her time as an elected representative. She went on to state that once details of the Committee system were known the resources required to deliver it could then be identified.

Councillor Bartley and Councillor Eddy added that Members of the Group had been working together collaboratively and positively.

Supplementary question from Suzanne Audrey: Are there any plans to webcast meetings of the CMWG?

PQ02. The Head of Democratic Engagement stated that the Council was in the process of moving towards delivery of increased webcasting and hybrid meetings.

Following the formal public forum, the Chair allowed an additional contribution from a member of the public who was present at the meeting. Mary Page inquired about whether the Committee planned to engage with representatives of the groups that campaigned in relation to the outcome of the referendum. In response, Members advised that the Committee would shortly be finalising its Communications and Engagement Strategy, which would include liaison with a range of external partners.

6. Work Programme

Members approved the work programme.

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be approved.

7. Decision-making under the current Mayor and Cabinet model of governance

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services provided a brief introduction to the report, following which the Head of the Executive Office provided a presentation and responded to questions from Members. The ensuing discussion was as follows:

- The current key decision pathway required the Council to publish forthcoming key decisions 28 days in advance. The threshold for a key decision was presently those resulting in expenditure or savings of £500k or over or being significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in two or more wards in the city. Members confirmed that the principles of political oversight and long-term planning needed to remain in place, therefore it was agreed that Policy Committees would publish Forward Plans, ideally at least 2-months in advance with final details to be confirmed at a later date. It was also suggested that ward Members be kept fully informed about Key Decisions affecting their wards.

- Decisions that cost between £100k and £499k (i.e., below the key decision threshold) were Officer Executive Decisions (OEDs) taken by senior officers. OEDs were made in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Members and details of the decision were then published. Members advised that they would like to consider how this arrangement would work in the committee model, with a view to determining if any changes should be made to improve transparency.
- Members noted the approach to emergency decision making, details of which were covered in the Council's Access to Information rules (see APR15 and 16), agreeing that a similar mechanism would need to be in place, with details to be agreed in due course.
- The Group discussed the principle about democratic decision making and all agreed that the current levels of political oversight must be retained.
- Members were advised that the Council could choose to have a Leader and Deputy Leader in the Committee Model. The benefits included having named individuals who could speak on behalf of the Council, although some Members were concerned about the potential for the Leader and Deputy Leader to have too many 'powers.' After discussion, Members agreed that Leader and Deputy Leader positions would be created, with both positions appointed by Full Council. It was noted that a fuller discussion about the roles and responsibilities of the Leader and Deputy Leader would take place at a future meeting, to include job roles from other Local Authorities.
- Members inquired about the various external bodies e.g., Boards which had Cabinet Member involvement and it was agreed that details would be provided following the meeting.
- Regarding Call In, Members agreed that once the Group had determined the number of Committees and their responsibilities this would be given further consideration, but there was consensus that this process should be retained.
- Members considered the approach to briefings, confirming that the Chairs and Vice Chairs of each policy Committee would be invited to attend, in a similar way to how Cabinet Member briefings operated currently. Agenda setting meetings should operate how they do now for some meetings (e.g., Development Control) so that all Lead Members (one from each political party) be invited, and draft reports should be available. Members agreed to discuss this further at a later meeting.
- The Group discussed the approach to setting the Budget and Policy Framework, deciding that this would be subject to further consideration after agreement was reached regarding the number of Committees as well as roles and responsibilities of all Members. It was noted that the Council's Corporate Strategy was in place until 2027.
- Discussion moved to the arrangements for Member Forum and Public Forum. All Members agreed that both should be retained in the new model and some suggested that the Forums needed to be expanded, although noted that time constraints were an important consideration. The current principle of enabling Chairs to take a flexible approach to managing public forum should be maintained.
- Members noted that further discussion was required in relation to petitions, including the threshold for a debate and appropriate pathway for response.
- Consideration must be given by the Working Group to the approach to Scrutiny and there were several options for the Committee Model to consider at their meeting in March 23.

