Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of General Purposes Committee 24 November 2014 at 7.00pm

Present:

Councillor J Stanley (Chair)

Councillor R D Burrett (Vice-Chair)

Councillors M L Ayling, C A Cheshire, D G Crow, C R Eade, P K Lamb,

R A Lanzer, T Lunnon, C G Oxlade and L A Walker

Also in Attendance:

Councillor B A Smith (Chair of the Recording How Members Vote Scrutiny Panel)
Councillor M G Jones

Officers Present:

Ann-Maria Brown Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Heather Girling Democratic Services Officer Mez Matthews Democratic Services Officer

9. Members' Disclosure of Interests

No disclosures of interests were made by Members.

10. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29 September 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

11. Recording How Members Vote Scrutiny Panel Final Report

The Committee considered report OSC/222 of the Chair of the Recording How Members Vote Scrutiny Panel Final Report. The Scrutiny Panel had been established following a Scrutiny review request from a member of the public into how Members vote in Council meetings and how those votes were recorded. There was concern that having attended a Full Council meeting to present a petition, it had been unclear how the Councillors present had voted and that no clear records were always taken. The report presented the findings and recommendations of the Panel.

Councillor Smith, Chair of the Scrutiny Panel addressed the meeting and drew the Committees attention to the comments made by the Overview and Scrutiny

Commission at its meeting held on 10 November 2014 on the above report (comments are attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes).

The Committee considered the recommendations proposed by the Scrutiny Panel and made the following comments:

Public Gallery Observations at Council Meetings

The Committee was concerned that boards showing the layout of the Council Chamber would not be visible once members of the public were sat in the gallery and that, if they were to be introduced, they should be displayed on the walls by the gallery entrance. The Committee agreed that it would be more practical to provide A4 paper copies of the layouts (showing each Councillor's name, party and ward) with the Full Council papers.

Public Questions at Full Council Meetings

Some members of the Committee were concerned that the public view of the Chamber could be obscured if a lectern was erected at the front of the gallery from which members of the public could ask questions of the Full Council, and that it could also cause disruption as people would need to vacate their seat in order to stand at the lectern. It was acknowledged that a lectern could support members of the public who were nervous when addressing the Chamber. The Committee agreed that further investigation should take place on the ideal location for a lectern/platform.

Mayor / Chair of Full Council Meetings

The Committee agreed that the Mayor / Chair should give clear instructions and guidance on the matters identified in the Comments Sheet (attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes).

Recorded Votes on all Petitions at Full Council

It was recognised that petitions often generated public interest. Several Committee members were of the opinion that some votes relating to petitions were unanimous and therefore a recorded vote would only be necessary when the vote was not unanimous.

Recorded Votes on all Major Decisions at Full Council

The Committee questioned what type of decision could be deemed as "major". It was suggested that the Mayor should have the discretion to identify when a recorded vote was necessary, and it was acknowledged that any member of the Council could demand a recorded vote. It was agreed that where a vote on a substantive motion or recommendation was not unanimous a recorded vote should take place.

Web-Casting of Full Council Meetings

It was acknowledged that there was an emphasis on modern government to be open and transparent in its decision making and that certain Full Council decisions could attract high viewing numbers. It was also suggested that web-casting could modify behaviour at Full Council meetings. It was recognised that web-casting could however be costly to introduce and that information regarding the financial impact should be gained. The Committee agreed that further investigations be made into the value of using web-casting.

Electronic Voting

The Committee was of the view that, should the introduction of an electronic voting system be adopted, it was fundamental that any such system should immediately show how Councillors had voted. Appendix A to the report showed that several other local authorities had an electronic voting system but did not use it, although it was noted that the reasons for not using those systems was not known. Several

Committee members were of the opinion that an electronic voting system was not necessary, as confusion regarding how a Councillor had voted would be eliminated if Councillors clearly raised their hand when taking a show of hands vote, however several members of the Committee welcomed electronic voting as it would increase the openness and transparency of the Council's decision making and could minimise the mistakes which could occur with a show of hands vote. The Committee was concerned however that it could be costly to introduce an electronic voting system which would meet the Council's expectations. The majority of the Committee agreed that the Council continue to use a show of hands vote and that an electronic voting system not be introduced.

