

## Common Themes and Discussion Points:

Case Study	London Borough of Sutton	Nottinghamshire County Council	Ribble Valley	Brighton & Hove	Kingston Upon Thames
<b>Tier of Authority</b>	London Borough	County	District	City	London Borough
<b>Political Leadership</b>	Lib Dem	Conservative	Conservative	Green	Lib Dem
<b>Catalyst for Changing Governance Structure</b>	Localism Act Improving Councillor involvement in decision making Constraints on Scrutiny after decisions have been made	Localism Act Improving Councillor involvement in decision making Greater transparency over the decision making process	Localism Act prompted a 'review' but no changes were made	Localism Act Greater Councillor participation Greater challenge & debate over decision making	Improving Councillor involvement in decision making Improving openness and collective accountability
<b>Governance Structure Adopted</b>	Hybrid – Leader with Service Committees	Hybrid – Policy Committee (Chairman as 'leader') Band A Committees – to cover cabinet portfolio Band B Committees – Regulatory  (Proposed - Jan 2012)	'Streamlined' Committee Structure (4 <sup>th</sup> Option) Reduction in OSC	Modern Committee System	Modern Committee System
<b>Process / Framework</b>	Governance Working Group brief: a) Good governance principles b) Inclusive Cllr involvement c) Politically proportionality d) Enhance Community Leadership e) Cost neutral f) Reduce number of meetings	Working Group led by the Leader of the Council.	Review of governance has been conducted by a Member Sub-Group reported to the main Policy and Finance Committee.  Recent review considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Format of Committee meetings</li> <li>• Number of Committees</li> <li>• Frequency of meetings</li> <li>• Starting times of meetings</li> </ul>	Officer working group with nominated Members.	Constitutional Review Working Group.  Key risks identified to avoid: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that strategic Community wide considerations take precedence over operational issues</li> <li>• Focus must be outwards and compliment the Community</li> <li>• Proposed structure must be cost neutral and no hinder the decision making process</li> </ul>
<b>Noted / Proposed Advantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased Councillor involvement in decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased Councillor involvement in policy and decision making</li> </ul>	Recent review was conducted to improve public interest in Committee	Greater participation in decisions making by Members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving openness and public engagement in Council decision making</li> </ul>

Appendix B– Case Studies

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexibility for party membership on Committees</li> <li>Fluidity if membership of the Council changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater transparency with debates held in public</li> </ul>	meetings.	More likely to secure different perspectives and greater / more robust debate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable innovation in decision making</li> <li>Improve integrity of decision making through greater debate and scrutiny</li> <li>Create collective accountability</li> </ul>
<b>Noted / Potential Disadvantages</b>	None disclosed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased meetings</li> <li>Increased Member workload</li> <li>Greater community expectation</li> <li>Balance of Members community role and scrutiny in a committee environment</li> </ul>	None disclosed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased democratic support (2 x Officers)</li> <li>Increased number of meetings</li> <li>Printing costs likely to increase</li> <li>Estimated £90k cost implication – which could be offset by streamlining OSC.</li> </ul>	<p>Possible resource implications – but would assume the same number of meetings.</p> <p>Small increase in printing costs.</p> <p>Potential increase costs associated with member allowances.</p>
<b>'Other' Considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members training</li> <li>Updated Members allowances</li> <li>Update to Constitution</li> <li>Consultation with public (Localism)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sought comments from partners</li> <li>Agreed responsibilities of each Committee</li> <li>Constitution updates</li> </ul>	None disclosed	<p>Officer and member time needed to prepare and implement the new system.</p> <p>Review of members allowances scheme</p>	Could be a potential impact to officers time being called to attend Committee meetings, but difficult to quantify.

