

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Governance Committee

Monday, 14 January 2019 at 7.00 pm

Councillors Present:

T Lunnon (Chair)

R D Burrett (Vice-Chair)

D Crow, C R Eade, R S Fiveash, M G Jones, P K Lamb, R A Lanzer, K McCarthy and B J Quinn

Also in Attendance:

Councillor

Officers Present:

Natalie Brahma-Pearl	Chief Executive
Ann-Maria Brown	Head of Legal, Democracy and HR
Mez Matthews	Democratic Services Officer
Andrew Oakley	Electoral Services Manager

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor K Sudan

1 Disclosures of Interest

No disclosures of interests were made.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Governance Committee held on 13 November 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Polling District Review: Final Proposals

The Committee considered report LDS/148 of the Head of Legal, Democracy and HR, the purpose of which was to consider the final proposals on future polling arrangements for Crawley. The review had been required to take account of ward boundary changes made by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England review of electoral arrangements in Crawley as well as being combined with the statutory review of Polling Districts.

The Electoral Services Manager presented the report and advised the Committee that, following discussions with Forge Wood Primary School, the school had agreed that its premises would accommodate a polling station for Forge Wood Ward if its safeguarding requirements could be satisfied.

The Committee acknowledged that the Council avoided using school premises as polling places where possible, however it noted that whilst Forge Wood Ward was still under construction, Forge Wood School had a limited number of pupils and therefore had sufficient available space which could be used without having to close the school. The Electoral Services Manager clarified that the use of Forge Wood School was expected to be a temporary measure and that it was envisaged that once Forge Wood Community Centre had been built, that would become the permanent polling station for Polling District LJC. The Committee was in support of Forge Wood School being used as a polling place for Polling District LJC in the interim.

The Chief Executive advised the Committee that she had been in discussion with the Brook School, as the school objected to the use of its premises as a polling place for Polling District LHA for Maidenbower Ward. Although several options had been discussed with the school, a solution had not been found which would allow the premises to be used without the full closure of the school on Election days. The Chief Executive highlighted the current uncertainty at Central Government level and advised that four elections could potentially be called at short notice. Should any such elections be called, the Chief Executive advised the Committee that a portacabin would need to be used as a polling place, as the school would not have planned for those closures and it would not be reasonable to expect the school to close in those circumstances.

Following a query from a Committee Member, the Electoral Services Manager agreed to verify and, if necessary, correct the postal vote numbers for Furnace Green Ward.

The Committee discussed the polling arrangements for Three Bridges Ward , and it was suggested that Crawley Library would be a suitable alternative polling place for Polling District LMD and it was requested that, once development of the Town Hall had begun and the Civic Hall was no longer available, that option be considered further. A Committee Member was of the view that Three Bridges Ward did not require four polling places, however other Members were of the view that the proposals for Three Bridges Ward were reasonable.

Amendment

It was moved by Councillor Crow (seconded by Councillor McCarthy) that the Holiday Inn polling place for Three Bridges Ward be deleted and that the polling place for Polling District LMC be at the Three Bridges Community Centre, Gales Place.

The amendment upon being put to the Committee, was declared to be LOST.

The Committee then voted unanimously to agree the recommendation as set out in report LDS/148.

The Committee expressed its thanks to the Electoral Review Working Group and the Electoral Services Manager for their hard work and for conducting such a thorough review of the Polling District.

RESOLVED

That the Full Council be recommended to approve the polling arrangements as set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

4. Changes to the Constitution

The Committee considered report LDS/147 of the Head of Legal, Democracy and HR which proposed a change to the Council Procedure Rules.

The Committee was reminded that the current wording of Paragraph 2.2(a) of the Council Procedure Rule had been agreed by the Governance Committee on 19 June 2018 (report LDS/140 refers) and the subsequent Full Council. That change had been introduced in readiness for the Full Council meeting which would take place in the Charis Centre whilst the Town Hall site was being redeveloped. However, development of the Town Hall site had been delayed until Summer 2019 and Full Council meetings would continue to take place in the Council Chamber until that date. Therefore the proposed change only enacted a guillotine when Full Council meetings were held outside of the Town Hall.