RESOLVED:

The following matters were agreed in relation to the Committee Model of governance:

- **That a Leader and Deputy Leader would be in place, appointed by Full Council. Roles and responsibilities to be confirmed at the 14th April 23 meeting.**
- **That Forward plan (s) would be in place, with more details to be considered.**
- **That Emergency Decision Making would be enabled with similar arrangements to those set out in APR 15 and 16.**
- **That the Chairs and Vice Chairs would be consulted on OEDs in advance, with other changes to the process to be considered in due course.**
- **That Member Forum/Public Forum, would be retained in the new model with full details to be confirmed.**
- **That agenda setting meetings take place before Policy Committees, with the Lead Members in attendance.**
- **That regular briefings be arranged for the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Policy Committees.**

8. **Community Engagement Feedback**

This item was deferred to a later meeting.

Appendix A – Log of Decisions

Committee Model Working Group

Decisions Log

Topic	Decision	Date	Note
Leader/Deputy Leader	Leader and Deputy Leader to be in place, appointed by Full Council. Roles and responsibilities to be confirmed at 14th April 23 meeting.	270123	
Key decision threshold	Details TBC. £500k minimum.	270123	Current political oversight of decisions to be maintained.
Forward Plan	Forward plan (s) to be in place – details TBC.	270123	
Emergency Decision Making	Assume APR 15 and 16 will be replicated but to be agreed once more details of how the arrangements operate have been provided.	270123	
Officer Delegated Decisions (OEDs)	Chairs/VCs to be consulted on OEDs in advance. May be a requirement to publish them before the decision and introduce the option for Call In.	270123	
Scrutiny	To be confirmed after the substantive discussion on 24th February 23.	270123	
Local Decision Making	To be confirmed after the substantive discussion on 26th May 23.	270123	
Budget and Policy Framework	Deferred to a later meeting.	270123	Decision to be made after details of the policy committee structure is available.
Member Forum/Public Forum	To be retained in the new model and may be expanded e.g., more time.	270123	Some concerns about the right balance between managing the business of the meeting and enabling additional engagement. Chairs' discretion to manage the meeting remains key.
Petition Debates	CMWG to review the threshold and agree pathway for debate and responses.	270123	
Agenda Settings	Leads to be invited to agenda setting meetings – draft reports to be available.	270123	
Briefings	Chairs/VCs to attend current Cabinet Member briefings.	270123	

Public Information Sheet

Inspection of Papers - Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

You can find papers for all our meetings on our website at www.bristol.gov.uk.

Public meetings

Public meetings including Cabinet, Full Council, regulatory meetings (where planning and licensing decisions are made) and scrutiny will now be held at City Hall.

Members of the press and public who plan to attend City Hall are advised that you may be asked to watch the meeting on a screen in another room should the numbers attending exceed the maximum occupancy of the meeting venue.

COVID-19 Prevention Measures at City Hall (June 2022)

When attending a meeting at City Hall, the following COVID-19 prevention guidance is advised:
- promotion of good hand hygiene: washing and disinfecting hands frequently
- while face coverings are no longer mandatory, we will continue to recommend their use in venues and workplaces with limited ventilation or large groups of people.
- although legal restrictions have been removed, we should continue to be mindful of others as we navigate this next phase of the pandemic.

COVID-19 Safety Measures for Attendance at Council Meetings (June 2022)

We request that no one attends a Council Meeting if they:
- are required to self-isolate from another country
- are suffering from symptoms of COVID-19 or
- have tested positive for COVID-19

Other formats and languages and assistance for those with hearing impairment

You can get committee papers in other formats (e.g. large print, audio tape, braille etc) or in community languages by contacting the Democratic Services Officer. Please give as much notice as possible. We cannot guarantee re-formatting or translation of papers before the date of a particular meeting.

Committee rooms are fitted with induction loops to assist people with hearing impairment. If you require any assistance with this please speak to the Democratic Services Officer.

Public Forum

Members of the public may make a written statement ask a question or present a petition to most meetings. Your statement or question will be sent to the Committee Members and will be published on the Council's website before the meeting. Please send it to committeesystem@bristol.gov.uk

The following requirements apply:

- The statement is received no later than **12.00 noon on the working day before the meeting** and is about a matter which is the responsibility of the committee concerned.
- The question is received no later than **5pm three clear working days before the meeting**.