**Summary:**

1. The key factor for change was to improve Member involvement and participation in Council decision making;
2. Member and Officer working groups led the review – reported to the main committee or full council;
3. A key advantage identified from adopting a Committee style of governance was greater transparency and integrity of decision making through greater challenge and debate in public;
4. A key disadvantage was that of resource, including increased Officer time, increased number of meetings, and potential increase in costs from allowances and printing;
5. Additional considerations include implementation and design of the structure, constitutional considerations, members training and consultation with partners and the public;

**London Borough of Sutton**

**Political Leadership:** Lib Dem

**1. What governance structure did they start with:**

Leader and Cabinet Model:  
Executive Committee  
4 Scrutiny committees

**2. When did they review their governance arrangements:**

Core proposals involved:

- a. replacing the current Executive system of Governance with five service committees
- b. replacing the current scrutiny arrangements with a single Scrutiny Committee whose role is limited to those scrutiny functions required in law
- c. developing new Standards arrangements to reflect the requirements of the Localism Act, and
- d. Discontinuing Advisory Groups

With effect from its annual meeting in May 2012 the Council dissolves the existing Executive and introduces a committee system of governance

**3. Why did they review the arrangements – what was the catalyst:**

The Localism Bill and changes to external operating environment – provides the opportunity to have a fresh look at governance arrangements.

Designed to:

- a. To involve more Councillors in decisions making processes without compromising efficiency and transparency
- b. Enhance governance arrangements
- c. Reinforce the community leadership role of Councillors

**4. What governance model have they adopted:**

5 main Committees  
4 Regulatory Committees  
A single scrutiny Committee with a focus on statutory scrutiny responsibilities  
6 local committees

Main committees consisting of 15-10 members (3 subs), meeting 6-8 week (5 times a year)  
Allocation of seats to reflect the political proportionality of the Council (example 8 LD and 2 Con)  
Committees have freedom to establish their own working groups

**5. What process / framework did they follow (Officer / Member led):**

To assist in robust evaluation of pros and cons of any proposals key design criteria were identified that proposals must achieve

- a. Meet principles of good governance within framework of the law
- b. Seek to offer more inclusive arrangements for Councillors to be involved in decision making
- c. Allow for relevant committees to be politically proportionate in membership
- d. Enhance community leadership role of councillors
- e. Not increase the total costs of democracy
- f. Seek to reduce the overall number of meetings

Proposals originally set out in October 2011 to Community Leadership Advisory Group  
Governance Working Group November & December 2011  
December 2011 report recommendations to Community Leadership Advisory Group  
January 2012 report to CLAG to agree follow-up proposals and look at constitutional review proposals  
January 2012 report to Standards Committee

March 2012 final report to CLAG  
March 2012 report to Executive  
April 2012 report to Council for decision

6. What are the advantages / disadvantages to the model:

Strengths of current:

Good practice models of governance – including timeliness of decision making, and checks and balances from scrutiny.

Weaknesses:

Decision making concentrated to smaller number of councillors and constraints on scrutiny after decisions have been made rather than before.

Adv of new:

Provides for a larger number of Councillors to be involved in the decision making process

Flexibility to allow each party group to put forward membership, and fluidity if membership of Council changes.

7. What other considerations did they take into account:

Training for Members and Officers to allow them to become familiar with the new system

New scheme of Members allowances

Proposed changes to the Constitution

Considered that no additional costs should arise

Consultation period with the public (as per Localism requirements)

8. How did they implement the changes / embed the arrangements:

No further information obtained.

9. Is this example suitable to arrange a visit / interview / request further information?

**Nottinghamshire County Council**

**Political Leadership:** Conservative

1. What governance structure did they start with:

Leader / Cabinet Executive

2. When did they review their governance arrangements:

Report to the Council to consider whether further work should be undertaken to plan how a Committee system could operate – January 2012.

Proposals then submitted to Council to vote to adopt the committee system in March 2012.

Decision to adopt the committee system made in May 2012.

3. Why did they review the arrangements – what was the catalyst:

The Localism Act – allowing power to be exercised at the lowest practical level, close to people who are affected by the decisions.

