

Review of governance and decision making framework at Forest Heath

Overview of Key Issues

Issue	Proposed Remedies (Communication/ Amendment)
Members: General observations (Executive and others):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portfolio Holders generally welcome additional roles and responsibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Realisation that it is literally more of a day job – less evenings and need for more time in the office. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge the steep learning curve and it may take 9 months to a year before fully up to speed at Cabinet (e.g. currently picking up what they are told rather than owning it). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning & Development to contact all Portfolio Holders to review their individual training needs. Encourage questioning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cabinet meetings to have appropriate level of challenge – may improve as Portfolio Holders increase in confidence. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cabinet Planning working well in terms of preparation for Cabinet Meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Members: Areas for development:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cabinet need to make time to liaise / talk to each other about “work in progress”, ensuring they are all up to speed on key issues and forward planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cabinet to take the opportunity to get together themselves when officers are not present to enable forward planning and political debate (e.g. immediately prior to Cabinet Planning).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication and engagement between members and management where changes to the management structure is making this difficult (acknowledgement this must be temporary). Increasing the support for Portfolio Holders through more engagement generally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity to be provided as to the “Lead Officers” for each Portfolio Holder under the new management structure. Heads of Service to clarify the particular support for each Portfolio Holder and facilitate as appropriate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve communication between Portfolio Holders and other members on all issues particularly those in connection with their ward. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving view of some members that despite having roles on other Committees they do not play a significant role in the authority. What is the role of Members when decision making lies with Portfolio Holders are making all the decisions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A training session could be provided to backbench members advising them of the mechanism that are in place to enable them to have a role in the authority. Improved communication (as above) may also improve this perception.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solving issue of Portfolio Holders on Performance and Audit Committee (PAC) which is not ideal. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Membership of Committees to ensure that all Members have a role outside of Full Council i.e. Licensing, Development Control, Performance and Audit Committees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members can review the membership of PAC and other Committees removing the Cabinet members if appropriate and replacing them with other members. The appointment of other members to Committees may also improve the perception of non-engagement.

APPENDIX

Issue	Proposed Remedies (Communication/ Amendment)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the decision that only Cabinet Members can represent the Council on Outside Bodies (.e. ARP Board) this would spread work load and provide a role for other members with knowledge/skills in these areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representatives on “Joint Committees” must by law be members of cabinet as they are discharging an executive function of the Cabinet. The Membership of other “Outside Bodies” is considered and approved by Council.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the seating arrangements at Council to remove the separation of Cabinet from other Members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The seating of Cabinet as a group at Council is to enable dialogue between Cabinet members on a key issue if required. While this is standard practice at most authorities, the Cabinet can determine arrangements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging any members to attend Cabinet and ask questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work will be undertaken on communicating to all Members that they are welcomed to attend Cabinet and be invited to speak at the meeting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow all Group Members to vote on the “Candidates for Cabinet”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under the Legislation the Leader is appointed by the Council and the Leader then appoints their Cabinet Members. The process for this is a matter for the Leader.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure there is a mechanism in place which enables the Members of the Licensing Committee to help inform and shape new and existing policies e.g. through establishing a Policy Development Working Group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This could happen now. “Working Groups/Task and Finish Group” can be established by the Cabinet. Individual members can propose this to the Portfolio Holder as appropriate.