The Committee expressed concern at the effectiveness of the current sound system in the Council Chamber and suggested that the public's understanding of procedures would be greatly improved if the system were upgraded.

The Committee thanked Councillor Smith, members of the Scrutiny Panel and the Democratic Services Officer (HG) for a thorough review and detailed report, as well as the Overview and Scrutiny Commission for its comments.

RESOLVED

1. That:

- A4 paper copies showing the Council Chamber layout (including Councillors names, political party and ward) be included with Full Council papers;
- b) a lectern/platform be installed in the public gallery and that further investigation take place on its ideal location;
- further investigations be made into the value of using web-casting as a means of making the Council's decision making processes more accessible to the general public.

2. That Full Council be recommended that:

- a) the Mayor / Chair of a meeting give clear instructions to Councillors on the reasons for a vote being taken and should request that all Councillors indicate their intention clearly. The Mayor / Chair of a meeting also give clear guidance to members of the public when addressing questions to the Full Council and also to the Council Chamber itself. Instructions and guidance should also be clearly given when a vote is to be taken;
- b) petitions considered by Full Council be subject to a recorded vote where the decision is not unanimous;
- where a vote on a substantive motion or recommendation taken by Full Council on a major decision was not unanimous, a recorded vote will take place;
- the amendments to the Constitution proposed in Appendix 2 to these minutes be agreed to reflect the changes in relation to recommendations 2
 (a) (b) and (c) above.

12. Review of Terms of Reference of General Purposes Committee

Due to other commitments Councillor Oxlade left at this stage of the meeting.

The Committee considered report LDS/085 of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which reviewed the Committee's current Terms of Reference and proposed a number of amendments including changing the name of the Committee from "General Purposes Committee" to "Governance Committee". The Committee noted that the Audit and Governance Committee would be considering a similar report in terms of changing its Terms of Reference and its name to that of "Audit Committee" at its meeting to be held on 2 December 2014.

The Committee's attention was drawn to Paragraph 6.4 of the report which detailed the key proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Committee. The Committee was pleased to see the report before them and welcomed the changes for the reasons outlined in bullet points 1-3 of Paragraph 5.2 of the report. The Committee's attention was drawn to functions 6(f) and 6(g) of the proposed Governance responsibilities and noted that an additional function should be included to designate an officer as the Chief Finance Officer.

It was questioned whether matters relating to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 should be the responsibility of the proposed Governance Committee or whether it would be better placed with the proposed Audit Committee. The Committee was informed that the Act did not solely relate to anti-fraud and corruption matters as authorisations for surveillance could cover a number of Council functions. As it was acknowledged that such matters could easily sit with either of the proposed new Committees it was suggested that matters relating to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 remain the responsibility of the Governance Committee unless the Audit and Governance Committee felt otherwise at its meeting on 2 December 2014.

The Committee debated whether a review of the functions and responsibilities of the Performance Monitoring Scrutiny Panel should be undertaken, however the Committee was reminded that the future of the Panel was not a consideration for the Committee as it was the responsibility of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

The Committee thanked the Head of Legal and Democratic Services for the report.

RESOLVED

That the Full Council be recommended to approve the revised Terms of Reference for the Committee including the change of name from General Purposes Committee to Governance Committee as set out in Appendix 3 to these minutes, subject to the approval of report LDS/084 by the Audit and Governance Committee at its meeting on 2 December 2014.

