

Governance Committee
12 JUNE 2018

Present: Councillors: Andrew Baldwin, Toni Bradnum, Karen Burgess,
Peter Burgess, Philip Circus, David Coldwell, Leonard Crosbie,
Matthew French and Michael Willett

GO/1 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED

That Councillor Michael Willett be elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

GO/2 **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED

That Councillor David Coldwell be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Council year.

GO/3 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th August 2017 be approved as a correct record.

GO/4 **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

GO/5 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

GO/6 **CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION OF HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL**

The Monitoring Officer reported on a number of proposed variations to the Constitution that were considered necessary to address ambiguities and omissions that had become apparent in recent months. The report also referred to a suggestion that the name of this Committee should be changed to avoid confusion with the role of the Audit Committee, which was responsible for financial governance.

Members of the Committee considered that there was no need for a change of name as they were not aware of any confusion regarding the roles of the two Committees, whose respective functions were clearly set out in the Constitution.

The Committee then discussed the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations, which had inadvertently been omitted from the Constitution when it was adopted in December 2016, and proposed a number of minor amendments to the submitted document. The purpose of this Protocol was to provide guidance to Members and Officers of the Council in their relations with one another and it was considered essential that this should be reinstated in the Constitution.

The Committee also agreed amendments to Article 8 of the Constitution in respect of the formation of the Employment Committee and the Policy Development Advisory Groups for the purposes of clarity.

RESOLVED

That no change be made to the name of this Committee.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- (i) That the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations, as amended by the Committee and attached to these Minutes, be reinstated in the Constitution as Part 5d.
- (ii) That Article 8 of the Constitution (8.2 Other Committees and Bodies) be amended at parts a) and c) only to read as follows:
 - “a) Employment Committee (the Leader of the Council, the Chairman of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition Group or, if they are not available, a Member chosen from a pool of named substitutes)
 - b) ...
 - c) One Policy Development Advisory Group for each of the following portfolios: Community & Wellbeing; Finance & Assets; Leisure & Culture; Local Economy; Planning & Development; and Waste, Recycling & Cleansing (11 Members each including the Cabinet Member) (A variance in size (not exceeding 11) will be permitted by notification of group leaders and the subsequent assent of Council).
 - d) ...
 - e) ...”

REASON

To comply with Article 13, Review and Revision of the Constitution.

GO/7 **REVIEW OF THE FUNCTIONS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONSTITUTION OF PLANNING COMMITTEES AT HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL**

The Monitoring Officer reported that one major area that the Constitution Review Group had left for a later date was that of the function and responsibilities of the Planning Committees.

It was therefore proposed to undertake a review that would look at whether the current structure, scheme of delegation and processes were efficient and effective and whether they met the needs (current and future) of the Council and its customers. The review would also look at how decision making might be improved whilst allowing for democratic input into the process, relationships between officers and Members, and identifying good practice from elsewhere that might be transferable to the Council.

As part of the review it was proposed that Members and officers should visit at least two suitable local authorities that used a differing committee process in order to review and compare other practices and procedures. It was also proposed that the Planning Advisory Service should be engaged to undertake an independent peer review.

Members agreed that the Committee should undertake a genuine, fair and professional review, with no preconceptions, on the basis proposed by the Monitoring Officer. It was considered important that the Planning Committee process was efficient and effective for all those involved: Members, officers, residents and applicants. A review would provide an opportunity to see if the Council's current processes could be improved. It was agreed that the review should be completed in time to allow changes, if any were proposed, to be implemented from May 2019.

It was agreed that future meetings of the Committee would normally be held at 5.30pm and the next meeting would be held in July when a timetable for the review would be available.

RESOLVED

That a review of the functions, responsibilities and constitution of Planning Committees at Horsham District Council be approved, on the basis set out above.

REASON

To comply with Article 13.2 Review and Revision of the Constitution.

GO/8 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7.27 pm having commenced at 6.00 pm

CHAIRMAN