

Cabinet – 7 September 2021

Councillor Questions

Question from Cllr Clare Sutton

At Full Council on 15 July we resolved that 'a review of Dorset Council's governance [will] take place over this current term with a vote before the 2024 election.'

In light of the often-stated aim to be a member-led council, I assume this review will be carried out by a working group of councillors. Can the Leader please confirm:

- How large that group will be and how will it demonstrate political balance;
- When its membership and terms of reference will be decided;
- Whether the terms of reference will include consideration of a non-Cabinet, cross party model, which many members and Dorset residents believe would both be more democratic and make better use of our collective experience and,
- In order to meet the stated timeline, when will the Working Group report, and when will options be put to full Council?

Response from the Leader of the Council

Thank you for your question, which is in four parts.

- The Governance Review Executive Advisory Panel will be made up of 11 Members, this being the minimum number required to achieve political balance.
- I have written to Group Leaders seeking nominations and have received two of the three to date.
- Terms of Reference and a Work Programme will be discussed and agreed at the first meeting of the Governance Advisory Group. The Group will be chaired by the Leader of Council as governance is included in his portfolio of responsibilities. The majority of members will be non-cabinet and will be cross-party and politically balanced as stated above.
- The timetable of key milestones leading up to a final decision, in accordance with the resolution agreed at Full Council on the 15 July 2021, has been sent to Group Leaders and will be made available to all members following agreement by the Governance Review EAP.

Details have been included as an attachment to my email to Group Leaders dated 1 September, but in answer to the question a report setting out options will be made at Full Council in September 23. This will enable the Constitution to be redrafted and approved prior to the May 2024 election should the decision be to move to a committee based governance model.