

Report of the Chief Executive

CHANGES TO GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS1. Purpose of report

To consider a proposal to change the Council's system of governance.

2. Background

The Council adopted a committee style of governance on 11 May 2016, the reasons given at the time included enabling the ability for a robust system of decision-making in addition to increasing the involvement of all councillors in the decision-making process. However, over a number of years the remits of the committees have changed and on occasion there is duplication, with a single report being submitted to numerous committees. The Council's business interests, arms-length company and shared services have resulted in different service delivery models that could now be better assisted by a different system of governance. It is now considered that a Leader and Cabinet system would allow for swifter and more streamlined decision-making, with clear lines of communication, responsibility and accountability.

The introduction of the Government's 'levelling up' agenda requires member involvement through accountability, transparency, scrutiny and delivery. Furthermore, with the initial consideration of County devolution under way, aligned decision-making structures would allow for greater continuity between the authorities involved. Currently, Broxtowe Borough Council is alone in operating a 'committee' system following recent resolutions from Nottinghamshire County Council and Newark & Sherwood District Council to return to a Leader and Cabinet system in May 2022.

To enable greater transparency and cross-party involvement in the decision-making process, the current Leader has stated an intention to move to a more politically balanced Cabinet than currently operating at other districts throughout the County. Should members signal an intention for this Council to change to a Leader and Cabinet system a further report would be submitted to members providing more detail, which would necessitate a direct resolution for a change of governance system being implemented at the Annual Council meeting in May 2022.

3. Financial implications

There are currently no direct financial implications.

Recommendation

Council is asked to RESOLVE to agree in principle that a Leader and Cabinet style of governance be adopted from May 2022.

Background papers

Nil

APPENDIX

Procedure for Change

The Local Government Act 2000, (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) sets out the statutory provisions that local authorities must follow in determining or changing their governance arrangements.

The Act requires that a local authority must make a formal resolution to make a change in its governance from a Committee to Leader and Cabinet form of arrangements. The Council may not pass another resolution changing its governance arrangements for five years. The five-year period runs from the date of the last resolution taken to change governance arrangements.

The Council can resolve at this meeting that it wishes to move to a Leader and Cabinet style of governance and the broad principles of the arrangements, with finer detail of the arrangements being agreed and adopted in early 2022 prior to its implementation at the Annual meeting in May 2022. This will enable consideration to determine the form of the Leader and Cabinet style of governance to be implemented and the detail of those arrangements.

The detail will set out revisions to the Council's Constitution which would bring the new system of governance into effect. There are many detailed provisions that would require careful consideration with regard to how the new arrangements would work and to ensure adequate provision for overview and scrutiny and also delivery of some of the major projects that are arising from the government's devolution bill, levelling up agenda and the borough's delivery of major projects through the Capital Programme.

It is envisaged the select committees could cover the following areas:

- Health, Leisure and Environment
- Finance and Human Resources
- Business Growth
- Housing
- Community Safety.

Issues requiring review in the Constitution would include:

- Responsibilities for functions
- Procedure rules for meetings of cabinet, scrutiny and quasi-judicial committees
- Scheme of delegation for officers
- Financial regulations
- Reviewing and cross-referencing all other aspects in relation to the governance model.

Other issues will include a detailed consideration of members' allowances through the Independent Remuneration Panel, while governance changes would also require training and development for both members and officers involved in the decision-making process.