

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

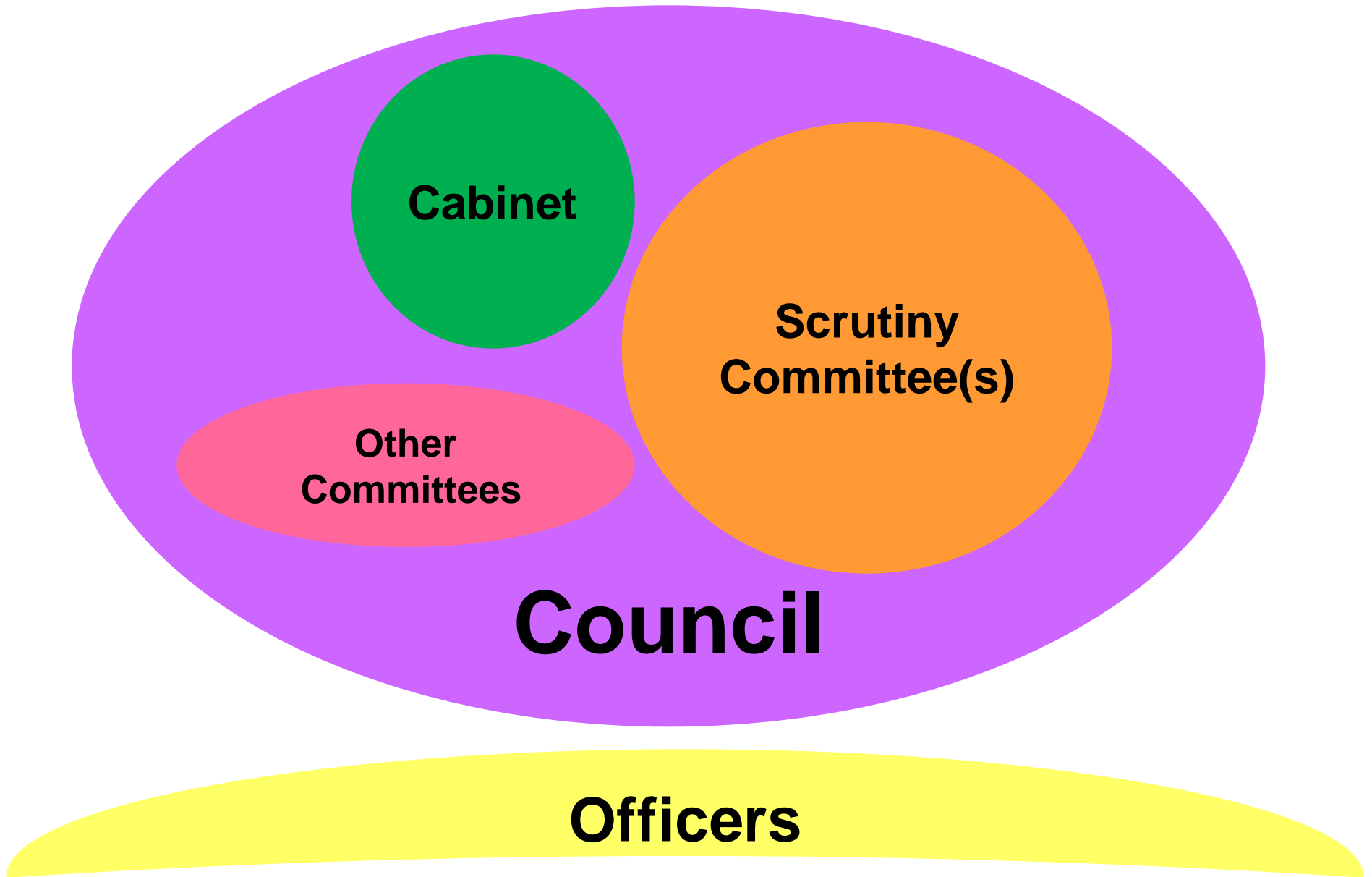
Types of services

- 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

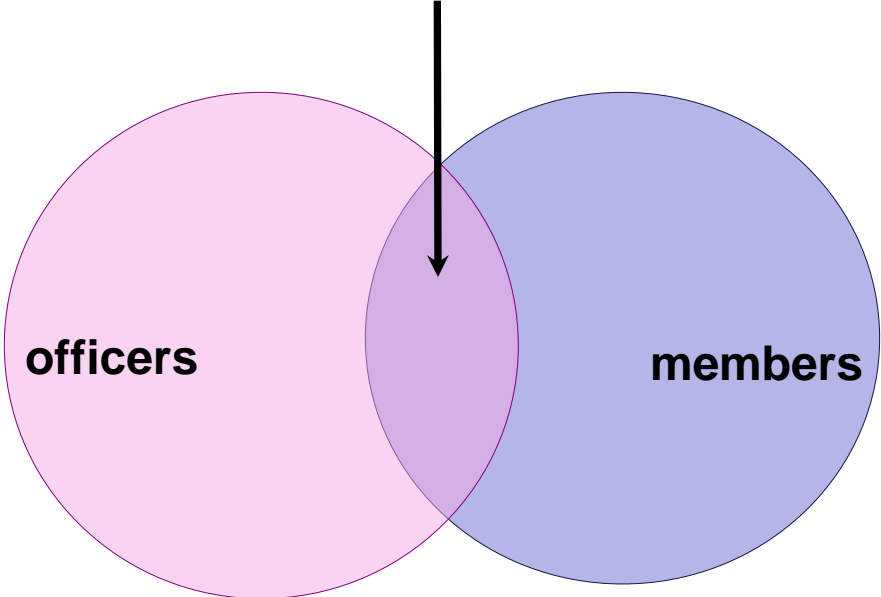