Note by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services:

At its meeting on 2 December 2014, the Audit and Governance Committee considered that matters relating to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 would be better placed with the proposed Audit Committee. Full Council is therefore recommended to approve the revised Terms of Reference for the General Purposes Committee, including the change of name from General Purposes Committee to Governance Committee, as set out in Appendix 3 to these minutes subject to the deletion of function 7(c) of the proposed Governance Committee ("to consider matters relating to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000").

13. Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Committee concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at $8.45 \, \mathrm{pm}$.

J STANLEY Chair

APPENDIX 1

Comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on Recording How Members Vote Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on Monday 10 November 2014 OSC/230

1. Agenda Item 8 – Recording How Members Vote Scrutiny Panel

Comments and Recommendations

The Commission held a discussion on Report OSC/222 with the Chair of the Recording How Members Vote Scrutiny Panel.

Members endorsed the following recommendations -

6.3a Public Gallery Observations at Council Meetings

Boards could be produced that show the layout of the Council chamber which would provide the names of the Councillors and their Wards together with Officers identified by their position in the Council.

There was an additional proposal that the layouts could be provided in A4 paper format and could be included with the Full Council papers provided in the Public Gallery.

6.3b **Public Questions at Full Council Meetings**

A lectern/platform be installed on the rail at the front of the public gallery, with a microphone attached.

It was noted that an investigation should take place on the ideal location for a lectern/platform.

6.3c Mayor/Chair of Full Council Meetings

The Mayor or Chair of a meeting should give clear instructions to Members on the reason for a vote being taken and should request all Members to indicate their intentions clearly. The Mayor/Chair of a meeting should also give clear guidance to members of the public when addressing questions to the Full Council and also to the Council Chamber itself. Instructions and guidance should also be clearly given when a vote is to be taken.

6.3g Recorded Votes on all Petitions at Full Council

Request that all petitions brought to Full Council should be subject to a recorded vote.

6.3h Recorded Votes on all Major Decisions at Full Council

Request that all major decisions made by Full Council should be subject to a recorded vote.

6.3i Web-casting of Full Council Meetings

Request that further investigations be made into the value of using web casting as a means of making the Council's decision making processes more accessible to the general public.

There was support in principle for continued investigation into webcasting. A report was submitted to General Purposes Committee on 25 June 2012 regarding Webcasting of Council Meetings. The Overview and Scrutiny Commission proposed that the General Purposes Committee re-investigate the possibility and a summary be provided of the practical and cost implications together with the advantages and disadvantages.

With regard to the proposed process of electronic voting, the Chair invited Members of the Commission to vote on the recommendations to pursue Electronic Voting. The General Purposes Committee is to be advised that five Members opposed electronic voting – opting to remain with the current system, whilst four Members voted in favour.

As a result, Members did not fully support the recommendations 6.4d - f, which all related to the electronic voting process proposed and therefore the current voting system would remain in place.

Councillor B A Smith
Chair, Recording How Members Vote Scrutiny Panel
10 November 2014

CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

APPENDIX 2

<u>Function</u>	Proposed amendment
	Where appropriate: Deleted wording is shown as crossed through Additional wording is shown in bold
Council Procedure Rules (Questions by the Public) – Page 162	Amend Paragraph 9.1 (General) to read as follows: "Members of the public may ask questions at ordinary meetings of the Full Council. The
	Mayor will provide clear guidance to members of the public (and those present) when addressing questions to the Full Council."
Council Procedure Rules (Petitions) – Page 164	Insert the following paragraph under Paragraph 11 (Petitions):
	11.4 All petitions considered by the Full Council will be subject to a recorded vote where the decision is not unanimous.
Council Procedure Rules (Voting) – Page 171	Amend Paragraph 17 (Voting) to read as detailed in Appendix 2a.
Crawley Borough Council Petitions Scheme – Page 454	Insert the following sentence to the last paragraph on page 454 (Full Council Debates):
	"All petitions considered by Full Council will be subject to a recorded vote where the decision is not unanimous."

