

COUNCIL

21 NOVEMBER 2017

REPORT OF HEAD OF GOVERNANCE AND LEGAL SERVICES

A.6 COMMITTEE STRUCTURE REVIEW

(Report prepared by Ian Ford)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To agree the principles for a new committee structure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council, at its meeting held on 5 September 2017 (Minute 66 refers), considered a report of the Head of Leadership Support and Community (A.5) which had provided details of the final recommendations from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) of a review of district wards, an update on Community Governance Reviews for Town and Parish Councils and to seek approval to undertake further work to put in place arrangements for a reduced council size in 2019.

Council **RESOLVED** that:-

- f) *the final recommendations on new electoral arrangements for Tendring District Council be noted;*
- g) *a Community Governance Review be undertaken in relation to the land in the St Osyth District Council area but not in the St Osyth Parish area;*
- h) *in principle, a wider Community Governance Review of parished and unparished areas in the Tendring District be supported subject to specific terms of reference, having regard to the initial views which are currently being sought, coming to a future meeting of Council for agreement;*
- i) *officers are authorised to commence a review of meeting arrangements, Cabinet and committee size, frequency and make-up in preparation for the reduction to 48 Councillors in 2019; and*
- j) *that, at an appropriate time following the 2019 District Elections, this Council writes to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and asks for a further Electoral Review of the Tendring District with a specific request that they look again at the decision to recommend a two member ward of St Bartholomews rather than two single member wards of St Bartholomews and Haven as requested by the Council.*

At the meeting of the Electoral Review Working Group held on 7 November 2017, initial proposals were submitted for discussion in relation to the review of Committees in preparation for the reduction in the total number of Councillors to 48 from 2019. The key proposals were:-

- Two Overview and Scrutiny Committees - with task and finish groups focused on evidence based reviews.
- Presentations and providing information to all Members will remain through the all Member briefings (not formal meetings, but provides the ability to ask questions).
- A single Governance Committee incorporating the existing Audit and Standards Committees.
- Two Licensing sub-committees reduced from the current four.

- A combined Human Resources and Council Tax Committee able to consider senior management appointments and dismissals as well as the impact of emergency planning on staff.
- Titles were for working purposes and formal Committee titles would need to be decided in due course.

The following timetable was proposed by the Working Group:-

- Consideration by Electoral Review Working Group – 7 November 2017;
- Consideration by Full Council and agreement to an “in principle” new committee structure – 21 November 2017;
- Consideration by Electoral Review Working Group of the proposed terms of reference, size and committee names etc. – Early January 2018;
- Consideration by Full Council of terms of reference etc. for the new committees – 23 January 2018;
- Implementation of new committee structure – Annual Council 24 April 2018 (seats to be allocated to new committees based on existing 60 Councillors);
- Operation of new Committees to be monitored during 2018;
- Any necessary amendments to terms of reference and appointments to committees based on new Council of 48 Councillors – Annual Council 2019.

The Working Group discussed issues including:-

- whether to have a member of an “Opposition” Group as chairman of the “inward facing” overview and scrutiny committee;
- cross-membership of the Local Plan and Planning Committees;
- the number of meetings in a municipal year of the “inward facing” overview and scrutiny committee;
- the possibility of the Planning Committee meeting in the daytime;
- the size of the committees and especially making sure that the overview and scrutiny committees were large enough to form a pool of potential members of the “task and finish” working groups;
- external input on the workings of the new committee structure;
- the importance of keeping a human resources committee (albeit with a smaller membership than at present); and
- how the overview and scrutiny “task and finish” working groups could operate.

The Working Group **AGREED** that The Centre for Public Scrutiny and/or SOLACE be invited, in Summer 2018, to give their input on the Council’s new committee structure once it has been in operation for a few months.

Having considered the proposed committee structure the Working Group decided to recommend to Council that –

- the proposed new committee structure be approved, in principle; and
- the proposed timetable for the implementation of the new committee structure be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended to Council that:-

- the proposed committee structure, as set out in the Appendix to this report, be approved, in principle; and**

b) the proposed timetable for the implementation of the new committee structure, as detailed in the Executive Summary, be adopted.

PART 2 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR THE DECISION

None

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Proposed new committee structure