Any statement submitted should be no longer than one side of A4 paper. If the statement is longer than this, then for reasons of cost, it may be that only the first sheet will be copied and made available at the meeting. For copyright reasons, we are unable to reproduce or publish newspaper or magazine articles that may be attached to statements.

By participating in public forum business, we will assume that you have consented to your name and the details of your submission being recorded and circulated to the Committee and published within the minutes. Your statement or question will also be made available to the public via publication on the Council's website and may be provided upon request in response to Freedom of Information Act requests in the future.

We will try to remove personal and identifiable information. However, because of time constraints we cannot guarantee this, and you may therefore wish to consider if your statement contains information that you would prefer not to be in the public domain. Other committee papers may be placed on the council's website and information within them may be searchable on the internet.

During the meeting:

- Public Forum is normally one of the first items on the agenda, although statements and petitions that relate to specific items on the agenda may be taken just before the item concerned.
- There will be no debate on statements or petitions.
- The Chair will call each submission in turn. When you are invited to speak, please make sure that your presentation focuses on the key issues that you would like Members to consider. This will have the greatest impact.
- Your time allocation may have to be strictly limited if there are a lot of submissions. **This may be as short as one minute.**
- If there are a large number of submissions on one matter a representative may be requested to speak on the groups behalf.
- If you do not attend or speak at the meeting at which your public forum submission is being taken your statement will be noted by Members.
- Under our security arrangements, please note that members of the public (and bags) may be searched. This may apply in the interests of helping to ensure a safe meeting environment for all attending.

- As part of the drive to reduce single-use plastics in council-owned buildings, please bring your own water bottle in order to fill up from the water dispenser.

For further information about procedure rules please refer to our Constitution
https://www.bristol.gov.uk/how-council-decisions-are-made/constitution

Webcasting/ Recording of meetings

Members of the public attending meetings or taking part in Public forum are advised that all Full Council and Cabinet meetings and some other committee meetings are now filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the council's webcasting pages. The whole of the meeting is filmed (except where there are confidential or exempt items). If you ask a question or make a representation, then you are likely to be filmed and will be deemed to have given your consent to this. If you do not wish to be filmed you need to make yourself known to the webcasting staff. However, the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 now means that persons attending meetings may take photographs, film and audio record the proceedings and report on the meeting (Oral commentary is not permitted during the meeting as it would be disruptive). Members of the public should therefore be aware that they may be filmed by others attending and that is not within the council's control.

The privacy notice for Democratic Services can be viewed at www.bristol.gov.uk/about-our-website/privacy-and-processing-notices-for-resource-services

Committee Model Working Group
24 February 2023

Report of: Director – Legal and Democratic Services

Title: Scrutiny arrangements under the Committee Model of governance

Ward: All

Officer Presenting Report: Director – Legal and Democratic Services

Recommendations:

That the Committee Model Working Group considers and makes recommendations in respect of the matters raised in this report.

The significant issues in the report are:

This report sets out a number of options for the Working Group to consider relating to the discharge of scrutiny functions under the Committee Model of governance.

1. **Summary**

As part of the preparations for the Committee Model of governance, there are a number of detailed matters that the Working Group needs to consider, which are part of the Work Programme for the Working Group during 2023.

This report considers the options for a scrutiny function under the Committee Model of governance.

The Working Group will need to make recommendations about the matters raised in this report. Those recommendations, together with recommendations from other meetings of the Working Group, will be reported to Full Council in due course, where a final decision will be taken regarding the arrangements for the Committee Model of governance.

2. **Scrutiny arrangements under the Committee Model of governance**

Under the Committee Model of governance, the Council could, but is not required to, have an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and it is for the Council to determine what style of scrutiny arrangements it would like to put in place.

There are different options for establishing scrutiny arrangements, including formal scrutiny through committees established to discharge scrutiny functions and 'task and finish' style sub-committees that could undertake policy development work that stops short of formal overview and scrutiny. Alternatively, the Council may decide that it does not want to put in place committees with scrutiny functions and instead will rely on the scrutiny of decisions as part of the decision-making process within policy committees.

