

# Notes of second meeting of Governance Reference Group (GRG)

**Monday 11 September 2023 (In-person & Online)**

**16.30-17.40**

Present: Cllrs Smart (MS) (Ex Cllr lead of the Governance Review), Bennett (NB), Bick (TB), Gawthrop Wood (JGW), Robertson (RR), and S. Smith (SS).

Officers: Robert Pollock (RP) (Chief Executive), Andrew Limb (Assistant Chief Executive), Nick Orchard (Project Manager – Our Cambridge), Chris Connor (Committee Manager)

## **1. Apologies and notes of GRG 3 August**

- Cllrs McPherson, Healy and Young were not present.
- Members discussed whether there should be alternates for the GRG or whether that may be disruptive to the group. No decision was made to add alternates at this time.
- No discussion of previous meeting (3 August) notes.

## **2. Report to Civic Affairs Committee 20 September**

- i. Members would like section 5.5 of report amended.
- ii. After discussion was recommended to Assistant Chief Executive Andrew Limb to update draft report to Civic Affairs.

## **3. Area Committees**

Subjects discussed included:

- i. The need to articulate options and alternatives to Area Committees (via community engagement, consultations etc.)
- ii. The potential to engage external organisations to support producing an options appraisal for alternative forms of neighbourhood engagement.
- iii. A desire to ensure we get a broad scope of feedback from a wider demographic – perhaps by targeting and a more tailored approach to obtaining feedback - e.g. young people.
- iv. Consider, in future options, the value of engaging people on their terms, where they are
- v. If Area Committees were paused, this would take place after current (September 2023) round of meetings is completed.
- vi. Chief Executive Robert Pollock stated that it was important to not be seen to be limiting the democratic process, therefore important for members and officers to go away, consult people to explore a better way to engage residents. Then can come back with options for Members to consider at a future meeting.
- vii. Chair stated after discussion with Members that they would go back to their respective Political Parties to discuss the possibility of pausing Area Committees

for 6 months while further options for possible replacement to engage residents are explored.

#### **4. Future Meetings**

- i. List was provided by Cllr Smart of future dates and agenda discussion topics. All dates could not be agreed. Cllr Smart stated he would come back to Members with alternative dates.
- ii. Guest speakers have not been booked yet. Members would prefer to have guest speakers in person. Aware of costs and would need to check to see what best course of action is.

#### **Other topics discussed/agreed:**

- i. Individuals to email quick wins to Gary and Nick to set the scope for discussion at the next meeting, drawing on ideas in Robert's earlier paper, the CfGS report and the Independent Remuneration Panel's advice to Civic Affairs in January 2022. Action to communicate via email.
- ii. Tighten up the agendas into specific deliverables; granular decisions from high level agenda items to focus the meeting.