

Appendix A – Key Findings from the Governance Review

Interviews:

Interview	Summary	Improvements to Scrutiny
Cabinet Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-decision scrutiny is not being used effectively; • There is a natural defensiveness over call-in, members cannot impact decisions effectively with call-in; • Scrutiny has done it's job and is now stale, as a result there is a lack of interest in scrutiny; • The principles of scrutiny as a system of checks and balances is good, but it is not being used effectively; • The value of cross-party input is before the decision is made through pre-decision scrutiny, not once the decision has been made through call-in; • Members need to have a clearer understanding of the role of scrutiny in order to really use it effectively; • Scrutiny is being misused too often to score political points, and being overshadowed by political agenda; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective pre-scrutiny can be used to better engage members • Programme of training to educate members on the role of scrutiny and the tools available for members to influence decisions • Members need to be proactive – it is up to members to add key decisions to the agenda not the Cabinet member; • Cross party collaboration between Cabinet and Scrutiny would provide better value to the decision makers - but is it for Cabinet to lead the scrutiny agenda? • Have one committee to scrutinise cabinet decisions and one committee to provide the overview; • Scrutiny is member driven should be proactive, rethink the format of meetings, bring back Officers and external people;
Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much focus on scrutiny and not enough overview; • Scrutiny chairmen are not being held to account – they need to have a clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be a more proactive and effective use of pre-decision scrutiny and should not be Cabinet led; • Chairmanship should not be the same as the

	<p>understanding of their role;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-scrutiny meetings hold too much influence members are 'dragged' along and therefore challenge is difficult; • Scrutiny reports have not impact, as a result members feel as though they have not been involved or had any influence over decision making; 	<p>administration;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of chairmanship should be improved; • Better programmed training for new members to provide better induction and better continuous professional development; • There needs to be improved training over the role of scrutiny;
<p>Senior Officers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-decision scrutiny is the most effective way to influence decision making and it is not being used effectively; • Scrutiny is not having the right impact – decisions are not being influenced / changed; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the appetite for pre-decision scrutiny to allow the Committee to actually influence decisions – and choose the right decisions; • Reduce to one scrutiny committee – with support from individual working groups – to allow adequate overview and scrutiny; • Re-consider the format of meetings, and adopt more innovate and flexible Officer reports and interviews; • Reduce scrutiny from 3 committees to one; • Improve collaboration between Cabinet and scrutiny • Improve the accountability of scrutiny recommendations and implement a system to capture and recommendations and report on the actions taken; • Improve the understanding and quality of the chairmanship; • Members should be proactive to be involved in decision before they are made;

Member Survey

Question	Thinking about the present Cabinet and Leader System what do you like and/or dislike?	How could the present system be improved
Key Points	<p>Liked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed of decision making • Ability to be decisive • Allows clear strategic direction • Efficiency of decision making <p>Dislike:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of transparency • Not enough members involved in decision making • Undemocratic • Disempowerment of ward councillors and their residents 	<p>Greater pre-decision involvement</p> <p>More input from Members</p> <p>More use of the scrutiny system</p> <p>Better forward planning of decision making</p> <p>More consultation</p>

From the Member workshop

Feedback on the systems of governance:

- Cllr Paine – Being a Cabinet member can be isolating – a hybrid system would improve member involvement;
- The current system allows for quick/snap decisions (that need to be made quickly) to be made;
- Cllr Ash – The speed of the cabinet process can result in decisions being made too quickly without effective challenge;
- Group discussion – Weakness of the current system is that not enough members are or feel like they are involved;
- Members lack sufficient knowledge and expertise – “jack of all trades but master of none”;
- Too much focus on scrutiny, and not enough overview – reports and recommendations are not revisited;
- The committee system led to more decision being made at full Council;
- The Council needs to make the right decision, not a financial decision;
- The system must not eliminate the overview side of the decision process (such as research). Would this be lost in a Committee system?

Accountability:

- Perception that Cabinet members are not being held to account;
- Scrutiny chairmen are not being held to account
- Cllr Paine: In a committee system would you get a decision made? And would there be clear accountability of that decision?