

GOVERNANCE AND ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

Meeting - 16 January 2018

Present: P Hogan (Chairman)
D Anthony and D Smith

Apologies for absence: Dr W Matthews, J Lowen-Cooper and D Pepler

15. MINUTES

The minutes of the Governance and Electoral Arrangements Committee held on 23 November 2017 were agreed as an accurate record.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

17. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

In accordance with the agreed constitutional review work programme, Members undertook a detailed review of Part C - Codes Protocol and Procedures and Part E - Schemes of Delegations of the Council's Constitution.

The Council's Constitution was last reviewed in 2014/15 and an updated version came into effect in May 2015. This took account of the reduction in the number of members and incorporated the shared working arrangements with Chiltern District Council in place at the time, together with changes introduced by the Localism Act 2011. Following the implementation of the final shared services reviews for the Planning and Local Land Charge services, all staff (except those at the South Buckinghamshire) now work for both Councils under harmonised terms and conditions. For the effective operation of all services, the Committee noted the importance of ensuring that any codes, protocols and procedures which involve staff, as well as the scheme of delegations to officers, are consistent across both Councils.

The Committee took into consideration the comments which had been sent by Cllr Lowen-Cooper electronically in advance of the meeting.

The Committee requested that the following paragraphs/sentences be rewritten to make them easier to understand:

- Part C – Section C – paragraph 1.2 – to remove the second sentence and for the third sentence to read 'Working relationships between members and employees should never.....'
- Part C – Section C – paragraph 1.3 – replace the word complaint with the word complain (4th line down)
- Part C – Section C – paragraph 2.6 – second sentence to refer to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Part C – Section C – paragraph 5.3 – to be split into two paragraphs. Second paragraph to read 'Members should understand the...'

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- Part C – Section D – paragraph 4.1b – to read 'If the equipment is large it must be.....'
- Part C – Section F – paragraph 1 – the text explaining the timings of planning committee meetings to be reworded
- Part C – Section F – paragraph 2 – replace the word 'Scheme' with the word 'It'
- Part C – Section F – paragraph 5 – update email address and telephone number
- Part C – section I – to make clear what regulations are being referred to.
- Part C – section I – sub section 2) paragraph 6 – the word 'present' appears twice.

Having considered the quoracy for Policy Advisory Groups, the Committee were of the opinion that current arrangements were suitable and that no change was required.

In response to a question regarding how members of the public know to inform Democratic Services in advance of the meeting that they intend to film, photograph or audio record the proceedings, Members were advised that there were signs displayed at the meeting and a note on the agenda asking that anyone who does intend to film, photograph or audio record the proceedings to contact Democratic Services Officer in advance of the meeting. Members were also advised that with regards to filming and photography, a Democratic Services Officer was likely to notice if someone was filming/photographing proceedings.

With regards to the adopted procedure for confirming Tree Preservation Orders by the Planning Committee, clarity was provided on the procedure for speaking at these meetings. The Committee questioned whether objector letters were being included in the committee report in full as stated in the protocol. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services agreed to speak to the Head of Planning and Economic Development to ensure that this was happening.

With regards to the scheme for public speaking at Planning Committee, the Committee discussed the rules around the application of the scheme.

In response to a query regarding how applications can be referred to Planning Committee by Councillors, the Committee were advised that the Constitution limits call in to Members of the Planning Committee. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services agreed to check that this was the wording being used on the Council's website.

The amendments to Parts C and E as agreed would be reflected in the final draft Constitution presented for consideration by the Committee as outlined in the Committee's work programme.

RESOLVED that the proposed revisions to Parts C and E of the Constitution at Appendices 1 and 2 be agreed.

The meeting terminated at 8.15 pm