Councillors and officers have a **collective corporate responsibility**. But aspects of their roles are distinctly different.

- 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

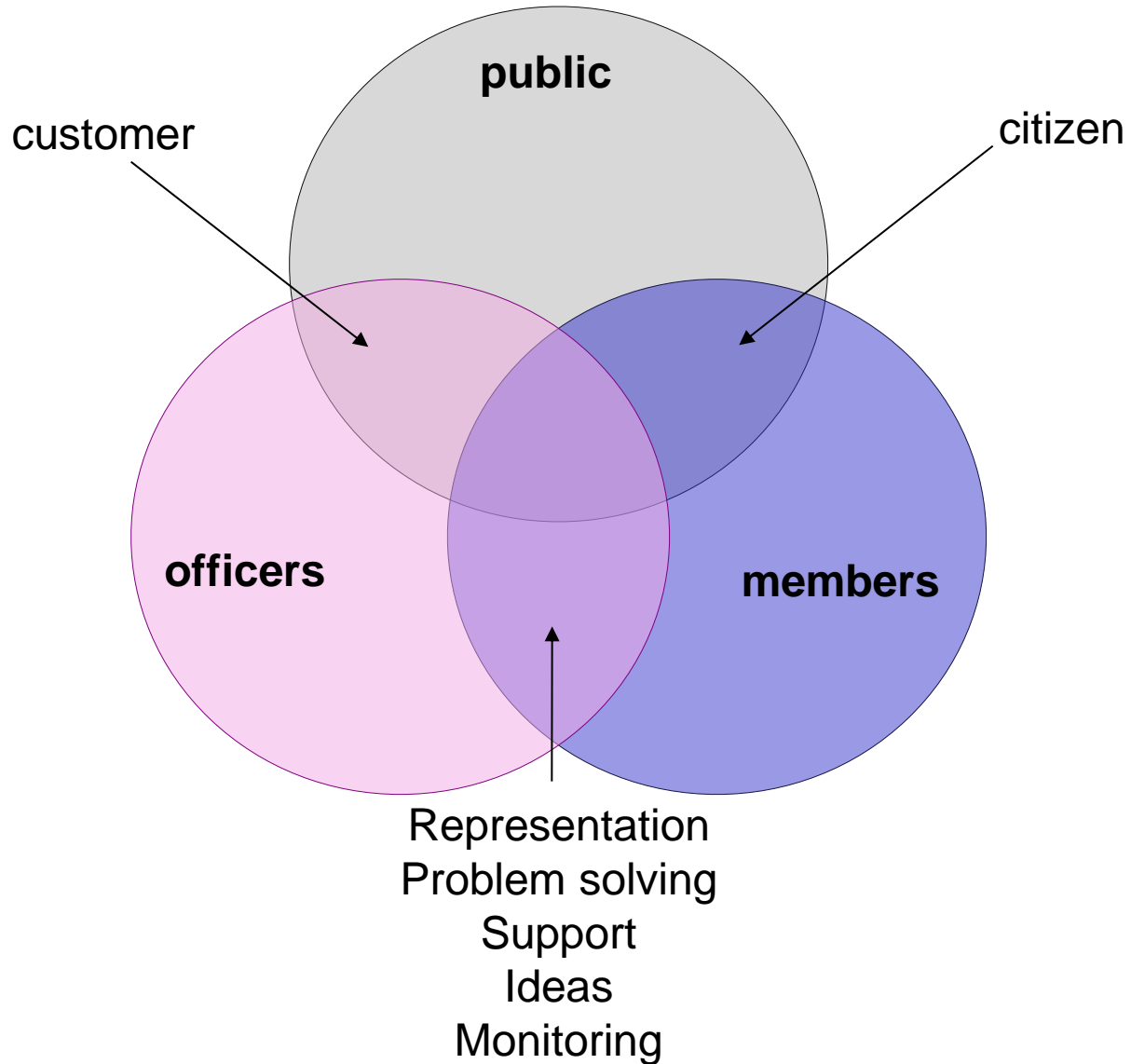
‘Councillor-led, Officer run’

