

## **Governance Survey Results Summary**

A survey was sent out to all Members on 20 August 2020 was closed on 9 September 2020.

The same survey was also sent to the Leadership Team, Corporate Management Team, Group Managers and an additional four officers.

Fifteen Members completed the survey, along with eight officers.

A summary of the results are below, using the 23 combined replies. All six questions required a reply in order to complete the survey.

Full responses are available in the attachment for those who wish to see more detail.

### **Q1 asked if the respondent was an Officer or Member**

### **Q2. In relation to the current Leader and Cabinet Governance arrangements please tell us what works well in this arrangement and why?**

23 comments received. Answers included:

- Accountability
- Dedicated portfolio holders
- Reduced size in decision making body, aiding decision time
- It is important that the Council has the ability to make decisions quickly and effectively yet with clear accountability. Leader & Cabinet Governance provides that capability with a small but accountable decision-making team. Moreover, they are supported by a range of Committees and PDGs which are able to provide more detailed review of many topics and recommendations when required. This is strength in depth
- The current system works well and allows for members, officers and the public to have a known and dedicated portfolio holder to take any issues too. The accountability is clear and the decision making process is both transparent and simple , works well
- Clear accountability in theory. Streamlined process which should lead to decisive actions and timely decision-making. Able to work up plans with the relevant members, so that there is a clear understanding of the plan in advance and more likelihood of avoiding abortive work

### **Q3. In relation to the current Leader and Cabinet governance arrangement please tell us what works less well and why?**

23 comments received answers included:

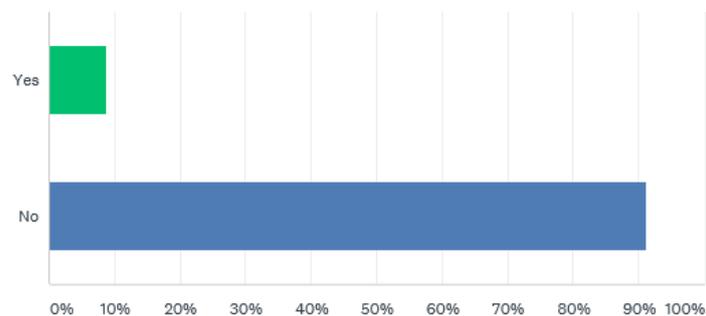
- Inability for Full Council to overrule Cabinet decision

- Not very democratic
- Lacking engagement
- Committee system is drawn out
- Inexperienced Cabinet Members
- Not cross portfolio working
- Not a team, a collection of individuals

#### Q4.

Do you think a complete change of governance arrangement is required? ie to form a committee structure?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	8.70%	2
No	91.30%	21
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>23</b>

#### Q5. If you answered yes to question 4 is there anything you would like to retain from the existing structure?

4 % replied no

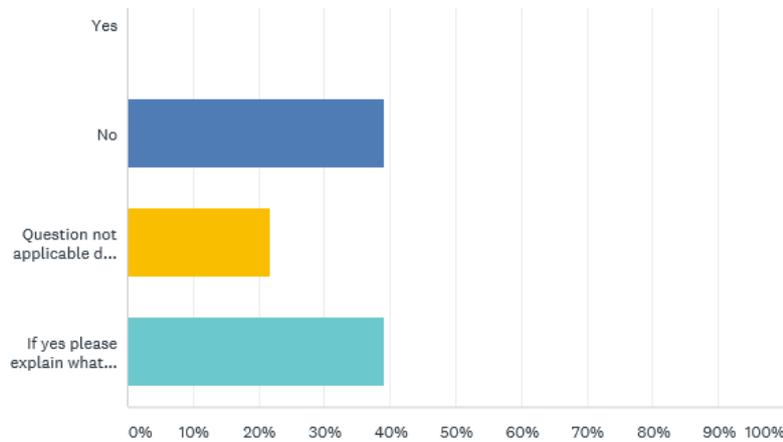
87% replied the question was not applicable due to previous answer

Two comments (9%) were received as per below.

- Accountable members for areas of policy
- I would even question why MDDC have a leader if we are all supposed to work together for the benefit of the district. MDDC needs a much more democratic system that takes into account the views of the public and members. It is the positions of power that cause conflict within MDDC because there are disagreements over who should sit in them and have that power. If there were a committee system, there would be no need for members to become so concerned about holding a position of power and

the members who do not sit on the Cabinet would not feel so demoralised at seeing how little influence they have over council proceedings

**Q6. If you answered no to question 4 would you like to see some changes to the current arrangements as operated by MDDC?**



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	0.00% 0
No	39.13% 9
Question not applicable due to previous answer	21.74% 5
If yes please explain what they are and why they would be necessary and/or an improvement. <a href="#">Responses</a>	39.13% 9

Nine comments were received and included:

- The workload for members of the planning committee should be looked at. The total hours sat and for site visits should be looked at.
- Tighter definition of role description for Cabinet members with training so that they better understand the respective roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders.
- Not sure - just getting a more in depth understanding of the current processes and how to use them for change - so it may just be more support for members is required. It does seem hard for members to personally contribute to decision making - as the process between all the relative committees, cabinet, full council and officers is complex and challenging to navigate.
- Given the problem that gave rise to this whole discussion, I do see that where Cabinet goes firmly against recommendations from lower-level committees / PDGs there needs to be some form of challenge rather than waiting until a subsequent election. However, that must not take away from the ultimate authority that the Leadership Team has to make decisions, however unpopular. (Sometimes that's needed.) With the infamous example, one issue

was that it was carried by a numerical minority of the Cabinet due to abstentions. That seems wrong, so perhaps tightening up on rules for abstention / requirement to vote is all that's needed, leaving Leadership with the accountability as is essential.

- if an additional check/balance can be incorporated that ensures Cabinet can not operate contrary to full Council's decisions
- Same answer, this review is the result of one decision that was both legal and followed procedure yet was unpopular with a small sector of residents. We cannot seek to change a whole system each time a small but vocal group object in the system was introduced after a committee system failed. The current system has and continues to work well
- With respect, the 'current arrangements' are not operated by MDDC but by a mixture of Independents and Lib. Dems. in which the tail wags the dog. There is bound to be inequality when two minority groups attempt to operate as one but there has never been any acknowledgement that this is a coalition; there has been no declaration of common purpose and I for one have absolutely no idea where the district is supposed to be going. The 'current arrangement' has been in power for 15 months without doing anything - in fact, all it seems to have done so far is call into question things which were done under the previous administration. If it wishes to continue in power, it has to have a common plan to which both of its constituent parts can sign up and for which both of its constituent parts can be held responsible. At the moment it is not an administration
- Enhanced role for Scrutiny and Audit - pre-decision making, rather than having to rely on call-in. This could be through sub-committees to review proposals at an earlier stage and pose questions. Consider removing PDGs and creating two Overview and Scrutiny committees - Homes and Community and Economy and Environment. Consider making Audit - Audit and Governance, with Standards Committee becoming a sub-committee?
- I think the Cabinet should be more responsible in their actions and projects, and should see the advice of officers before going down a separate path. Collective cabinet responsibility is a key issue

ENDS