

Working in a political environment

20 February 2017

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Aims of today

During the session you will:

- Consider what councillors should expect from officers and vice versa.
- Build awareness of protocols and guidance available to support strong working relationships.
- Explore the behaviours and principles that build rapport with councillors and tactics available in different scenarios to strengthen influencing skill.
- Consider how participants can apply this learning to their own roles.

Ground rules for today

- 'Chatham House' rule
- Respect others' views
- Phones on silent
- Finish when we say we'll finish
- What else?

Introductions

- Name?
- Role?
- How long have you worked in your field?
- Experience of working in/ with local government?
- Any particular questions/ issues to explore?

Mee Mee

Baa Baa



Different models of governance

- Leader & Cabinet model
- Elected mayor model
- Committee system
- Majority vs no overall control

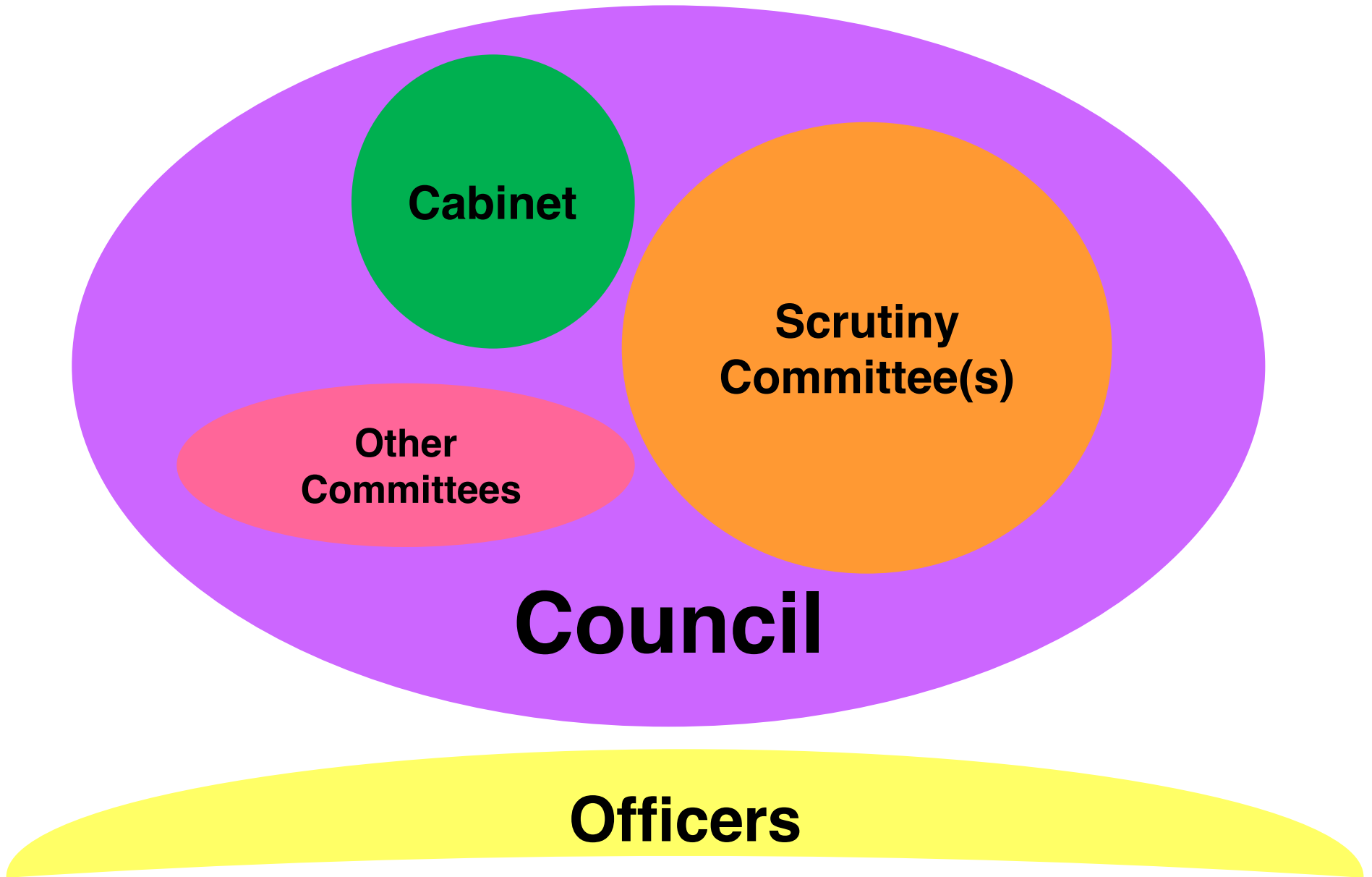
Types of services

- Statutory services – councils must provide
- Regulatory services – councils must provide
- Discretionary services – councils may choose to provide

Different types of councillors

- Councillors/ Members
- Mayor/ Council Chairman/ Chair
- Leader / Mayor
- Group Leader
- Opposition councillor
- Cabinet member/ portfolio holder/ executive member
- Ward / backbench / non-executive councillor
- Chairperson/ Chair

Reminder – how do councils work?



The councillor's role

Representing
the ward

Understanding
the ward

Signposting

Decision-making

Regulatory duties

Negotiating
support/ Advocacy

Policy and strategy development

Overview
and Scrutiny



Community leadership and engagement

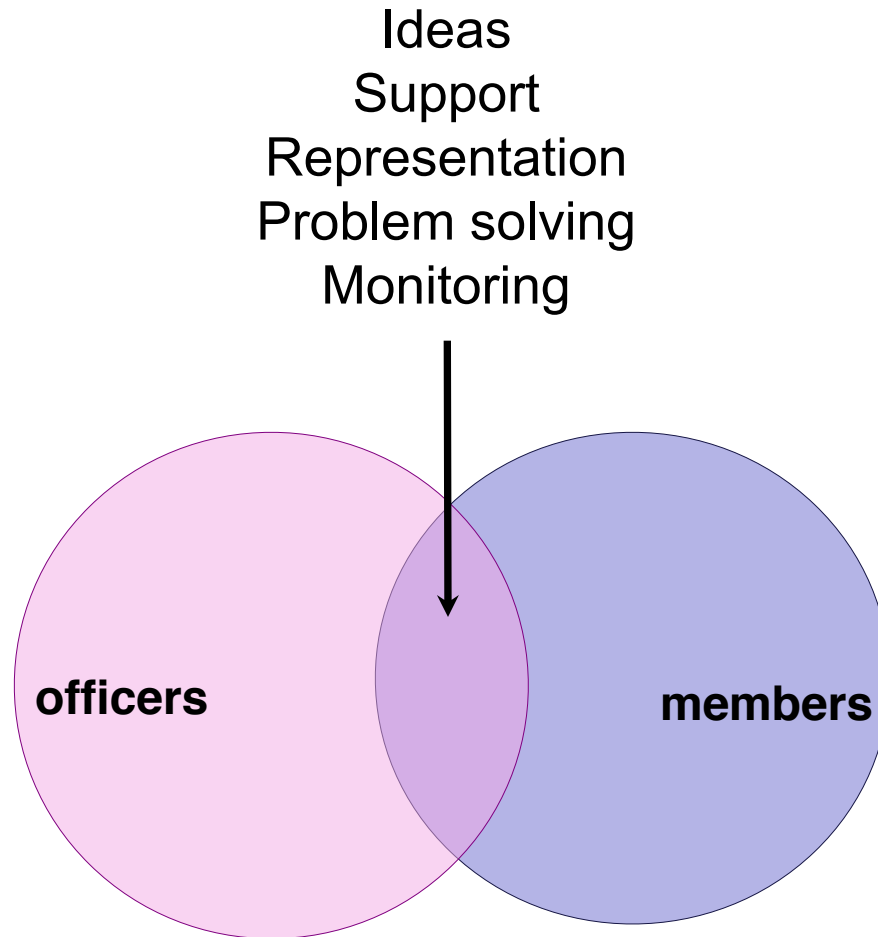
Councillors and Officers

Councillors and officers have a **collective corporate responsibility**. But aspects of their roles are distinctly different.