4. What governance model have they adopted:

Committee system – made up of councillors from all parties to reflect the political balance of the authority.

Policy Committee

Band A Committees – primarily replace the current cabinet portfolios

Band B Committees - include existing regulatory committees as well as new ones

Chairman of Policy Committee will be the Leader of the Council and vice-chair will be the deputy leader.

New Committee's will themselves be responsible for scrutinising the Council's policies and decisions and therefore the existing O&S arrangements were disestablished.

5. What process / framework did they follow (Officer / Member led):

January 2012 – Inform Council about provisions to change governance arrangements, and to seek approval to develop proposals

Leader led / reported

Independent Remuneration Panel review – reduction of special responsibility allowances by some £24,000.

No published framework for the proposals.

6. What are the advantages / disadvantages to the model:

Reasons for recommendations:

A Committee system is the most democratic and transparent form of governance.

It allows all 67 democratically elected Councillors to participate in the decision-making and policy shaping of the Council.

Greater transparency – reports are made available to public prior to decision making, and all meetings are held in public – decisions are not made behind closed doors.

Possible disadvantages:

Members may be faced with attending more meetings, and facing increased workload as well as greater expectation.

Members will need to adapt to balance their role in the local community with their responsibility to develop and scrutinise policy and performance through membership of committees.

7. What other considerations did they take into account:

## Appendix B– Case Studies

Sought comments and considerations from partners  
Diagrammatic structure  
Outline the responsibilities of each Committee  
Changes to the constitution

### 8. How did they implement the changes / embed the arrangements:

Seemed to be a very swift process, once the decision was agreed to adopt, then they were almost immediately put in place.

### 9. Is this example suitable to arrange a visit / interview / request further information?

As this example seems to have been achieved so promptly, it could be a good case to look at in more detail.

## Ribble Valley

**Tier of Authority:** District ('fourth option' Council – population of 58,000)  
**Political Leadership:** Conservative

### 1. What governance structure did they start with:

Ribble Valley is a fourth option Council – They run a 'streamlined Committee System' consisting of 9 Committees, supported by a budget working group and a Parish Council Liaison Committee.

### 2. When did they review their governance arrangements:

The streamlined system was adopted in March 2012 – following public consultation (which I cannot find online?).

In April 2011 the Leader made a statement to say that there were no plans to replace the Committee System.

The Council updated their Scrutiny arrangements in 2008.

Prior to this the Council conducted a review and refresh of Committees in 2007.

### 3. Why did they review the arrangements – what was the catalyst:

There have been various suggestions and 'reviews' of the governance structure. Most recently in March 2012 - the Council appointed a member working group (4 members) as a result of the Localism Act 2011.

The working group was asked to consider:

1. The options over the Council's current O&S Committee arrangements; and
2. To confirm the commitment for the current Executive Governance model.

The Group should have reported to Council on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2012 – Online records show no formal reporting of this group yet?

### 4. What governance model have they adopted:

On 26<sup>th</sup> April 2011 the Leader and Leader of the opposition announced there were no plans to replace the current committee system.

In the Annual report March 2012 they state that they have adopted 'streamlined committee system'. It is unclear how exactly the public consultation was reported and what the options were, there is limited information on the Ribble Valley website.

### 5. What process / framework did they follow (Officer / Member led):

As a fourth option Council they have maintained their Committee structure.

### 6. What are the advantages / disadvantages to the model:

What they have in place has been refined and embedded since the requirements to change in the LGA 2000. Given the limited information, and absence of any expressed dissatisfaction from residents it would appear that the system works well for Ribble Valley.

Interesting points raised during the 2007 review of Committee report highlighted a real lack of public interest and participation at Committee meetings. It acknowledged that it can be difficult to make Council meetings more interesting. An additional element they considered was the times of meetings, acknowledging that they are often in the late evening, rather than during the day. A working group considered:

1. Format of meetings
2. Number of Committees
3. Frequency of meetings
4. Starting times of meetings

These elements could be worth considering in the MBC current review?

