

Governance: Item 8

Governance Committee: Governance changes resulting from Democratic Services Savings and Removal of Prevention and Wellbeing Grants from County Local Committees

Governance changes resulting from Democratic Services Savings

Background

- 1 A savings target for Democratic Services of £378,000 was identified as part of the Council's two-year savings programme for 2016/17 and 2017/18. Following the work of an Executive Task and Finish Group (TFG) a number of options were identified. These were endorsed by the Performance and Finance Select Committee (PFSC) in June and agreed by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Relations in July. They include proposals for County Local Committees set out below which require approval by the County Council.
- 2 These proposals are part of a wider package of savings to the Democratic Services budget that seek to avoid any significant reduction in support to the Executive, to Scrutiny and non-Executive Committees.
- 3 The Governance Committee deferred a proposal relating to the chairmanship of the Planning and Rights of Way Committees to its next meeting on 28 November 2016, to be considered alongside the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel which will be before the Committee at that meeting. Any proposals arising will be brought to the next meeting of the County Council in December.

County Local Committees (CLCs)

- 4 The following proposals have been endorsed by the Governance Committee:
 - Reduce the number of CLCs from 14 to 11 from May 2017 by merging the two Crawley CLCs to form one and reducing from three to two CLCs in both Arun and Mid Sussex (a map showing the proposed boundaries for Arun and Mid Sussex is **shown at the Appendix**). This will provide a consistent approach across the county whereby the more rural areas (Arun, Chichester, Horsham and Mid Sussex) will have two CLCs and urban areas (Adur, Crawley and Worthing) will have one.
 - Reduce the number of meetings held by CLCs per year from four to three with effect from 2017/18.
- 5 These changes to CLCs received broad support through engagement with County Council members during May and June, and were endorsed by PFSC. Further engagement has been carried out with members for the affected areas (Arun, Crawley, Mid Sussex) as well as with local councils or committees and the proposals have been adjusted slightly as a result. The County Council currently receives income from Arun District Council to part fund the administration of the three Joint Area Committees. This will reduce proportionately. The District Council supports the proposals.

- 6 The Governance Committee has received an assurance that reducing the number of CLCs will not have an impact on the number of Traffic Regulation Orders available for implementation. In order to ensure that communities continue to be engaged in the local democratic process venues will be rotated and meetings will continue to be advertised through social media and other channels. Partnership working in the areas affected will be strengthened through close working and ongoing liaison with partners by the Council's Communities Directorate to address issues of local concern/need.

Recommended

- (1) That the number of County Local Committees be reduced from 14 to 11 with effect from May 2017 as set out in paragraph 4;
- (2) That the number of meetings of County Local Committees per year be reduced from four to three;

Removal of Prevention and Wellbeing Grants from County Local Committees

Background

- 7 Adults' Services grants were delegated from the then Cabinet Member for Adults' Services to County Local Committees (CLCs) with effect from April 2011. At that time the grants were drawn from a programme for Prevention and Wellbeing Grants with a total budget of £190,000. The 2016/17 budget allocation, as agreed at full Council in February 2016, has been reduced to £100,000 as a result of national Public Health Grant reductions and the grant could reduce further in future.
- 8 A review of the Council's support to the voluntary and community sector, with particular focus on current grant funding schemes was undertaken. The funds in scope for this piece of work include the Prevention and Wellbeing Grants, the Members' Big Society Fund and the Community Initiative Fund. The review considered the need to deliver efficiency, meet the aspirations of the Future West Sussex Plan and maximise the opportunities for voluntary and community organisations. It was concluded that a more flexible funding process would better support these aims.

Proposal

- 9 A streamlined grants process is being developed with a focus on easy access for potential applicants and an increased frequency of decision points for the Adults' Services grants. The Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing has therefore decided that the grants currently awarded annually by the CLCs should be awarded via a rolling monthly decision process undertaken by the Cabinet Member. Applications will be shared with the local member to ensure that they can inform the Cabinet Member decision. The Cabinet Member's decision was published on 24 August 2016 (decision [CW2\(16/17\)](#) refers).

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10 The Cabinet Member's decision requires a corresponding amendment to the role of CLCs by the deletion of terms of reference set out below:

2. To agree the distribution of County Council grants which have been delegated to the Committee including the following:
 - Grants for Adults' Services

Recommended

- (3) That, following the decision of the Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing to take back the function to determine Adults' Services Grant awards, the terms of reference of County Local Committees be amended as set out in paragraph 10 above.

Equality Duty

11 The need for an Equality Impact Report has been assessed. As these proposals largely deal with internal governance arrangements and budget changes that are not likely to have an impact on customers (and any potential impact is likely to be marginal) it is not considered that a report on impact for equality purposes is needed.

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Chairman of the Governance Committee

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Background Papers

None

Proposed boundaries of County Local Committees in Mid Sussex and Arun Districts