Whichever model of scrutiny the Council decides to adopt, it should be recognised that the Council must have arrangements in place to undertake scrutiny of health, community safety partnerships and flood risk management/coastal erosion risk management functions. More details can be found in paragraph 3.

3. **Legal and Constitutional matters**

The Legal and Constitutional matters raised by this report are as follows.

Overview and scrutiny committees were first introduced by the Local Government Act 2000 as part of executive governance arrangements to ensure that members of an authority who were not part of the executive could hold the executive to account for the decisions and actions that affect their communities. Subsequently, the Localism Act 2011 amended the Local Government Act 2000 to allow councils to incorporate overview and scrutiny arrangements as part of a change to the committee model of governance. Councils who operate the committee model of governance are not required to have overview and scrutiny arrangements, but may do so if they wish.

If the Council decided to formally set up overview and scrutiny arrangements as part of the committee model of governance, then provision is made under section 9JA of the Local Government Act 2000 to enable the Council to establish one or more overview and scrutiny committees.

Where the Council resolves to establish one or more overview and scrutiny committees, the arrangements for how the committees should function and their responsibilities are set out in Regulations 4-10 of the Local Authorities (Committee System) (England) Regulations 2012. Those functions and responsibilities, which are not dissimilar to current arrangements, include the following:

a. to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions of the authority;

b. to make reports or recommendations with respect to the discharge of any functions of the local authority or on matters which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of that area;

c. in reviewing or scrutinising a decision that has not yet been implemented to recommend that the decision be reconsidered by the person who made it;

d. to establish sub-committees;

e. to require members and officers to attend the committee to answer questions and also to invite other persons to attend;

f. to enable members of the Council to refer matters to an overview and scrutiny committee;

g. the Council must designate one of its officers as its Statutory Scrutiny Officer.

The 2012 Regulations also contain specific provisions relating to co-opted members of overview and scrutiny committees and membership of education overview and scrutiny committees.

Notwithstanding the preceding paragraphs, it should be noted that there are certain scrutiny functions that will need to be discharged by the Council irrespective of whether the Council decides to establish overview and scrutiny committees or not. The Council must ensure that arrangements are in place to enable the effective scrutiny of health functions, community safety partnerships and flood/coastal erosion risk management functions.

Sections 244 and 245 of the National Health Service Act 2006 and the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 set out the arrangements that the Council needs to have in place to undertake health scrutiny. These functions are currently discharged by the Health Scrutiny Sub-committee of the People Scrutiny Commission.

Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 requires local authorities to have a crime and disorder committee with power to scrutinise the decisions and actions of the Community Safety Partnership in their area and to make reports and recommendations to the local authority and the Partnership. The Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009 require Local Authorities to scrutinise CSPs at least once a year. This function is currently discharged by the Communities Scrutiny Commission.

Section 9JB of the Local Government Act 2000 requires the Council, as a lead local flood authority, to review and scrutinise the exercise by risk management authorities (e.g., Environment Agency, Water Companies etc. as defined in s.6(13) of the Flood and Water Management Act 2000) of (a) flood risk management functions, or (b) coastal erosion risk management functions, which may affect the local authority's area. This function is currently discharged by the Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission.

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Part 4 of the Council's Constitution includes the Scrutiny Procedure Rules, and these rules would need to be updated to reflect any new arrangements for scrutiny.

4. Matters for the Working Group to consider

The Working Group should consider the following matters as part of the preparation for the Committee Model of governance.

There are 3 potential options for scrutiny under the Committee Model of governance. It should be noted that these options are not mutually exclusive, and it would be possible to reflect all of these options in the governance arrangements for the Committee Model.

Formal scrutiny arrangements

The first option is to put in place scrutiny arrangements that follow the requirements of Regulations 4-10 of the Local Authorities (Committee System) (England) Regulations 2012, details of which are set out above. Under this option the Council would need to determine whether the scrutiny of decisions is reserved to only one committee or whether there are a number of scrutiny committees with responsibility for scrutinising different areas of Council business.

Task and Finish – Budget/Policy development

The second option is to make provision for policy committees to establish 'Task and finish' style sub-committees which would be responsible for budget/policy development. Alternatively, if the Council decided to establish formal scrutiny arrangements, then scrutiny committees could be given the responsibility for budget/policy development.