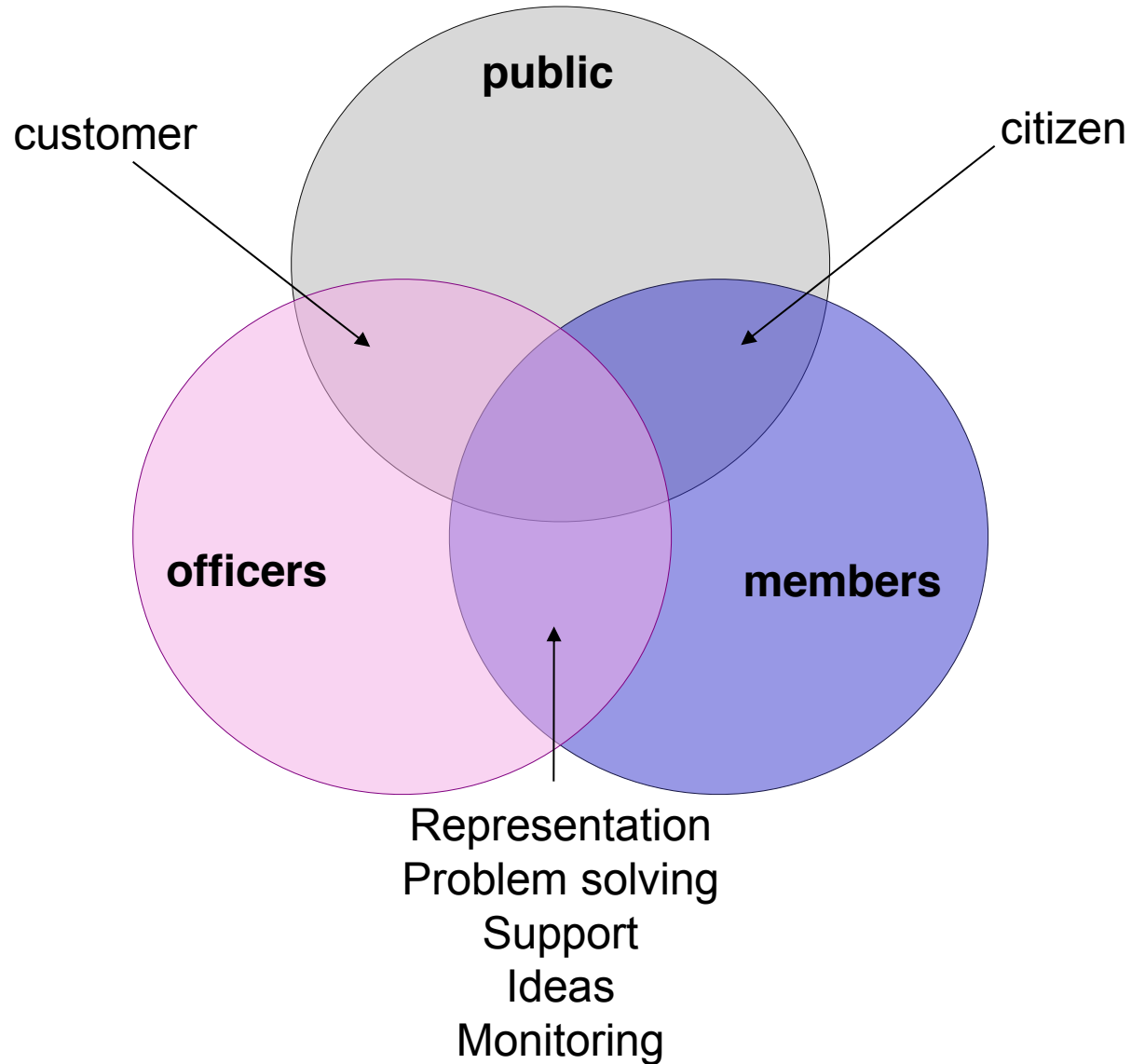
- Councillors set the strategic direction and agree the policy framework of the council
- Officers are responsible for delivering the council's policies and for the day-to-day operation of the organisation

