



Report to: Council, 9th July 2024

Report of: Corporate Director – Planning and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Subject: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

1. Recommendation

1.1 That the Council agrees to the terms of reference for the Governance Review, set out in Appendix 1.

2. Background

2.1 The Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 21 May 2024 agreed that a review should take place into the Council's current governance arrangements. The Committee agreed that the Monitoring Officer should produce Terms of Reference for the Governance Review, in consultation with Group Leaders, for approval by the Council.

3. Preferred Option

3.1 The proposed Terms of Reference are set out in **Appendix 1**. This document defines scope, key lines of enquiry, specific lead and steering roles for Members, officers and external advisors. It notes that participation will be encouraged from all Members, as well as from staff who are involved in supporting the Council's governance arrangements. There is also the potential to invite public comments via an online facility and participation at public meetings.

3.2 The Policy and Resources Committee report is set out at **Appendix 2**.

3.3 The next step will be to commence work under the key lines of enquiry set out in the Terms of Reference, starting with thematic workshops and surveys, spreading out the work programme over the next few months.

3.4 Over the Summer and Autumn, meetings of the Policy and Resources Committee and meetings of the full Council will be used to progress discussions and decisions under the Governance Review as they become ready for consideration.

4. Alternative Options Considered

4.1 The option of not doing any review at all, is not recommended. The review process is intended to address the Council's duty to secure best value and continuous improvement in all of its functions.

4.2 The Policy and Resources Committee agreed that a review should take place and that its scope should relate to the current committee system, not other potential governance arrangements (eg Cabinet, executive arrangements).

5. Implications

5.1 Financial and Budgetary Implications

There are no significant financial implications in undertaking the review itself. Engaging some external expertise would not create a significant financial burden for the Council.

Implementing recommendations arising from a governance review could have significant financial implications for the Council; these will form part of the review itself and can be considered by Committee and Council as the review progresses.

5.2 Legal and Governance Implications

Reviewing the operation of the committee system is something the Council is free to do at any time, on whatever terms it reasonably determines and subject to the operation of its own Constitution. The key legislation governing the operation of the committee system is the Local Government Act 1972.

5.3 Risk Implications

The risk of not reviewing the Council's governance arrangements are that are not as operationally effective as they could be, which in turn has an adverse impact on outcomes for Worcester communities, or an adverse impact on the commitment and contributions of Members and officers of the Council.

5.4 Corporate/Policy Implications

The review will be managed by Members with advice from officers. Final decisions will be taken by the full Council. Changes to the Constitution, consequent on the review, will also be made by full Council.

5.5 Equality Implications

No adverse equality implications have been identified at this stage. An equality impact assessment will be undertaken prior to any substantive recommendations being made for approval.

5.6 Human Resources Implications

The staffing implications of the Council's governance arrangements will be considered as part of the review. Officers who are most involved in supporting the committee system will have the opportunity to contribute to the review.

5.7 Health and Safety Implications

None arising from this report.

5.8 Social, Environmental and Economic Implications

None arising from this report.

Ward(s): All Wards
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Background Papers: None
Appendix 1: Terms of Reference
Appendix 2: Policy and Resources Committee report 21 May 2024