Scrutiny of health functions, CSPs and flood risk management/coastal erosion risk management functions

The third option is to consider the most appropriate way to discharge the Council's legal duty to scrutinise health, community safety partnerships and flood risk management/coastal erosion risk management functions. The scrutiny of these functions could be carried out by one or more of the policy committees. Alternatively, if the Council decided to establish formal scrutiny arrangements, then scrutiny committees could be given the responsibility for the scrutiny of these matters.

To summarise, the Working Group may wish to frame the discussion of the above matters around the following questions:

a. Should the Council establish formal overview and scrutiny arrangements? If the Council establishes formal overview and scrutiny arrangements how many overview and scrutiny committees will the Council have and what functions will each committee be responsible for scrutinising?

b. If the Council establishes formal overview and scrutiny arrangements, is the preference to have one overview and scrutiny committee or multiple overview and scrutiny committees aligned to the policy committees?

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c. Should the Council make provision for policy committees and/or scrutiny committees to establish 'Task and Finish' style sub-committees and/or informal Working Groups and/or Inquiry Days with responsibility for budget/policy development?

d. How will budget development be carried out, for example through 'Task and Finish' sub-committees or a Working Group?

e. Will the scrutiny of health functions, community safety partnerships and flood risk/coastal erosion risk management functions be carried out by policy committees or scrutiny committees?

f. What will be the approach to post decision scrutiny or 'calling in' decisions i.e., will requests be taken to a Scrutiny Committee or somewhere else, such as Full Council.

g. Will the review of risk and performance reports be undertaken by a scrutiny committee or policy committee?

Appendices:
None

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
Background Papers:
None

Community Engagement Feedback Report

Committee Model Working Group

Overview

1. Bristol City Council will be moving a committee system model of governance from May 2024. A cross party Group of Councillors, the Committee Model Working Group (CMWG), have responsibility for making recommendations about how the new model will operate. As part of this Members of the Group have agreed that seeking the views of the public is key and they have set out how they will do this in their comprehensive Communications and Engagement Strategy.

2. As part of the first phase of public engagement, the Committee Model Working Group commissioned the Community Development Team at Bristol City Council to run a variety of focus groups with residents and community organisations. The intention of these sessions was to gather views in the very early stages of their discussions about the new model before any decisions have been made about the direction.

2. It was agreed that this engagement would take place via four sessions in the North, South, Central and East of the city. Additional details about the events can be found at Appendix A.

3. This report sets out the detailed feedback provided during the sessions, separated by theme.

Questions

4. The following questions were asked at each of the sessions.

- Question 1: Have you been involved in decision-making and community participation and what have you learnt from it?
- Question 2: What will success look like in the new committee model, and how do we achieve this?
- Question 3: What are the key points to include when we are designing the committee structure?

Feedback

Communication, Accessibility and Transparency

1. Equality of access should be a guiding principle for all democratic engagement.
2. Residents would like to see improved communication from the Council about democratic decision making including how interested parties, both individuals and grass roots organisations, could become involved. This could include use of simplified language and/or the introduction of reports written in the most common languages spoken in Bristol.
3. It was important to keep residents fully informed about how they would be impacted by decisions but also how their feedback would be taken into consideration. The Council should be clear about when the public were able to shape outcomes and avoid asking people to contribute in 'box ticking' engagement activities.

4. There would always be differing opinions about the outcome of a decision, but more information should be provided to demonstrate why it was made and how the views of the public had been considered.

5. The need for increased transparency was a key point made throughout the engagement sessions. Information about decisions should be easy to locate online including how each one was made, the impact on local residents and who was responsible.

6. Some felt that formal meetings of the Council were inaccessible both due to the location (i.e., City Hall) but also the atmosphere, language, and politics.

7. The current option for residents to submit statements and questions to meetings at City Hall felt intimidating to some and could be replaced by a more relaxed and creative forum.

8. If meetings continued in the current formal setting, then more advice, training and guidance should be available to the public who wished to attend and contribute.

9. Council meetings should be held at various times/days as scheduling them in the same slot each time e.g., Cabinet and Full Council always being on Tuesdays, could exclude some groups.

