

## **GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2014 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Mrs. Davison (Chairman)

Cllrs. Mrs. Cook and Mrs. Morris

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Fittock, London, Scholey **and Walshe**

### **31. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Governance Committee held on 29 January 2014 be approved and signed as a correct record.

### **32. Declarations of Interest**

No additional declarations of interest were made.

### **33. Actions arising from the last meeting**

There were none.

### **34. Community Governance Review**

The Electoral Services Manager presented a report which advised Members that District Councils were required to keep parish council governance under review.

Representations had been received from Shoreham and Chevening Parish Councils. A Community Governance review of the Sevenoaks District took place in 2012 which provided an opportunity to deal with requests and make recommendations in time for local government elections in May 2015.

Shoreham Parish Council proposed to create an additional ward and the proposal from Chevening Parish Council was to move the properties in Bowzell Green into the Sevenoaks Weald Parish Council. The terms of reference for the Community Governance review will include both proposals.

In response to questions the Electoral Services Manager explained that Chevening and Sevenoaks Weald Parish Councils would be consulted on the Bowzell Green proposal and, because there were cost implications in creating a new ward of Shoreham Parish, all households in the Parish of Shoreham would be written to.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council that

- a) a community governance review be undertaken in the Parish of Shoreham to investigate the creation of a new parish ward;
- b) a community governance review be undertaken to investigate the boundary between the parishes of Chevening and Sevenoaks Weald in the vicinity of Bowzell Green; and
- c) the terms of reference for the review as set out in Appendix C to the report, be adopted.

**35. Polling Districts and Polling Places Review**

The Electoral Services Manager presented a report informing Members that a review of polling districts and polling places was required by law to be carried out by 31 January 2015, ahead of the five yearly Parliamentary General election. The Council started the review on 25 November 2013 and some of the changes which had been identified would have to take effect at the European Parliamentary election in May this year.

In response to questions the Electoral Services Manager advised Members that if issues arose between the five yearly reviews, then ad hoc reviews could take place at any time to look for other polling venues.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council that the polling scheme shown as Appendix A to the report be approved.

**36. Review of New Governance Arrangements**

The Chief Officer Legal and Governance presented a report which set out that the Governance Committee had been tasked with reviewing the new governance arrangements which were introduced at Annual Council in May 2013 as well as looking at options for future governance. The report set out the Committee's final recommendations to Council.

The Committee expressed their thanks to the Head of Transformation and Strategy and his team for collating the responses to the Members' survey.

Resolved: That the implementation of the following recommendations be recommended to Council to take effect from the date of Annual Council on 13 May 2014:

- a) the Scrutiny Committee changes to a fixed membership of 9 members plus a Chairman and Vice Chairman with all members of the committee being independent of the Cabinet Advisory Committees;
- b) the membership of the Cabinet Advisory Committees increase from 10 members to 12 members including the relevant Cabinet and Deputy Cabinet Members on each of the Cabinet Advisory Committees;
- c) Members be able to sit on more than 1 Cabinet Advisory Committee;

- d) with the number of Cabinet Advisory Committees remaining at 5 the Committees should normally meet 4 times a year;
- e) the Advisory Committees be able to choose their own Chairman;
- f) the Governance Committee continue to investigate future Governance arrangements in general to allow the newly elected administration in 2015 to consider future governance;
- g) Portfolio Holders to individually present a report to each ordinary Full Council meeting in the same way the Chairmen of the Select Committees did previously; and
- h) a comprehensive training plan for Members be developed for implementation in May 2015.

i)

**37. Recorded Votes at Budget Meetings**

The Chief Officer Legal and Governance presented a report which advised Members that as a result of The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 all councils were now required to adopt the practice of recorded votes on any decision relating to the budget or council tax at the relevant budget setting meeting of Full Council and it would apply to any report or amendment at that budget meeting that has an implication for the setting of the budget.

Members were advised that as the change to Standing Orders was brought about by a change in legislation, the Monitoring Officer had delegated authority to ensure the Council's Constitution was updated to reflect the new requirement.

Resolved: That Council be recommended to note the requirement to hold a recorded vote at future budget setting meetings of Full Council.

**38. Recording of meetings**

The Chief Officer Legal and Governance presented a report which set out having a trial audio recording of the meetings of Full Council in May and July 2014. If these were successful then the recording of all Full Council, Development Control Committee and Licensing Hearings meetings could take place. She explained that there was a cost implication for keeping the recordings and that there would be a retention policy which would keep the recordings on the Council's network for a period of six months commencing on the day of the meeting. If a meeting were to last three hours and the recording was retained for six months the cost would be £20 per meeting.

Resolved: That Council be recommended to record Full Council meetings on a trial basis for the month of May and July 2014, and if successful Full Council ratify the roll out of recording all meetings of Full Council, Development Control Committee and Licensing Hearings.

**39. Work Plan**

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The Chairman suggested that the future work plan be looked at in July by which point there may have been a change to Membership.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.31 PM

CHAIRMAN