APPENDIX 2a

17. VOTING

17.1. Procedure

The Mayor will give clear instructions and guidance when a vote is to be taken. The Mayor will give clear instructions on the reasons for a vote and will request that all members indicate their voting intentions clearly.

17.2. Majority

Unless this Constitution provides otherwise, any matter will be decided by a simple majority of those members voting and present in the room at the time the question was put.

The Mayor will ascertain the numbers voting for or against any question, shall announce those numbers and declare the result. His/her declaration as to the result will be final.

17.3. Mayor's Casting Vote

If there are equal numbers of votes for and against, the Mayor or the person presiding will have a second or casting vote. There will be no restriction on how the Mayor chooses to exercise a casting vote.

17.4. Show of Hands

Unless a recorded vote is demanded under Rule 17.4, the Mayor will take the vote by show of hands, or if there is no dissent, by the affirmation of the meeting. **All members should indicate their voting intentions by clearly raising their hand.**

17.5. Recorded Vote

All petitions considered by Full Council will be subject to a recorded vote where the decision is not unanimous. Where a vote on a substantive motion or recommendation taken by Full Council on a major decision is not unanimous, a recorded vote will take place.

If any member present at the meeting demands it, the names for and against the motion or amendment or abstaining from voting will be taken down in writing and entered into the minutes.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, the Council at its annual budget meetings is required to undertake a recorded vote when voting on any decision relating to the Annual Budget and Council Tax. This includes any amendments proposed at the meeting, substantive budget motions to agree the budget, and setting council taxes, including precepts.

17.6. Right to Require Individual Vote to be Recorded

Where any member requests it immediately after the vote is taken, their vote will be so recorded in the minutes to show whether they voted for or against the motion or abstained from voting.

17.7. Voting on Appointments

If there are more than two people nominated for any position to be filled and there is not a clear majority of votes in favour of one person, then the name of the person with the least number of votes will be taken off the list and a new vote taken. The process will continue until there is a majority of votes for one person.

APPENDIX 3

RESPONSIBILITY FOR COUNCIL FUNCTIONS GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The role of the Governance Committee

The Governance Committee will deal with Constitutional matters, the Conduct of Members, Political Management Arrangements, Corporate Governance, Members' Allowances, Elections and all non-Executive functions not specifically delegated to another Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council.

The powers and duties of the Council relating to the functions set out below are delegated to the Governance Committee

Membership: Councillors: J Stanley (Chair), R D Burrett (Vice Chair), M L Ayling, C A Cheshire, D G Crow, C R Eade, P K Lamb, R A Lanzer, T Lunnon, C Oxlade and L A Walker (substitute Councillors – I T Irvine and vacancy)

Functions of the Governance Committee	Delegation of Functions (concurrently with the Governance Committee)
 (1) Functions relating to elections (a) Power to assign employees in relation to the requisitions of the registration officer 	This function is delegated to the Electoral Services Manager
(b) Duty to provide assistance at European Parliamentary Elections	This function is delegated to the Local Returning Officer
(c) Duty to divide the constituency into polling districts*	

Functions of the Governance Committee	Delegation of Functions (concurrently with the Governance Committee)
(d) Power to divide electoral divisions into polling districts at local government elections*	
(e) Powers in respect of holding elections	This function is delegated to the Returning Officer
 (f) Power to pay expenses properly incurred by electoral registration officers 	This function is delegated to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services
(g) Power to fill vacancies in the event of insufficient nominations*	
(h) Duty to declare vacancy in office in certain cases*	
(i) Duty to give public notice of a casual vacancy	This function is delegated to the Returning Officer
 (j) Power to determine fees and conditions for supply of copies of, or extracts from, elections documents 	This function is delegated to the Returning Officer
(k) Making a request for single-member electoral areas (relating to Section 14A(1) of the Local Government Act 1992)*	
(I) Duty to consult on change of scheme for elections (relating to Sections 33(2), 38(2) and 40(2) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007)	
(m) Power to pass a resolution to change a scheme for elections (under section 32(1), 37(1) or 39(1) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007)*	