Two Dimensional Political Management

Ideas
Support
Representation
Problem solving
Monitoring



Three Dimensional Political Management



Local government is unique due to the democratic context

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

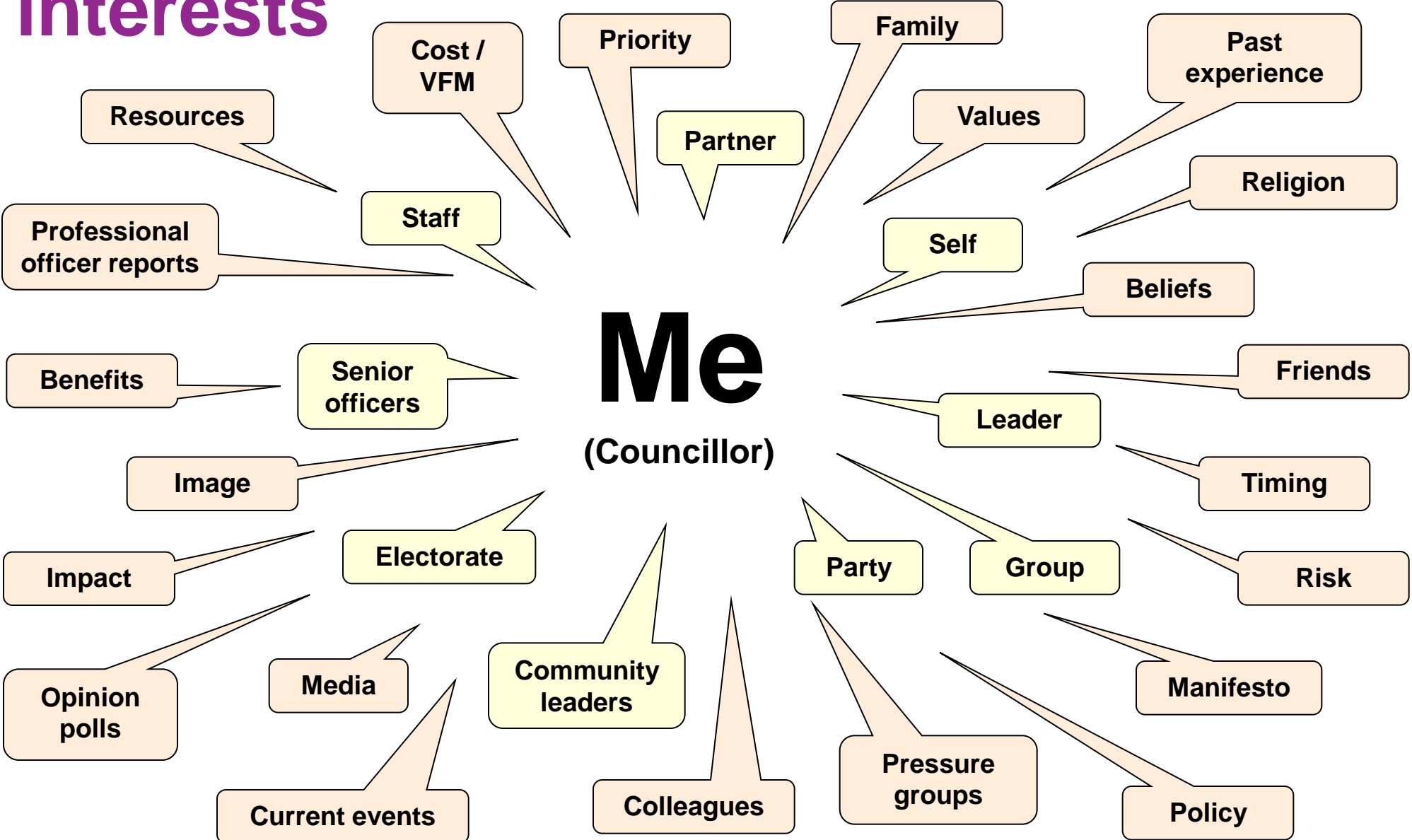
- involving members
 - subject to politics and the electoral process
 - leadership has to be developed afresh
 - requires active work by both Members and Officers
 - Community leadership about more than services
 - Regulatory and standards bodies, statutory and strategic responsibilities
-