'Councillor-led, Officer run'

Two Dimensional Political Management



Three Dimensional Political Management



Local government is unique due to the democratic context

Administration and delivery must be achieved in a democratic context...

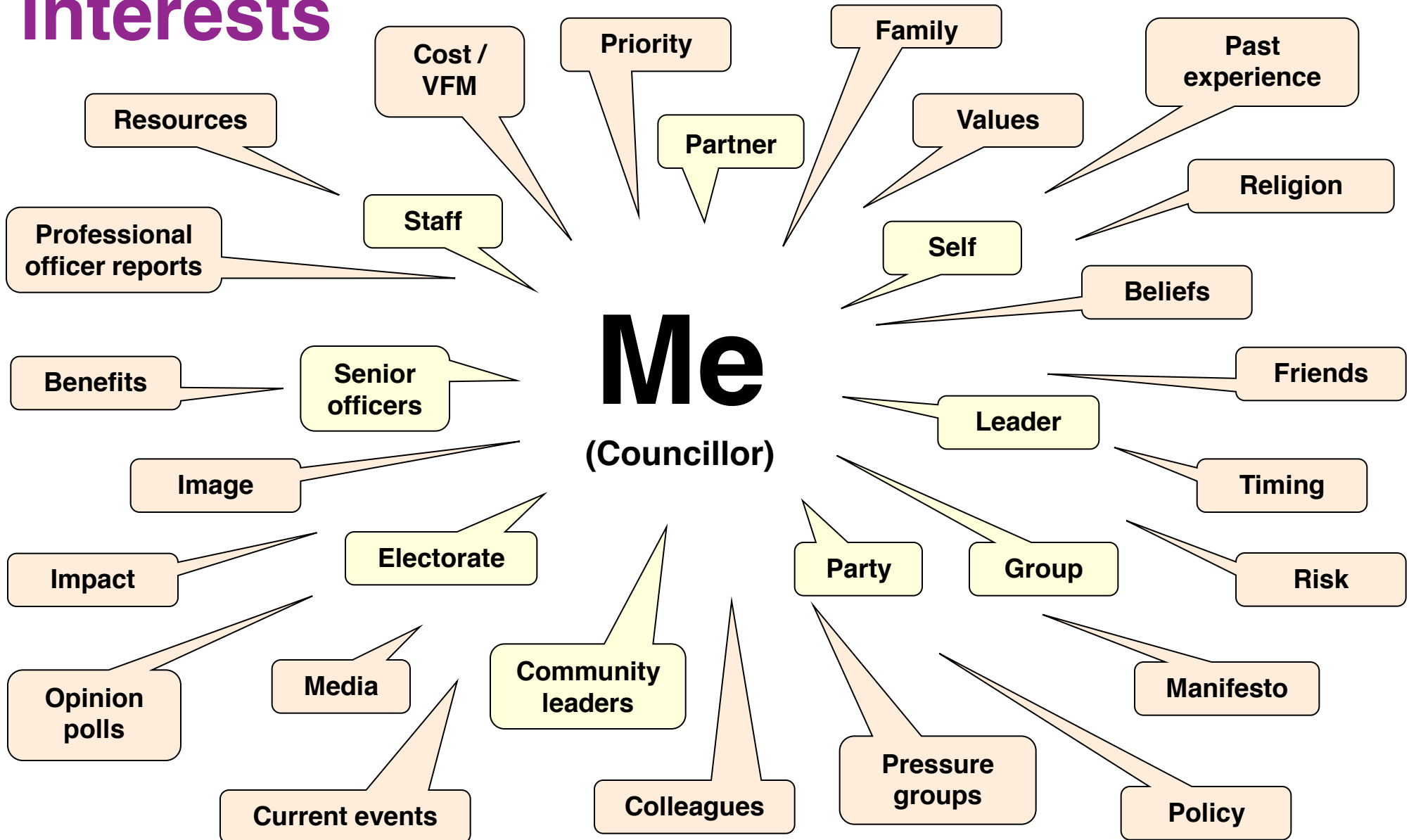
- involving members
 - subject to politics and the electoral process
 - leadership has to be developed afresh
 - requires active work by both Members and Officers
 - Community leadership about more than services
 - Regulatory and standards bodies, statutory and strategic responsibilities
-