Amendment

It was moved by Councillor Lunnon (seconded by Councillor Burrett) that, for ease of reading, the proposed change to Paragraph 2.2(a) of the Council Procedure Rules be amended to read as follows:

“If the business of the Council meeting has not been concluded within two and a half hours, unless the majority of Members present vote for the meeting to continue for a period up to 30 minutes if required, the following procedure will be implemented. Following the meeting’s initial extension, consideration will be given to extending the meeting by further periods of up to 30 minutes if required. **However, if the Full Council is held outside of the Town Hall** no further extensions may be called to extend the meeting beyond 11.00pm when the guillotine will come into effect”.

The amendment upon being put to the Committee, was declared to be CARRIED.

RESOLVED

That the Full Council be recommended to approve the change to the Constitution below:

<u>Function</u>	<u>Proposed amendment</u>	<u>Reason for amendment</u>
	Where appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deleted wording is shown as crossed through Additional wording is shown in bold 	
Council Procedure Rules – Page165 (Councillors Burrett and Lunnon)	Amend paragraph 2.2(a) “Duration of Meeting: Guillotine (Concluding the Meeting)” as follows: “(a) <i>Concluding the Meeting</i> If the business of the Council meeting has not been concluded	When Full Council meetings are held at the Town Hall there is no requirement to conclude the meeting by a certain time. However, the current guillotine is required for

<u>Function</u>	<u>Proposed amendment</u>	<u>Reason for amendment</u>
	<p>Where appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deleted wording is shown as crossed through Additional wording is shown in bold 	
	<p>within two and a half hours, unless the majority of Members present vote for the meeting to continue for a period up to 30 minutes if required, the following procedure will be implemented. Following the meeting's initial extension, consideration will be given to extending the meeting by further periods of up to 30 minutes if required. However, if the Full Council is held outside of the Town Hall no further extensions may be called to extend the meeting beyond 11.00pm when the guillotine will come into effect".</p>	<p>other venues such as the Charis Centre as the building closes at 11.30pm.</p>

5. Constitution Review Working Group Update

Councillor Lamb, as Chair of the Constitution Review Working Group, provided a verbal update on the comprehensive review of the Constitution which had been established by the Committee at its meeting on 15 March 2017 (report LDS/126 refers).

Tranche 1 and 2 of the re-drafted sections of the Constitution had been sent to the Working Group for their comments, with a response deadline of 3 February 2019. Tranche 3 of the re-drafted sections had been sent to him for comment and it was anticipated that this Tranche would be circulated via email to the Working Group shortly. The aim was to send the final Tranche (Tranche 4) to Chair by mid-February, with a view to sending it electronically to the Working Group by the end of February 2019.

Councillor Lamb advised that due to the distribution deadlines of the next Governance Committee (5th March), and the need to ensure 'buy-in' from the Groups, it was not deemed feasible that the new Constitution be considered by Governance Committee before its submission to the 3 April 2019 meeting of the Full Council for approval as had been previously anticipated. Councillor Lamb therefore proposed that once finalised, the new Constitution be considered by the Full Council at its AGM on 24 May 2019 for adoption. He suggested that a meeting of the Working Group be arranged to consider any outstanding issues prior to that Full Council meeting. Following that Working Group meeting, a draft combined version of the new Constitution would be circulated to the Working Group for its agreement. Democratic Services would also be able to attend Group meetings to discuss the new Constitution if that was requested.

The Committee noted the update provided by Councillor Lamb and agreed that the new Constitution be submitted straight to the Full Council at its AGM on 24th May 2019. The Committee acknowledged that in agreeing to that arrangement, the new Constitution would not be considered by the Governance Committee prior to its submission to the Full Council AGM. In taking this approach, there was general consensus that, as cross-party agreement would have been sought prior to the new Constitution's submission to the AGM, no substantive debate should be required by Full Council on the matter.

RESOLVED

1. That the updated provided by the Chair of the Constitution Review Working Group be noted.
2. That the new Constitution be submitted directly to the Full Council AGM on 24 May 2019 for adoption.

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Governance Committee concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.30 pm

T Lunnon
Chair