

Governance Committee

14 May 2018 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 2.15 p.m. at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mr Barnard (Chairman), Mr Acraman, Mr Burrett, Ms Goldsmith, Mr Mitchell, Mrs Mullins, Mr R J Oakley, Mrs Sparkes and Dr Walsh.

Declarations of Interest

1. None declared.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

2. Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2018 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Notice of Motion: Women in Politics

3. The Committee considered a report by the Member Development Group (copy appended to the signed minutes) which set out the Group's consideration of the motion from Ms Lord that had been referred by the County Council on 16 February 2018 for consideration by the Governance Committee via the Group. The motion called for a project to investigate ways of encouraging more women to stand for election in 2021.
4. The report was introduced by Ms Kennard, Chairman of the Group, who reported that the Group had agreed that broadening diversity of the Council's membership should be a focus for the Group, including increasing the number of women councillors, as mentioned in the motion.
5. At the Chairman's invitation, Ms Lord addressed the Committee on the subject of the motion. She highlighted that women were generally underrepresented in all levels of government. Although West Sussex demonstrated some good practice, including a gender balanced Cabinet, women only accounted for a third of members. She recognised that there were some limits to what the Council could do to encourage women to stand for election, but hoped that the motion would stimulate work to be done ahead of the 2021 County Council election. Options such as improving the carer's allowance and the timings and scheduling of meetings could be explored.
6. The Committee agreed that broadening diversity of the Council's membership was something to be aspired to, although it was recognised that a lack of salary for the role made it difficult for working age people to stand. The Committee also noted the broader aspiration for tackling diversity rather than to focus on the gender balance. The 'Be a Councillor' work undertaken by Democratic Services to promote the role in 2017 was welcomed and it was hoped that this could be built on well ahead of the 2021 election.
7. Resolved – That the principles of the motion be supported, but with a

recommendation that the Member Development Group undertakes project work rather than a separate project group.

Adult and Children's Safeguarding Training for Elected Members

8. The Committee received a report by the Director of Law and Assurance (copy appended to the signed minutes) which asked the Committee to consider whether safeguarding training should be seen as mandatory for elected members and, if so, how this would best be achieved.

9. The Committee highlighted the importance of safeguarding training for members as something relevant to all members because of their local community role, the primary responsibilities of the Council of which they are members, as well as the issue being of particular relevance to members involved with adults and children's services as part of their roles. It was acknowledged, however, that anything made mandatory could not ultimately be enforced.

10. The Committee discussed how best to highlight the importance of such training and agreed that members should be required to attend safeguarding training within six months of this decision and that failure to undertake training should be reported to group leaders, who could take action they consider appropriate such as to not make such members available for or to remove members from any adults or children's services roles.

11. Mr Acraman asked that it be recorded that he voted against the proposal to use the term 'required'.

12. Resolved –

- (1) That safeguarding training relating to both adults and children be required for all West Sussex County Council elected members; and
- (2) That the relevant political group leader be informed of any member who does not complete the training within six months.

Report of the Member Development Group

13. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law and Assurance (copy appended to the signed minutes), which advised of the recent work of the Group.

14. The Committee welcomed the current programme but highlighted the need for officers to strike the right balance between presentation and member questions, avoiding overloading member development sessions. The Chairman of the Group agreed to investigate these issues at the next meeting of the Group.

15. Resolved – That the report be noted.

Report of Member Attendance May 2017-March 2018

16. The Committee was reminded that, as part of its terms of reference, it is

required to monitor attendance of members at meetings of the County Council and its committees annually. The Committee was asked to note a report by the Director of Law and Assurance on members' attendance for the period 1 May 2017 to 30 March 2018 (copy appended to the signed minutes). A suggestion was made that would make the document easier to read across.

17. Resolved – That members' attendance at Council, Committee and other meetings for the period 1 May 2017 to 30 March 2018 be noted.

Appointments to Committees, Panels and Outside Bodies

18. In accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Committee was asked to appoint members to serve on the committees, panels and outside bodies as set out in the report by the Director of Law and Assurance (copy appended to the signed minutes) in line with the expressed wishes of the political groups.

19. Resolved – That appointments to committees, panels and South East Employers be approved as set out in the note.

Report of Urgent Action

20. The Committee noted action taken by the Director of Law and Assurance, in consultation with the Chairman, as follows:

Response to Consultation on Crawley Borough Council's Electoral Boundary Review

Approval to the County Council's response to a consultation document from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on its electoral boundary review of Crawley Borough Council, as recommended by the Electoral Review Panel.

Date of Next Meeting

21. The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held at 2.15 p.m. on Monday, 25 June 2018.

The meeting ended at 3.31 p.m.

Chairman

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