

Issue referred from the Policy Development Co-ordination Group

Council Meeting 18th October 2012

Rule 12 – Motion on notice - withdrawn

South Kesteven District Council operates the leader/cabinet arrangements for running the Council and the majority of decisions are taken by the members of the cabinet. The full Council take very few decisions and the majority of members are not involved in strategy decision making. Most members do not have a major role to play in the running of SKDC.

There are alternatives to this arrangement and the Localism Act 2011 permits Councils to change from one form of governance to another. The Chief Executive and the Monitoring officer have both confirmed to me that this is both legal and possible.

An alternative could be to operate a full committee system in which several committees are set up with specified responsibilities. The committees would be politically balanced and have responsibility for taking strategy decisions within their remit. In this way all members would be actively involved and be part of the running of SKDC.

Operating a committee system would mean that, apart from day-to-day operational decisions, decisions are made by committees comprised of Councillors from all political groups.

A committee system operated at SKDC for many years prior to the leader/cabinet arrangements and was very successful. Committees are the most democratic form of decision making and enable all Councillors to be involved and gain experience in many areas.

I am aware of other Councils reverting back to a Committee system and in particular Nottinghamshire County Council which is Conservative led agreed to return to Committees following a Nottinghamshire Conservative manifesto pledge. They successfully organised this change in the period from November 2011 to 17th May 2012 and now operate a full committee system. Nottinghamshire have also contained all costs within their existing budgets.

I propose that South Kesteven District Council agree to return to the Committee system and set a timescale to achieve this.

Councillor Paul Wood

2nd October 2012