Delegation of Functions (concurrently with the Governance Committee)

- (n) Duties relating to publicity (relating to Sections 35, 41 and 52 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007)
- This function is delegated to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services
- (o) Duties relating to notice to Electoral Commission (relating to Sections 36 and 42 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007)
- This function is delegated to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services
- (p) Functions relating to change of name of electoral area (relating to Section 59 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007)*

(2) Functions relating to a change in governance arrangements

- (a) Take decision whether to change governance arrangements (Local Government Act 2000)*
- (b) Duty to comply with direction given by the Secretary of State (The Local Government Act 2000)

This function is delegated to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services

- (c) Take decision whether a change of the kind set out in Section 9MA and 9MB of the Act should be subject to approval in a referendum under 9M of the Local Government Act 2000 *
- (d) Duty to hold referendum (The Local Government Act 2000)

This function is delegated to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services

^{*} These matters may be considered by the Governance Committee but shall be referred to the Council for determination

Delegation of Functions (concurrently with the Governance Committee)

- (e) Duty to publish notice if proposals not approved in referendum (The Local Government Act 2000)
- This function is delegated to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services

- (f) Duty to deal with a referendum by Petition*
- (g) Duty to implement new governance arrangements (The Local Government Act 2000)

This function is delegated to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services

(3) Functions relating to community governance reviews

- (a) Duties relating to community governance reviews (relating to Section 79 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007)*
- (b) Functions relating to community governance petitions (relating to Sections 80, 83, 84 and 85 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007)
- This function is delegated to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services
- (c) Functions relating to terms of reference of review (relating to Sections 81(4) to (6) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007)*
- (d) Power to undertake a community governance review (relating to Section 82 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007)*

^{*}These matters may be considered by the Governance Committee but shall be referred to the Council for determination.

Delegation of Functions (concurrently with the Governance Committee)

- (e) Functions relating to making of recommendations (relating to Sections 87 to 92 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007)*
- (f) Duties when undertaking a review (relating to Sections 93 to 95 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007)*
- (g) Duty to publicise the outcome of a review (relating to Section 96 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007)
- (h) Duty to send two copies of the order to the Secretary of State and Electoral Commission (relating to Section 98(1) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007)
- (i) Making an order giving effect to recommendations made in a community governance review (under Section 86 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007)*
- (j) Power to make agreements about incidental matters (relating to Section 99 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007)*

This function is delegated to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services

This function is delegated to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services

^{*}These matters may be considered by the Governance Committee but shall be referred to the Council for determination

Delegation of Functions (concurrently with the Governance Committee)

(4) Standards Functions

- (a) Duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by:
 - (i) Members and Co-opted Members of the Council and
 - (ii) Employees
- (b) *Duty to adopt a Code of Conduct dealing with the Conduct expected of Members and Co-opted Members of the Council when acting in that capacity and including provision in respect of the registration and disclosure of (i) pecuniary interests and (ii) interests other than pecuniary interests.
- (c) Power to revise the existing Code of Conduct or adopt a replacement Code of Conduct.
- (d) * Duty to appoint one or more Independent Persons for the following purposes:-
 - (i) To give the Council views on any allegations it has decided to investigate, before a decision is reached;
 - (ii) At the discretion of the Council, to give the Council views on any other allegations; and
 - (iii) At the discretion of a Member or Co-opted Member to give the Member views on any allegations relating to the behaviour of the Member
- (e) *Power to make Standing Orders to provide for the exclusion of a Member or Co-opted Member of the Council from a meeting while any discussion or vote takes place in which that person may not participate.

- (f) Power to grant a Member or Co-opted member a dispensation from the restriction on speaking and/or voting when any matter in which that person has a disclosable pecuniary interest is to be considered at a meeting of the Council or any of its committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint subcommittees.
- (g) To provide advice, guidance and to ensure that all Members and employees have access to training in all aspects of their respective Code of Conduct that this training is actively promoted and that Members are aware of the Standards expected of Members under the Code of Conduct.
- (h) To establish and maintain a Register of Interests.