10. Feedback was generally positive regarding virtual meetings and webcasting due to the increased ease of access for residents with other commitments but in person meetings were preferable for building trust and effective working relationships. It was suggested that childcare be provided for in person meetings.

11. Some residents would prefer formal Council meetings to take place in the community. It was acknowledged that this would be expensive and there might not be adequate funding to deliver this.

12. Many residents would like to see the introduction of more local/devolved decision making.

13. Engagement tools needed to vary depending on the target audience, for example some preferred social media or newsletters, whereas other groups liked face to face contact such as 'door knocking' or community meetings. Resources to promote democratic decision making should be directed at underrepresented groups in the first instance.

14. It was important for the Council to be very clear and open about the financial situation and what that meant in terms of service provision. This would provide residents with the opportunity to come forward with alternative suggestions where possible.

Councillors and Governance

15. The role of local Councillors was considered vital in providing the link between residents and City Hall and many suggested that it would be helpful to find ways to enable Councillors to spend more time in their wards talking about decisions.

16. Residents needed to know who their local Ward Councillors were and how they could contact them. Information could be delivered to residents' homes via newsletters or provided in posters in doctors' surgeries, libraries, community centres etc. Radio interviews were also recommended as a good way to communication with residents.

17. A recurring theme across all events was that Councillors should embrace cross party working and focus more on the needs of their communities rather than party politics.

18. Not all residents had the time to participate in democracy and trusted their elected representatives to deliver the best outcomes for local people.

19. In the committee system, Councillors would be making decisions based on issues affecting areas across different parts of the city, so a briefing/training programme on local context for all wards in the city was recommended.

20. Councillors should receive in-depth training on equalities principles and how to engage with all members of the community.

21. Attendees wanted to see increased diversity in the Councillor cohort and for this to lead to more equal representation on committees. Many were of the view that the allowances paid to Councillors were a barrier to standing for election.
22. Bristol had a reputation as a 'global city' and it was important that this not be diminished in the Committee system.
23. If Scrutiny was included in the Committee system, it should be used to facilitate better engagement with residents and community organisations. A system where Councillors scrutinised their own decisions could be ineffective.
24. Some residents who had been involved in participatory decision making felt that it slowed down the process unnecessarily or that the decision had already been made and the engagement wasn't meaningful.

Ensuring Success

25. All the learning from previous models of governance needed to be incorporated in the new ways of working.
26. Members needed to be clear about how they would define success from the outset and ensure they reviewed performance regularly and shared outcomes with the public. Residents would like to contribute to discussions about any changes to the system that may be required post implementation.
27. A successful committee system would show clear accountability regarding all decisions that were made. The benefit of the Mayoral system was having a single person who had clear ownership and it was important to retain elements of this in the new model.
28. It was vital to ensure that that the committee system operated in a joined up way. Structure charts should be produced to show how all the committees (including Audit) linked to each other and the reporting lines.
29. Councillors' performance should be reviewed to ensure they were upholding the Council's values and standards of behaviour, as well as supporting meaningful community engagement.
30. The Council must find a way to ensure local residents had sight of activities, strategies and projects that directly affected them and their local areas.
31. During Covid, a significant response was seen across the city with resources coming from a variety of places including the Council, the voluntary sector, and community centres/organisations. It was important to take any learning from this experience and see how it could be applied to improving democracy.

Next steps

32. The CMWG will be considering the findings from this first phase of community engagement at a meeting in December 22 where it will be used to inform early discussions around the future design of the committee model.
33. This report and an initial response from the CMWG will be shared with all participants.
34. Future phases of engagement will be considered by the CMWG at a meeting in early 2023. The intention is to replicate the community events as more information about the emerging model becomes clearer. A comprehensive range of supplementary engagement activities will also take place, with details to be confirmed in due course.

Appendix A – Community Events – Further Information

APPENDIX A

Community Events – Further Information

Attendees
The Community Engagement team prepared lists of recommended attendees for the events with the intention of ensuring diverse and representative groups. These were then shared with elected Members who added additional participants based on their own local knowledge.

North - Blaise High School on Monday 14th November from 18:30 to 20:30.