How do HWBs fit in?

- Health and Social Care Act 2012 - established HWBs
- Expectation that they will act as 'system leaders'
- Committees of the council, but unlike any other council committee
- Partnerships of the key players in the local health and care system who work together to improve the health and wellbeing of their local population and reduce health inequalities.

**What makes
councillors tick?**

Balancing competing demands & interests



**What do you expect from
councillors?**

What do YOU expect of councillors?

- Political leadership and direction
- A working partnership based on mutual respect
- Not to get involved in the operational management of the authority
- Not to use influence or pressure to gain special treatment for themselves or others
- An understanding of the need for work/ life balance

What do councillors expect of you?



What do councillors expect of you?

- A commitment to the authority/locality as a whole, and not to an individual political group
- A working partnership based on mutual respect
- A timely response to enquiries and complaints
- Professional advice, not influenced by political views or preference
- Integrity, mutual support and appropriate confidentiality
- If in doubt, you can seek advice of the Council's Monitoring Officer

Building rapport with members

- Create good impressions through your body language, demeanour and mannerisms
- Listen actively: encourage members to talk through 'active listening'
- Ask open and searching questions to probe, test and challenge members – get to the nub of the issue

Building rapport is often about personal chemistry – but none of us can hope to influence *all* other people

Exercise

What would you do if ...?

Scenario set 1

How are decisions made - formally



Public consultation?

HWB?