Delegation of Functions (concurrently with the Governance Committee)

The following functions are delegated to the Monitoring Officer

- (i) Receipt of written applications for Dispensations under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011.
- (ii) To grant applications for Dispensations pursuant to the provisions in Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011.
- (iii) the discretion to refer applications for Dispensations to the Governance Committee if considered appropriate following consultation with the Independent Person.

The following functions are delegated to the Monitoring Officer

- (i) Duty to establish and maintain a register of interests of Members and Co-opted Members of the Council
- (ii) Power to remove entries from the register of interests once the person concerned no longer had the interest or is no longer a Member or Co-opted Member of the Council
- (iii) Duty to make a register of interests available to public inspection and publish this on the Council's website
- (iv) Duty to register disclosable pecuniary interests which are notified by a Member or Co-opted Member to the Monitoring Officer pursuant to section 31 of the Localism Act 2011 after arising and being declared at a meeting.

- (i) Power to exclude the details of sensitive interests from the register of interests
- (j) To consider any application for officer exemptions from political restriction (under Section 3A of The Local Government and Housing Act 1989) or give directions to include a post in the list and adjustment to the list of politically restricted posts to reflect changes in salary level and to reflect changes in responsibilities.
 - NB (a) items above marked * although can be considered by this Committee they can only be discharged by the Full Council
- (5) To Monitor and Review the Corporate Governance of the Council including giving consideration of the Authority's Annual Governance Statement.*
 - * The Audit Committee will retain responsibility for approval of the Annual Governance Statement as part of the approval of the Council's Annual Accounts.
- (6) The following matters may be considered by the Governance Committee but shall be referred to the Council for determination:
 - (a) The promotion of or opposition to local or personal Bills
 - (b) The Members' Allowances Scheme

Delegation of Functions (concurrently with the Governance Committee)

<u>The following function is delegated to the Monitoring Officer</u>

Power to exclude the details of sensitive interests from the register of interests

The following function is delegated to the Head of People and Technology

To consider any application for officer exemptions from political restriction (under Section 3A of The Local Government and Housing Act 1989) or give directions to include a post in the list and adjustment to the list of politically restricted posts to reflect changes in salary level and to reflect changes in responsibilities.

- (c) Proposals for the monitoring, review and adoption of, and changes to the Constitution (except where it relates to the Scheme of Delegation for Cabinet functions in which case it will be delegated to the Leader).
- (d) The making, amendment, revocation or re-enactment of byelaws
- (e) The appointment of employees for particular purposes (appointment of "proper officers")
- (f) The designation of an officer as the head of the authority's paid service, and the provision of staff, etc. (Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989)
- (g) The designation of an officer as the Monitoring Officer, and the provision of staff, etc. (Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989)
- (h) The designation of an officer as the Chief Finance Officer, and the provision of staff, etc. (Section 114 of the Local Government Act 1988; and Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972)
- (i) Powers relating to Overview and Scrutiny Committees (voting rights of co-opted members) under Paragraphs 12 and 14 of Schedule 1 to the Local Government Act 2000

Delegation of Functions (concurrently with the Governance Committee)

This function is delegated to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services

To make changes as a result of legislative changes and clerical and typographical corrections to the Constitution

This function is delegated to the appropriate Head of Service and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services

The enforcement of byelaws

Delegation of Functions (concurrently with the Governance Committee)

(7) Other Functions

- (a) Other than in the case of functions which are the responsibility of the Cabinet, decisions relating to the contracting out of a function or service (in accordance with the De Regulation and Contracting Out Act 1994) and to whom to award the contract together with the function of revoking such a contract.
- (b) To consider matters referred to the Committee in relation to petitions submitted under the Crawley Borough Council Petition Scheme.
- (c) To consider matters relating to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.