The event was attended by 22 people and alongside residents the following organisations were represented: Ambition Lawrence Weston, Henbury and Brentry Community Council, Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust, Shirehampton Community Action Forum and SusWot (Sustainable Westbury-on-Trym).

Councillor Geoff Gollop was also in attendance.

South - The Park, Knowle West on Wednesday 16th November from 18:30 to 20:30

The event was attended by 20 people and alongside residents the following organisations were represented: Diamonds Social Community Hub, Knowle West Media Centre, Vision BAME and representatives from Bristol Youth Council.

Councillors in attendance were Councillor Gary Hopkins, Councillor Tim Kent and Councillor Helen Holland.

Central - The Trinity Centre, Trinity Road on Tuesday 21st November from 18:00 to 20:00

The event was attended by 27 people and alongside residents the following organisations were represented: ACE Service, Aspiration Creation Elevation, Bangladesh Association, Bristol Horn Youth Concern, Commission on Race Equality, Friendly Neighbours, OMCA, Polish Women's Group, Somali Centre, and representatives from the Bristol Youth Council.

Councillors in attendance were Councillor Nicola Beech, Councillor Guy Poultney and Councillor Jenny Bartle.

East - The Rose Green Centre, Gordon Road on Wednesday 30th November from 18:00 to 20:00

The event was attended by 17 people and alongside residents the following organisations were represented: Centre for Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Timorese Association-Bristol.

Councillor Lorraine Francis was also in attendance.

Equalities and Diversity

Each of the sessions were diverse and inclusive. In order to promote and support attendance, the following measures were put in place:

- All of the venues were fully accessible and assistance with transport was provided if required.
- Interpreters were available.
- The events were 'child friendly.'
- At each of the above sessions, participants were offered a £20 voucher to compensate them for their time.

CMWG Work Programme 2023

Session Details	Date and time (all meetings are on Fridays)
Agenda setting 1. Annual Business Report 2. Work Programme 3. Decision-making under the current Mayor and Cabinet model of governance report 4. Community Engagement Feedback report	13th January 2023 11:00-13:00
Public Meeting 1. Annual Business Report 2. Work Programme 3. Decision-making under the current Mayor and Cabinet model of governance 4. Community Engagement Feedback	27th January 2023 11:00-13:00
Agenda setting 1. Scrutiny report(s)	10th February 2023 11:00-13:00
Public Meeting 1. Discuss options for a Scrutiny function	24th February 2023 11:00-13:00
Agenda setting 1. Initial discussion on the proposals to the Independent Renumeration Panel 2. External Communications plans and launch	17th March 2023 11:00-13:00

3. Committee Structure report(s)	
Public Meeting 1. Committee Structure; to determine the number of Committees and their general responsibilities.	31st March 2023 11:00-13:00
Agenda setting 1. Councillor Roles and Responsibilities report (s)	14th April 2023 11:00-13:00
Public Meeting 1. Councillor Roles and Responsibilities	28th April 2023 11:00-13:00
Agenda setting 1. Constitution Session 1: Full Council and Committee Roles and Responsibilities 2. Constitution session 2: Review of Responsibilities and Functions 3. Local Decision Making report(s)	12th May 2023 11:00-13:00
Public Meeting 1. Local Decision Making	26th May 2023 11:00-13:00
Agenda setting 1. Constitution session 3: Code of Conduct and Protocols 2. Constitution session 4: Full Council and Committee Rules and Procedures - Budget and Policy Framework etc. 3. Corporate Policies and Processes report(s)	16th June 2023 11:00-13:00

Public Meeting 1. Corporate Policies and Processes	30th June 2023 11:00-13:00
Agenda Setting 1. Work Programme until May 2024 2. External Partnerships report(s) 3. One City report(s)	14th July 2023 11:00-13:00
Public Meeting 1. Update of Work Programme until May 2024 2. External Partnerships 3. One City	28th July 2023 11:00-13:00

To be scheduled;

- Draft recommendations from the IRP
- Member induction programme May 2024
- Constitution session 5: Officer Schemes of Delegation
- Constitution session 6: overview and sign off
- CMWG sign off the revised Constitution
- Follow up sessions in regards to matters covered between January – July 2023