## Appendix B– Case Studies

### 7. What other considerations did they take into account:

Initially they found it difficult to operate O&S and there was no real guidance for fourth option Councils. In 2008 they streamlined their O&S Committees from 2 to 1. Originally the 2 Committees were split, one to focus on policy and the other to look at service matters.

The single committee have 4 key areas of work (community leadership, priorities, performance & partnerships). In order for O&S Committee to add value, they are encouraged to select topics that are not already being dealt with by another Committee to avoid duplication.

### 8. How did they implement the changes / embed the arrangements:

Any consideration for changes in recent years have been led by a Members sub-group and reported to the Policy and Finance Committee – referred to Council.

### 9. Is this example suitable to arrange a visit / interview / request further information?



**Brighton & Hove**

**Tier of Authority:** City Council  
**Political Leadership:** Green

1. What governance structure did they start with:

In 2001 the Council held a referendum to move to a mayor and cabinet system. This was not supported and so alternative arrangements (improved committee system) were adopted.

7 executive committees  
 5 sub committees  
 Standards committee and O&S

In 2007 the committee system for decision making was removed, and in 2008 the Council adopted a leader and cabinet system.

2. When did they review their governance arrangements:

Notice of Motion supporting the return to Committee system was agreed in July 2010.  
 The Localism Act in November 2011 allowed the Council to do this.

Report to agree in principle to change the governance arrangements in December 2011 with effect from the annual Council meeting in May 2012.

3. Why did they review the arrangements – what was the catalyst:

Previously had Committee arrangements – Localism Bill enabled a decision to be made to return to the committee system.

4. What governance model have they adopted:

Policy Committees – 7 in total  
 Policy sub committees – 3 in total  
 Regulatory Committees – 7 in total  
 O&S Committees – 2 supported by 6 O&S panels

The Council opted to retain elements of their previous O&S arrangements to run alongside the new Committee system- but streamlined.

Standards Committee now forms part of Audit Committee.

5. What process / framework did they follow (Officer / Member led):

“The Council instructs Officers to prepare detailed proposals for a Committee system....including briefings, training and modifications to ways of working”.

Officer working group, working with nominated members – proposals taken to regular Lead Group meetings for progression - equivalent of 3 Officers to work on documentation and facilitation with members.

Jan 2012 – Governance Committee to consider the options until the Localism Act and agree outline principles  
 March 2012 – Governance Committee to agree arrangements and draft constitution to Council  
 April 2012 – Special Council – Resolution to move to committee system  
 April 2012 (after above) – Publication of proposals  
 May 2012 – Council AGM – Adoption of new constitution

6. What are the advantages / disadvantages to the model:

**Advantages:**  
 Committee system allows greater participation in decision making by Members of all political groups.

More likely to secure different perspectives and greater challenge and robust debate at decision making stage.

Potential disadvantage – identified impact:

Committee system would require increased democratic support of approximately 2 support offices

Increase number of meetings

(Above could be off set by changes to O&S)

Printing costs are likely to rise.

Estimated cost implications of £90k

7. What other considerations did they take into account:

Resources – costs of supporting a committee system are estimated higher than to support an executive system. Officer and Member time will be required to prepare for and implement the new system.

Timing – causing the Council to adopt something very similar to previous arrangements rather than reviewing all the options and without the support of guidance.

Preparing the organisation – The Council will need to review how it engages and supports its Members so that decisions can be made at cross-party committees.

IRP – to review members allowances.

8. How did they implement the changes / embed the arrangements:

The Officer and Member working party documented a work programme running from December 2011 – April 2012. This included preparation of detailed proposals.

(How they researched and confirmed the proposals is not published).

