

Chichester District Council

Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

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Governance Review - Terms of Reference

Contacts

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1. Recommendation

1.1. The committee are asked to agree the terms of reference for a Task and Finish group to review the Governance arrangements of the Council as attached at Appendix 1.

1.2. The committee are asked to appoint members to the Task and Finish group in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

2. Background

2.1. In January Council considered a motion regarding the future governance arrangements, and resolved:

This Council resolves to establish an Officers and Members Working Group to review the operational model of the Council. The Working Group shall review the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny's 'Rethinking Council Governance for the 20s' paper and consider how to:

- maximise councillor involvement in decision making
- build upon the experience of the Recovery Groups to promote consensual working
- offer continued financial acumen
- provide a strong role for scrutiny and governance
- ensure speed of decision making
- provide open and accountable democracy
- make the most of opportunities to work effectively with residents and local partners

The politically balanced working group, led by Corporate Governance, will commence once the current effects of Covid have finished with the aim to report to Council in the 2021/22 Council year with agreed recommendations to be introduced at the Council's 2022 Annual Meeting.

Recognising that a change from a 'Leader and Cabinet' model of governance to a formal Committee System is complex, resource-intensive and undesirable given our circumstances, the Working Group will make recommendations that could be introduced to deliver a 'best of both worlds' 'Hybrid' model.

2.2. Previously the Council had also committed to conduct a review of the timing of meetings, with any changes to be introduced for the new Council following the

2023 elections. It is felt appropriate that this issue is considered by the same Task and Finish group.

2.3. In addition, it would be an opportune time for the T&F group to consider some broader issues regarding the running of council meetings, including whether to hold hybrid meetings when permitted to do so, the scheme of delegation to officers and members, and other aspects of running a meeting such as public questions and questions to the executive.

3. Outcomes to be Achieved

3.1. To complete the review of governance as agreed at Council, and make appropriate recommendations on any proposed changes to come into effect from May 2022.

3.2. To ensure that committee and council meetings continue to run as effectively as possible, and make recommendations regarding improvements that could be implemented either from May 2022, or sooner if appropriate.

3.3. To review the timing of meetings and make recommendations in time for the new Council commencing May 2023.

4. Proposal

4.1. The T&F group should meet three or four times during 2021 to complete their review, or more frequently if necessary. Recommendations to be reported in time for implementation for May 2022, and May 2023 with regards to timing of meetings.

4.2. The T&F group shall be politically balanced, and be led (chaired) by this committee, as agreed at Council. The number of members of the group should ideally be no greater than 6. Alternatively the committee itself (8 members) could take on the role.

The make-up of the group would be as follows:

| Total Membership | Conservative | Liberal Democrats | Independent Group | Minority Groups |
|------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 6 | 3 | 2 | 1 | nil |

4.3. As a result of the political balance report considered by Council in November last year, the Independent Group had to forego their entitlement to a seat on this committee, so as to maintain their overall allocation of committee seats. The group is however, entitled to a seat on the T&F group.

4.4. All group leaders will be asked to confirm their intent to take up a position on the T&F group, and to make nominations. In the event that more than one or more minority groups wish to take a seat, that can only be facilitated by another group relinquishing their entitlement.

5. Alternatives Considered

5.1. The review of governance arrangements is required by resolution of Council. It is appropriate to combine other elements at this time, although they could be

considered separately if members wished.

6. Resource and Legal Implications

6.1. No additional resources will be required to conduct this review. Recommendations emanating from the T&F group will be assessed for any resource implications.

7. Consultation

7.1. The scope limits the review to hybrid models of governance only, and does not include a change to committee or mayoral systems which may have necessitated public consultation. Members may feel it appropriate to undertake a limited consultation exercise regarding timing of meetings. The T&F group will report to CGAC, who will in turn advise Council.

8. Community Impact and Corporate Risks

8.1. The review should enhance decision making and transparency, while ensuring appropriate public engagement in local democracy.

8.2. Any governance changes must be carefully considered and implemented to minimise risk to the authority.

9. Other Implications

| | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| Crime and Disorder | | ✓ |
| Biodiversity and Climate Change Mitigation | | ✓ |
| Human Rights and Equality Impact | | ✓ |
| Safeguarding and Early Help | | ✓ |
| General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) | | ✓ |
| Health and Wellbeing | | ✓ |
| Other | | ✓ |

10. Appendices

10.1. Draft Terms of Reference – Appendix 1.

11. Background Papers

11.1. None