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?**

DMT

CMT

HWB?

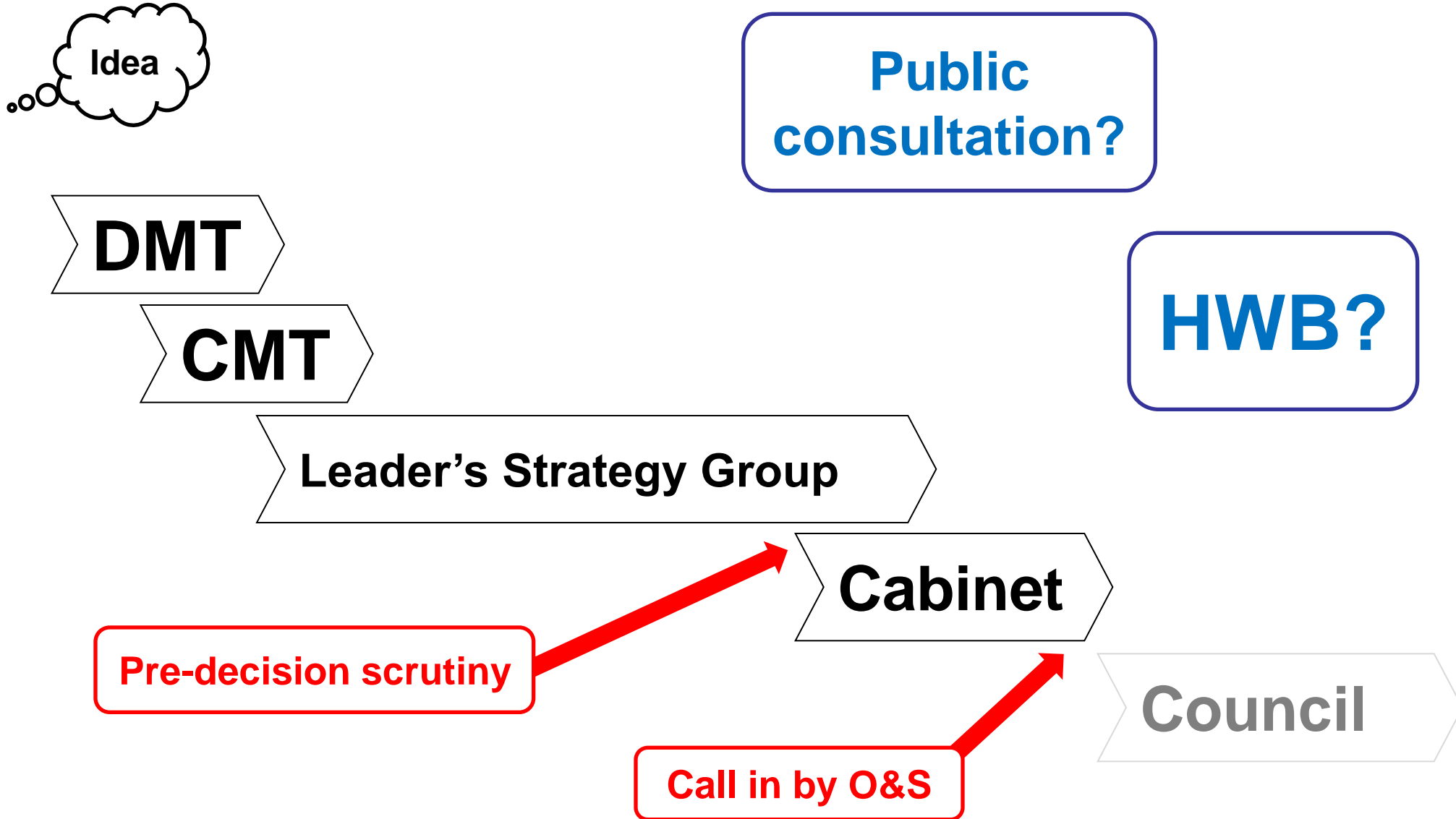
Leader's Strategy Group

Cabinet

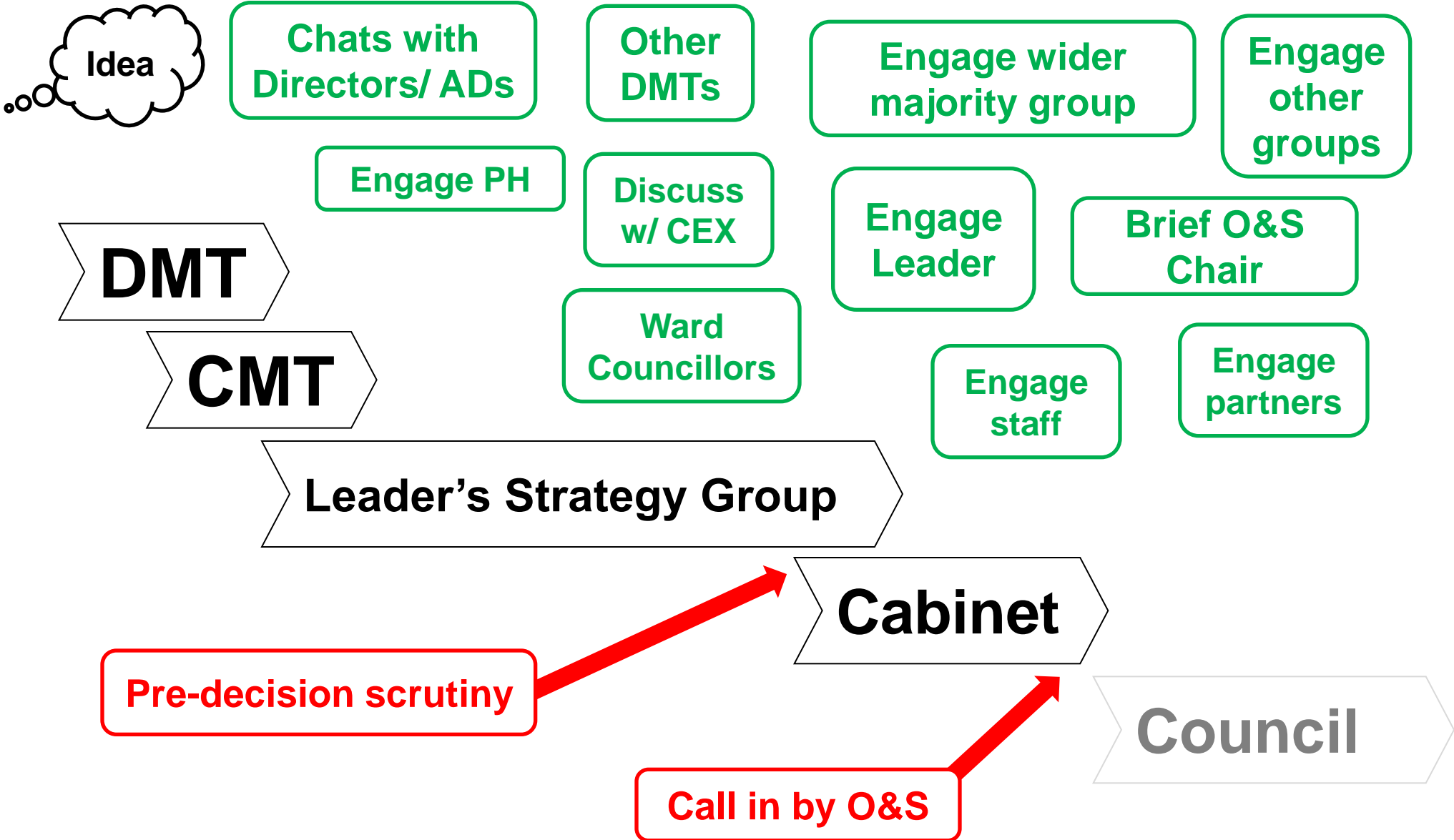
Pre-decision scrutiny

Call in by O&S

Council



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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