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| COUNCIL | AGENDA ITEM. 13(b) |
| 15 APRIL 2015 | PUBLIC REPORT |

ALTERNATIVE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

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| R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S |
| FROM : Chair of the Alternative Governance Working Group |
| <p>That Council:</p> <p>(1) Agrees to defer a decision regarding an alternative form of governance until the new civic year; and</p> <p>(2) Notes that the preferred model of alternative governance is a hybrid model of executive decision making with a greater involvement of pre-scrutiny decision making (a Peterborough model).</p> |

1. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 On 16 June 2014 Council resolved to explore a change in its current governance arrangements. For this purpose it set up a working group to consider and report back on the options available including the move to a committee system, elected mayor or continuation of the current arrangements or a version of those arrangements.
- 1.2 The Alternative Governance Working Group reported back to Council in January regarding the exploratory visits it had made to several councils operating different models of governance and asked to defer any decision on the preferred model for Peterborough until all members had been canvassed on the proposals.
- 1.3 This report explains the preferred model of governance recommended by the Working Group but does not make any firm recommendation regarding the implementation of the new model. Given that the Council is about to enter a new civic year and that any substantive changes to the form of governance may be recommended for the Annual Council in 2016, a formal recommendation can be made to any meeting of Council in the new civic year for adoption of a new model.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Before the Local Government Act 2000, Councils took all decisions at either full council or the committee to which it had delegated that responsibility. Individual officers also had some limited delegation of responsibility.
- 2.2 The 2000 Act abolished the committee system and required all councils to adopt a new executive model of governance with either an elected mayor and cabinet, a council manager or an elected leader and cabinet.

- 2.3 Peterborough City Council has operated executive arrangements since 2001 under a Leader and Cabinet model with delegated decision making resting with the Cabinet or individual Cabinet members according to their portfolio. There is limited delegation to officers for non-key executive decisions.
- 2.4 The Localism Act 2011 allowed Councils to exercise discretion regarding their governance arrangements and Councils were therefore permitted to return to a committee system or adopt other governance arrangements.
- 2.5 Following the motion of June the Alternative Governance Working Group has met on 4 occasions, conducted 3 visits, spoke to 4 different authorities and has hosted visits from two councils and John Cade of Inlogov at the informal All Party Policy meetings.

3. THE PREFERRED MODEL OF GOVERNANCE

- 3.1 Although the Working Group did not unanimously agree on a preferred single form of governance, all members of the Working Group agreed they would not object to a form of governance based largely on a model operated at Wandsworth London Borough Council.
- 3.2 In this model the executive system of decision making is retained but all decisions are, where possible, referred to Scrutiny meetings in advance of the decision being considered.
- 3.3 The Leader and Cabinet are therefore retained, providing the leadership and focal point for the Council which many in the Working Group considered to be a primary benefit of the executive model. With the new role played by scrutiny, this new model also allows for backbench and opposition members to take part in the formulation of policy and decision making and so provides the inclusivity which other members of the Working Group considered to be the primary benefit of a new model.
- 3.4 The Forward Plan, which gives notice to the public of forthcoming meetings, will also be retained. The Forward Plan is considered to be of such benefit that some councils who have converted to the committee system have retained the Forward Plan and the concept of key decisions because of the transparency this gives to the public.
- 3.5 In the Wandsworth model, the Cabinet meets x12 per year. Scrutiny meetings are aligned to the Cabinet meeting timetable, so that all scrutiny decisions are reported to the next scheduled Cabinet meeting. The scrutiny recommendations are reported in a table of decisions with Cabinet members referring to the earlier reports submitted to the scrutiny meeting.
- 3.6 The scrutiny committees retain the powers of call-in and the right to set up task and finish groups to develop future policy, however under the Wandsworth model they are also given powers to refer any executive decision to the next council meeting for debate. The decision must still be taken by Cabinet (as any executive decision can only be made by the executive) but before any decision is made there can be a debate before all members of the council. This is called the 'reference up' procedure. So for example a recent recommendation to reduce grant funding to a voluntary sector body was referred up to Council by way of motion for debate. At Peterborough this would currently be achieved through a motion to Council or a debate on a petition under the proposed petition scheme.
- 3.7 The executive member with responsibility for the relevant service area attends the scrutiny committee to hear the matter under debate. The Cabinet member can

therefore give his views on the matter at the scrutiny meeting and later to the Cabinet meeting.

- 3.8 A flowchart demonstrating the Council's Governance Structure under the proposed model is attached at Appendix 1.

4. IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None at this stage as no recommendations are being made to adopt an alternative model.

5. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)
None.

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Council's Governance Structure under proposed model.

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