

REPORT TO GOVERNANCE TASK GROUP

Date of Meeting : 19th November, 2019

GOVERNANCE MODEL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Summary

The purpose of this Task Group meeting is to review the feedback from the member workshop and to agree the design principles which will guide the next phase of the work programme which is to explore amendments to the current governance model or alternative models of governance.

Recommendation

The Task Group is recommended to:

1. Agree upon the design principles for an amended or new governance model.

Reason for Decision

To enable investigation and evaluation of alternative governance arrangements.

1. Introduction

1.1 On the 5th November, 2019 a workshop was held to which all members were invited. Five table groups of members were each facilitated in a discussion around three key questions on governance.

1.2 A record was made of the discussion on each table using a flip chart.

1.3 Based on the views expressed at the workshop and Task Group members own experience and research the Task Group will consider the “design principles” it wishes to adopt.

2. All Member Workshop 5th November, 2019

2.1 The workshop comprised five groups of 6-8 members, selected randomly, and facilitated by Cllr B. Long, Cllr I. Devereux, Cllr J Moriarty, the CX and the Executive Director.

2.2 Each group of members considered three core questions in separate sessions.

Session 1

Core Question :: Is the present governance model helping the Council to make good decisions. i.e. are the best outcomes achieved for the residents of the borough?

Prompt Questions

Does it provide for options/alternatives to be considered?

Does it provide opportunity for Members to be involved in shaping proposals before they are considered for approval?

Do decision makers focus on the beneficial outcomes for the community - economic, social, environmental?

Are law, policy and values guiding decisions.

Are the correct people making the decisions and have they received the training they need?

Session 2

Core Question :: Is the Council open and transparent in the way it makes decisions?

Prompt Questions

Are upcoming important decisions included in a programme / timetable that is available to all to see?

Is it clear who will be making the decision?

Once made is it clear what factors have influenced the decision and why the decision was made?

Session 3

Core Question :: Are there ways to hold the decision maker to account for the decision?

Prompt Questions

Are there mechanisms by which a decision can be halted and reviewed before implementation?

Are there opportunities to review KPIs, project reports, financial performance and outcomes relating to a decision and hold the decision maker to account?

Are the risks associated with a decision adequately considered?

2.3 The responses were captured at each table on a flip chart. Copies of these responses have been circulated to the Task Group Members.

3. Design Principles

3.1 The purpose of the workshop was to inform the next stage and to better understand what members think needs to change and why. This in order that the Task Group can be clear on what they are trying to achieve from any changes they recommend.

3.2 The Task Group will now draw upon this experience and their own knowledge and experience to determine the “design principles” which will guide any changes to the current system and by which alternatives will be evaluated. The “design principles” will guide the questions which will be asked of any other Local Authority whose experience and governance model the Task Group wishes to explore.

3.3 Considering the feed back from the members workshop there are concerns raised which can not or may not be able to be improved through changes to the governance model. The task group could include these issues within an appendix to their final report so that they can get consideration in the appropriate forum.

3.4 Using the feedback from the workshop I have drawn up a list of possible design principles for members consideration.(Appendix 1) This can act as a catalyst for discussion at the Task Group Meeting but it is important that members also add their own suggestions for design principles. At the meeting we will seek to prioritise the top 5 design principles for the governance model of BC KLWN.

3.5 The design principles may need to be modified when the additional planned stakeholder consultation is completed.

4.0 Corporate Priorities

Not applicable

5.0 Policy Implications

None to this report

6.0 Financial Implications

The work plan is within the budget provision. The Workplan provides for the financial implications of options to be assessed.

7.0 Personnel Implications

None to this report

8.0 Statutory Considerations

The workplace provides for legal advice from the Monitoring Officer.

9.0 Equal Opportunity Considerations

The equal opportunities implications of the task group recommendation will need to be included in their final report.

10.0 Risk Management Implications

None to this report.

11.0 Recommendations

The Task Group is recommended to agree the design principles for the ideal governance model

12.0 Declarations of Interest /Dispensations Granted

None

Appendix 1

Design Principles to consider.

(n.b. this list is not exhaustive and members should bring forward their own suggestions at the Task Group)

1. The governance model

- i. The governance model should be straightforward and easily understood
- ii. The governance model should enable all elected members to have a worthwhile role and one which is achievable within the available time.
- iii. The model should enable decisions to be made based upon the public good and in a timely fashion.
- iv. The governance model should provide for stakeholders who will be impacted by decisions to be able to express a view.
- v. The governance model should provide for decisions to be based upon evidence.
- vi. The governance model should make it clear why a decision was made / why this option was chosen from amongst the alternatives
- vii. The governance model should make it clear who is making the decision.
- viii. The governance model needs to work with the political makeup of the Council (e.g. large majority party or party with a small majority or no overall control)
- ix. The governance model should enable members to contribute to the formation of policy (not just rubber stamp proposals)

- x. The governance model should provide an acceptable way of selecting topics/issues for pre decision scrutiny
- xi. The governance model should provide a method to arrest a decision for further consideration when there is evidence of sufficient concern that the decision was made in error.
- xii. The governance model should enable the implementation, outputs and outcomes from decisions to be scrutinised.
- xiii. The governance model should provide for decisions to be made at the correct level
- xiv. The governance model should provide for effective partnership decisions.

2. issues not dependent on governance model

- i. Members need support and guidance on how to be effective
- ii. Members need to commit to training when offered and participate in ensuring the training suits their needs.
- iii. The nature of party politics in local government needs to be better understood and used positively and effectively to achieve better decisions (cultural issue?)
- iv. Build on the positive feedback on pre Council briefings (signposting to information)
- v. Review web site to determine if improvements could aid transparency of decision making.
- vi. Frequency and time of day of meetings

Background Papers

None