9. Is this example suitable to arrange a visit / interview / request further information?

Kingston Upon Thames

**Tier of Authority:** London Borough  
**Political Leadership:** Liberal Democrat

1. What governance structure did they start with:

The Council adopted Executive style governance formally in 2002.

2. When did they review their governance arrangements:

Transitional arrangements implemented in April 2011, and formally adopted in April 2012.

3. Why did they review the arrangements – what was the catalyst:

Original motion adopted in October 2010 to call for a more democratic style of decision making, increasing involvement of Councillors.

The Executive style was considered to ill serve the democratic process. Power is concentrated in the hands of a relatively small number of Members and “backbench” Councillors are potentially excluded from the opportunity for wider participation in decision making. The opportunities for development of knowledge and expertise by Members are limited, and that as a result of the democratic deficit Council meetings have become largely pointless.

April 2011 the Council made transitional changes (as a result of the Localism Bill) to its governance arrangements through creation of 3 strategic committees. As the ‘powers’ were not in effect, a ratification process was needed for all decisions taken by the Strategic Committees – by maintaining Executive during the transitional stages.

As a result of the Localism Act, the Council passed the necessary resolution to formally change its governance arrangements for municipal year 2012/13.

4. What governance model have they adopted:

The Council has adopted a modern Committee system. Decisions are made within 3 politically proportionate strategic committees to involve all members of the Council in decision making:

1. People Services
2. Place & sustainability
3. Policy & Resources

Lead Members of Committees take the place of formal Executive Members, still placed under the Leader or the Council responsible for a range of services. Appointment made by the Council itself. Leader would serve on all 3 Committees.

Local decisions are made by 4 neighbourhood Committees (in place since 2002).

2 Regulatory Committees (development control and licensing) and a Standards Committee and Audit Committee are also in place.

A scrutiny panel deal with decisions called in by the Community – the role is to review the decisions, they cannot change decisions. Decisions can be referred back to Committee to reconsider. A Heath Overview Panel is also in place.

5. What process / framework did they follow (Officer / Member led):

Original motion adopted in October 2010 to call for a more democratic style of decision making, increasing involvement of Councillors. A Constitutional Review Working Group proposed the new arrangements.

In April 2011 report from the working group to the Council.

In May 2012 the reported and recommended the changes to the Councils Constitution. In addition the report also outlined the intention for the Council to retain the Scrutiny Panel, but with a reduction of membership from 16 to 9 for any ‘community call-ins’.

6. What are the advantages / disadvantages to the model:

After the first year of operation the new system was considered to have 'certainly met' its objective of bringing more Councillors into the formal decision making process. Opportunities outlined are:

1. Improving openness and allowing public to engage positively with Council decision making;
2. Enabling innovation through collective decision making;
3. Improving effectiveness and integrity of decision making through greater debate and scrutiny;
4. Creating collective accountability.

Identified risks to avoid:

1. Ensuring that strategic and Borough-wide consideration take precedence over operational interests
2. To ensure that the focus is outwards and compliments the Community and Borough-wide agenda;
3. That the structure is resource neutral and does not slow down decision making.

7. What other considerations did they take into account:

Resource implications – Resource assessment April 2011 indicates and assumes the same number of meetings (level of business). Increased strategic committee meetings offset by the reduction and abolishment of Scrutiny Panel, Overview Commission and related working parties.

There could be a small overall increase in the costs of the members allowance scheme (May 2012). This was originally proposed as a reduction (April 2011)

Need to publish the changes in accordance with section 9KC of the Localism Act 2011.

There could be a potential impact on Officers attending more meetings, or additional Officers attending meetings, but these are difficult to quantify.

There could be an increase in printing costs, yet no impact on accommodation costs for meetings.

8. How did they implement the changes / embed the arrangements:

They introduced a transitional Committee System, running alongside the Executive for ratification, then implemented in full.

9. Is this example suitable to arrange a visit / interview / request further information?