

Governance Committee
18 SEPTEMBER 2018

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

Also Present: Councillors: Paul Clarke, Godfrey Newman and Claire Vickers

GO/9 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12th June 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

GO/10 **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

GO/11 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

GO/12 **REVIEW OF THE FUNCTIONS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONSTITUTION OF PLANNING COMMITTEES AT HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL**

The Monitoring Officer gave an update on progress made in respect of the review of the function, responsibilities and constitution of Planning Committees at the Council.

The Planning Advisory Service had been engaged to undertake a peer review of the Planning Committee process and would be observing both the North and South Committees in November.

Consultation with other authorities had begun, with telephone interviews having been held with both Sevenoaks and Lewes District Councils. Arrangements were being made for a group visit to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and other authorities would be contacted with a view to carrying out further visits and/or interviews.

At present four possible planning committee options, all including the issue of training for members, were being considered:

- Status quo (i.e. all Members sitting on one of two area-based committees)
- Two area-based committees with number-limited membership

- Two committees – one for strategic/major applications and one for all other applications – with number-limited membership
- One committee for all applications with number-limited membership.

The pros and cons of these options would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee and other options or variations would also be considered if identified.

In addition to formal visits to other authorities, it was suggested that individual Committee Members could if they wished attend meetings of planning committees at nearby authorities as members of the public in order to observe proceedings.

An initial timeline for the review was reported, with the aim of submitting recommendations to Council in February 2019.

A number of useful documents would be made available to Committee Members, as suggested by the Chairman.

Some additional questions to be put to other authorities were agreed.

RESOLVED

That the progress made to date be noted.

REASON

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

GO/13 **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

The Committee received the report of the Chief Executive regarding a request that had been received from Southwater Parish Council to amend its parish boundary to take account of new housing development.

The last review of parishes and parish councils across the District had been completed in February 2013 and, as the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) suggested that it was good practice for principal councils to conduct such a review (a community governance review) every 10-15 years, the next major review was not due for some time. However, the LGBCE recognised that it was important that parish boundaries accurately reflected local communities and that it might be appropriate to carry out a smaller review between major reviews to adjust minor parish boundary anomalies.

It was therefore proposed that a community governance review of the parishes of Southwater and Shipley should be undertaken, with a view to implementing any changes at the next parish council elections in May 2019.

Councillor Claire Vickers, a ward Member for Southwater, supported the proposed review.

RESOLVED

- i) That a community governance review of the parishes of Southwater and Shipley be undertaken.
- ii) That the terms of reference and timetable for the review, as set out in the Appendix to the minutes be adopted.

REASON

It is timely to conduct a review now in accordance with Government and LGBCE guidance. The suggested timetable meets the requirement of completing a review within 12 months of its commencement.

GO/14 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 6.37 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN