

GOVERNANCE AND ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

Meeting - 7 March 2018

Present: P Hogan (Chairman)
Dr W Matthews, J Lowen-Cooper and D Smith

Apologies for absence: D Anthony and D Pepler

18. MINUTES

The minutes of the Governance and Electoral Arrangements Committee held on 16 January 2018 were agreed as an accurate record.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

20. MEMBERSHIP OF PLANNING AND LICENSING COMMITTEES

The Committee were asked to consider a report which proposed to reduce the number of Members on the Licensing and Planning Committees from 12 to 10 and reduce the quorum of the Planning Committee from 6 to 5.

Members were advised that the proposal to reduce the Membership of the Committees should be considered in the context of the overall number of Members on the Council. At present, the appointment of 12 Members to each Committee represented almost half of the 28 Members on the Council, therefore it was suggested that a lower number of Members may be more appropriate.

The Committee felt that, given the reduced workload and the reduction in the number of meetings needed by the Licensing Committee in recent years, the proposal to reduce the Membership of the Committee to 10 whilst maintaining the quorum at 3 Members should be endorsed. It was noted that the proposal was supported by the Licensing Committee Chairman.

In reference to the use of substitute Members, it was clarified that substitutes should attend for the entire duration of a meeting and should receive the same training as ordinary Committee Members. Members were advised that training sessions for both Planning and Licensing Committee Members had taken place as required following changes to appointments.

A concern was raised that lowering the quorum of the Planning Committee to 5 Members could lead to issues when declarations of interest were received. It was felt that reducing the quorum would have a negative effect on the public perception of the Committee, as it could lead to fewer Members debating and determining the outcomes of applications.

RECOMMENDED that the Council's Constitution be amended to reflect the following changes:

1. That the Licensing Committee comprises of 10 Members (reduced from 12) and that the quorum for a meeting be 3 Members (remains the same).
2. That the Planning Committee comprises of 10 Members (reduced from 12) and that the quorum for a meeting be 6 Members (remains the same).

21. **JOINT WORKING - APPOINTMENT OF A JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO THE WORK OF THE CHILTERN AND SOUTH BUCKS JOINT COMMITTEE**

The Committee received a report on the proposal to establish a joint committee which would discharge overview and scrutiny functions in relation to the work of the Chiltern and South Bucks Joint Committee. Members noted that the proposed new committee would not affect the work of the existing Overview and Scrutiny Committees at either Council but would instead focus solely on scrutinising the functions delegated to the Joint Committee.

It was proposed that the new Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be made up of 5 Members from each Council, with two co-Chairmen elected at the first meeting in each municipal year. The Committee would have a quorum of 4 with a minimum of 2 Members from each Council. Appointments to the Committee would be made by the Leaders of each Council subject to the application of political balance rules, and the Committee would report back to each individual Full Council.

Members felt that establishing a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be beneficial as it would enable greater scrutiny of the work of the Joint Committee to be carried out between the Councils.

RECOMMENDED that the following be agreed:

1. That pursuant to section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Councils agree to appoint a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee with authority to discharge the Councils' overview and scrutiny functions in relation to the functions delegated to the Chiltern and South Bucks Joint Committee as set out in the terms of reference at Appendix 1 to the report.
2. That the rules of procedure for the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee be agreed as set out in Appendix 2.
3. That the Councils' constitutions and respective Cabinet Procedure, Access to Information and Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules be amended to reflect the new Joint Committee.
4. That the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the necessary amendments to the IAA to reflect the above decisions in consultation with the Chief Executive and Leaders.

22. **REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION**

In accordance with the agreed constitutional review work programme, Members undertook a review of Part F - Partnerships and Part H - Decision Structure of the Council's Constitution and considered the inclusion of a new Part I - Glossary of Terms.

With reference to Part F – Partnerships, the Committee felt that, as the Terms of Reference for the Chiltern and South Bucks Strategic partnership were outdated, these should not be included in the Council's Constitution. It was recommended that the Terms of Reference should be reviewed and updated to ensure that they were fit for purpose.

Similarly, Members felt that the Assurance and Accountability Framework for the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership should not be included in the Constitution due to it being outdated. It was suggested that a link to the framework could be included on the Council's website once it had been updated.

The Committee noted that Part H – Decision Structure had been updated to include newly established committees. Members felt that an arrow should be added to the chart to show the link between Cabinet and Council decisions more clearly.

In reference to Part I – Glossary of Terms, the following amendments were made:

- Political Assistant – change reference from Chiltern District Council to South Bucks District Council.
- Overview and Scrutiny – should read "decisions made by the Cabinet and Joint Committees".
- Scrutiny – second paragraph referring to scrutiny committees should be moved to the Overview and Scrutiny section.
- A definition of the Governance and Electoral Arrangements Committee should be included.

RESOLVED that:

1. The Terms of Reference for the Chiltern and South Bucks Strategic Partnership and the Assurance and Accountability Framework for the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership be removed from the Constitution.
2. Part H – Decision Structure and Part I – Glossary of Terms be agreed subject to the amendments set out in the minute above.

The meeting terminated at 6.55 pm