DMT

CMT

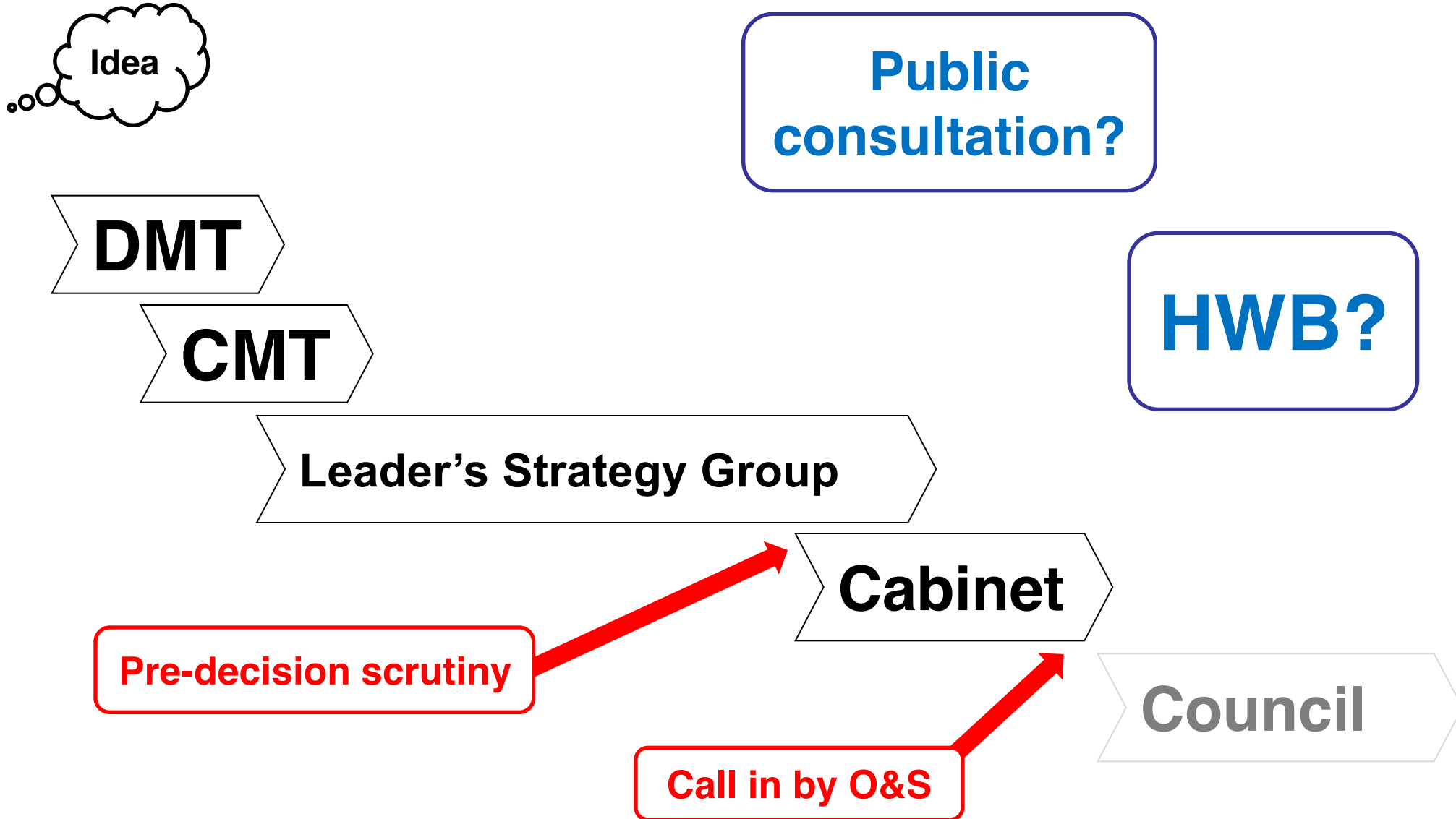
Leader's Strategy Group

Cabinet

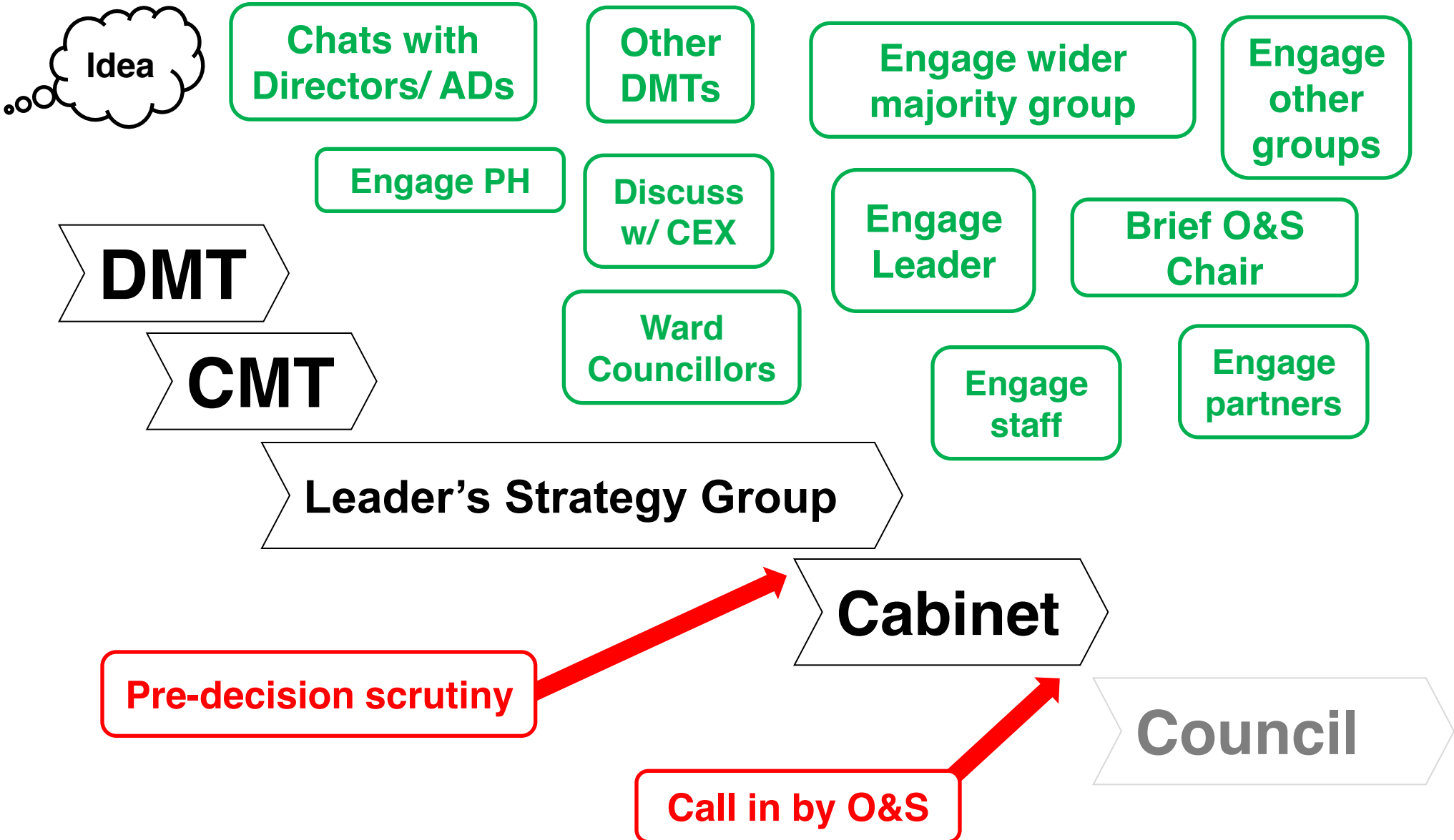
Council

Pre-decision scrutiny

Call in by O&S



How are decisions made - informally



Characteristics of good influencing skills

- Energy and enthusiasm
- An ability to be flexible and adaptable to different people and situations
- Strong listening and observation skills
- An ability to act impartially or with neutrality
- Self confidence and gravitas
- Think about timing and setting of conversation

Give your ideas a solid landing

- Support the member-led 'culture of accountability'
- Think strategically and recognise the 'big picture'
- Present thoughts, ideas and arguments clearly and succinctly
- Avoid, or at least translate, 'Health speak' (and challenge 'council speak'!)
- Avoid certain behaviours, e.g. irritators, defend/ attack spirals
- Do your homework and be prepared
- Use language which will help gain support
- Be tactical: Is this the right time, place, approach?

Influencing in difficult situations

- Preparation is key
- Be yourself – no defensiveness/ hidden agendas
- Listen first and talk second – understand and address their concerns
- Maintain your assertiveness ... appropriately
- Share your experiences & feelings to establish empathy
- Explore options together – is there another option to achieve the desired outcome?
- Keep people and problems separate

Exercise

Making the case

Scenario set 2

Tips for effective working

Do be:

- Impartial
- Professional
- Authoritative
- Respectful
- Sensitive
- Positive
- Communicative
- Discreet
- Reliable
- Friendly

Don't be:

- Unhelpful
- Jargonistic
- Arrogant
- Deferential
- Subservient
- Imprudent
- Indiscriminate
- Evasive
- Reliant
- Friends

Reflections

What might you do differently
after today?

Any issues raised today to
follow up locally?

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