

Council Governance Arrangements Member Working Group

Terms of Reference

Role of the Council Governance Arrangements Member Working Group

A cross party, non-decision making Member Working Group who will investigate the options available and the type of governance structure that would suit Somerset West and Taunton Council.

The Working Group will report back to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee and Executive prior to a final report going before Full Council

The panel will meet on a regular basis to review the options available to the Council

Scope

The Members Working Group will consider:

- The main features and advantages and/or disadvantages of each type of Council governance structure i.e. Leader and Executive, Committee and Hybrid arrangements
- Guidance produced by the Local Government Association, Centre for Public Scrutiny and others on Council governance arrangements
- Any other research available on Council Governance arrangements
- Case studies - examples and feedback from other Councils that have changed their Council governance structures
- Consider the feedback from an all Member 'away day' on what works well and how improvements could be made
- The impact of making a change to the Council governance arrangements i.e. cost, risk, impact on officers, impact on members of the public, etc
- Changes that could be made to the organisational culture
- What a finished system would look like and the practicalities as to how it would work

Membership

The membership of the group will be politically balanced, with all political parties being represented.

Name	Political Party / Role
Cllr	Liberal Democrat
Cllr	Liberal Democrat

Cllr	Liberal Democrat
Cllr	Liberal Democrat
Cllr	Independent
Cllr	Independent
Cllr	Conservative
Cllr	Labour

Method of Working

- Chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Resources with support from our Governance team.
- The Working Group will meet virtually on a regular basis, via Zoom
- The Working Group will follow the five step process as set out by the Local Government Association, 'thinking toolkit' , i.e
 - Step 1 – Plan your approach, and assess your current position
 - Step 2 – Consider some design principles
 - Step 3 – Think of ways to meet these objectives and put a plan in place
 - Step 4 – Make the change
 - Step 5 – Return to the issue after a year and review how things have gone
- The Working Group can make recommendations but is not a decision making body, collective views will feed into the Working Group report, which will be taken through the democratic process
- Where possible papers will be issued 5 working days ahead of meeting, allowing sufficient time to review and prepare for the meeting.
- Meeting notes and actions will be circulated to the Working Group with 5 working days
- All papers will be distributed electronically only.