

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Governance Committee

Monday, 11 September 2023 at 7.00 pm

Councillors Present:

P K Lamb (Chair)

J Bounds (Vice-Chair)

D Crow, G S Jhans, M G Jones, R A Lanzer, T Lunnon, K McCarthy, S Pritchard, T Rana and S Sivarajah

Officers Present:

Mez Matthews

Democratic Services Officer

Chris Pedlow

Democracy & Data Manager

Jill Rozier

Lead Electoral Services Officer

Apology for Absence:

Councillor C M Burke

1. Disclosures of Interest

No disclosures of interests were made.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Governance Committee held on 13 June 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Public Question Time

No questions were asked by the public.

4. Reviews of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations (2023)

The Committee considered report [LDS/207](#) of the Head of Governance, People & Performance which informed the Committee of the arrangements for the statutory review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Station that must be undertaken before 31 January 2025.

The Returning Officer had highlighted several issues with the current Polling Scheme which they believed would need consideration as part of the Review.

Concern was expressed by the Committee that, due to a change in The Mill School's safety protocol, the exterior gates to the car park had remained closed during Polling Day in May 2023 which had meant that voters with waking difficulties, or requiring disabled parking, were not able to park near the venue. The Democracy & Data Manager confirmed they had only become aware of the change in protocol on the morning of the Poll. There was consensus amongst the Committee that further work should be undertaken to ensure parking would be available on Polling Day for those schools which would be designated Polling Places and, where parking would not be provided, the use of alternative Polling venues should be investigated.

The Committee discussed the possibility of altering the boundary between Three Bridges and Furnace Green Wards to include The Hawth into Three Bridges Ward. Whilst the Committee acknowledged that it was best practice for a Polling Place to be located within the Ward it was serving (where possible) and a change in boundary would not result in changing the Ward of residential properties, the Committee expressed no appetite for moving the boundary between those Wards.

A discussion took place regarding the issues experienced and cost incurred when Creasys Drive former Adventure Playground site was used as the Polling Place for Poling District LBB for the May 2023 election. Various views were expressed in relation to the possible Polling Place options.

Whilst the Committee had expressed some initial views, it confirmed it would reserve judgement until its meeting in November, when it would consider comments received from the consultation and a proposed Polling Scheme. The Committee expressed its support for the arrangements for the Review as set out in Paragraph 4 of the report.

RESOLVED

That the Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations be agreed and conducted as set out in paragraph 4 of report LDS/207.

5. Date of Next Committee Meeting

The Committee was reminded that the next meeting of the Governance Committee would now be held on 28 November 2023.

Following a query from the Committee, assurance was given that the revised date would allow for the conclusion of the consultation on Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations and consideration of its findings. A report setting out a proposed Polling Scheme would then be brought to that meeting of the Governance Committee for its consideration requesting that it provide a recommendation on the matter to the December meeting of the Full Council.

RESOLVED

Noted that the next meeting of the Governance Committee would take place on 28 November 2023.

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Governance Committee concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.42 pm

P K Lamb (Chair)