



Short Life Working Group (SLWG)
Political Management Arrangements
Consultation Feedback

1. Within the current political management arrangement for strategic committees what works well?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. The number of members seems adequate although invariably the contribution made by some is negligible if non-existent.2. Big improvement in previous set up Leave as is.3. From a democratic perspective the majority should be with the administration Group.4. The different people over the different committees gives everyone a chance to have an input to decisions which is good for democracy. It is good that the committees have a remit and a line of feedback and recommendation to the full council.5. Members are involved in the process. Opportunities to scrutinise proposals. Wide range of members involved.6. At present works well.7. OK, but focusses exclusively on required decisions. The Committees does not have 'space' to consider evidence and to work up policy issues for development by Officers.
2. Within the current political management arrangement for strategic committees what could be improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Strategic committees could meet more regularly with smaller agendas. Given the time saved as a result of The pandemic, home working and less travel time provides more opportunity for in-depth discussion on topics that if properly discussed could result in better outcomes for constituents.2. Reduction in the number of Papers marked to follow when agendas published.3. Both administration and opposition group(s) should ensure the right people are in the right seats on the bus and that Group leaders should give feedback on the contribution/ attendance of the members they nominate to represent the communities of Argyll and Bute.4. Better accountability and clearer flow of information between some of the committees.

5. Too lengthy in terms of agenda items can restrict time for discussion. # Can at times be just a process (papers to note etc.)
6. For members who wish to speak and vote not to be stopped by the chair to contribute and vote if it is within your own area.
7. No suggestions as work well at present.
8. Opportunities for Area Committee contribution to matters of policy under development.

3. Within the current political management arrangement for area committees what works well?

1. Smaller agendas and more regular meetings. Also increase public scrutiny opportunity and engagement and attendance of officers to respond. Connectivity with community groups important and consideration for evening meetings to aid this. Community councils in general meet in the evenings and we should increase our opportunity for more engagement with them and other community organisations. It is simply a timetabling activity.
2. The ability of committee assistants to chase up and forward responses to members issues raised at the meetings.
3. The chair should reflect the democratic process. ie be from the administration Group.
4. Public Question time on Local issues. Opportunities for questions and scrutiny.
5. Could community planning and area committee join to make one less meeting as brought up at the SLWG?
6. Officers attending the meeting.
7. The management works well.
8. Like to space for members of the public to address the Committee. Consideration of Education reports. Chance to hear from Partner organisations – although not worked lately.

4. Within the current political management arrangement for area committees what could be improved?

1. To improve local democracy we need to improve the area committees responsibilities and get things decided at a local level with local accountability. Too often local decisions in Bute and Cowal are overturned by folk in Oban or Helensburgh. Local decisions need to be supported and agreed by full council rather than overturned simply due to political strength. Diversity in our decisions on an area by area basis can be accommodated centrally but budgets need to be devolved. This, diversity, is indeed a strength in Argyll and Bute we should build on it.

2. Perhaps a linkage to area CPGs and discussions at Business days. Once they go live encouragement to public participation at question time
3. Such committees are at the core of local democracy: we may wish to consider that the vice chair should not be from the administration Group.
4. I think they work well.
5. More frequent meetings. Area Committee input on the agenda items. More local decision making. Public Question time on Local issues. Opportunities for questions and scrutiny.
6. I think someone for Roads & Amenities should be available who can answer our questions as there are many items going round in a circle, and not just a representative there to take notes of the questions. No disrespect to those who do however it would be beneficial to have questions answered.
7. More items for decision making, there are many reports simply to update but not decide. Also the frequency of Area committees should be increased as suggested by Audit Scotland a number of years ago.
8. It works well.
9. Reducing power. No influence over investment and spend Don't meet often enough. Inadequate accountability for local performance from Officers – not just PI reports.

5. Are there any additional comments you would like to make in terms of existing political management arrangements on what works well?

1. No
2. Virtual meetings have worked well, hybrid meeting will need to be monitored to prevent a them and us scenario.
3. Reports from management are very helpful.
4. I receive support and it works well.
5. I like SLW Groups as a means to develop things on a cross-party basis. Not used often enough.

6. Are there any additional comments you would like to make in terms of existing political management arrangements on what could be improved

1. No
2. Need to await the outcome of BV review of scrutiny.
3. I think the current system gives more people a proper role in decision making rather than the Cabinet or Executive models which exclude a lot of people and make it harder for Councillors to represent their constituents as they are removed from most of the decision making process.

4. I think online meetings and recording has generally been a good thing.
5. Local decisions devolved to local members.
6. My very simplistic view is that there should be no room for politics. We are representing our constituents.....end of story.....however, I feel that these arrangements are as well organised as can be within the council.
7. Feel strongly that area committees have to be strengthen, at present most of the time is spent noting, there is a lack of considered decision making at area committee level, see following remarks.
8. I am concerned that the focus on decision-making alone denies the opportunity to consider wider issues of interest in our communities. I wonder if we had a more diverse approach to Committees rather than ED&I and Community Services, or established SLWGs to facilitate police development, if we would be better addressing other issues of concern. A case in point; the Environment – we consider when we have to when challenged by the community to do so, but we could have done more to develop the Council role as a Community Leader,
An example of somethings which have been sheltered from oversight and development ... Community Safety, inc. Violence to Women, Autism Services, Community Engagement

7. Do you wish to provide suggestions in terms of any future arrangements?

1. Dedicated executive director/ head of service for each area, allocated fifteen minute slot Business days
2. I would like to see the system we have at present continued.
3. As above more decision making powers to Area Committees.
4. Reverting back to face-to-face when permitted. Used to have committee support at local level which is missed.
5. Return to meaningful role(s) for Area Committees, perhaps in Community Planning, or specifically, in community engagement.

8. Are there any other comments you would like to make?

1. It is regularly acknowledged that we live in a diverse area of Scotland Oban and Dunoon have different dynamics to Tobermory and Helensburgh. Although this is acknowledged those areas of diversity are not permitted to flourish due to a one fit all centralist agenda operated by the administration.
2. It is absolutely vital that as far as possible groups ensure the right people have the right people on the right seats on the bus and that group leaders address poor attendance or performance of their members.
3. Some people who join by phone seem to have no problems, however there are others who join and leave the meeting several times.

4. I don't feel I have been here long enough to answer some of the questions yet as I am learning from every meeting I attend. My only comment would be that some members seem not to read their papers and ask questions which we already have the answer to!
5. Strengthening democratic input from local councillors at area committee level.
6. Business days are exceptionally important when discussing local matters of importance to the area. All major decisions should come to business days for open discussion then to area committees before strategic committees.
7. Councillors want to work with officers to make the best decisions.
8. Imperative chair and vice-chair aware of any impeding motions and/or amendments prior to meetings taking place to allow the chair to be prepared.