

Extract from the Joint Governance Committee - 24 September 2019

JGC/033/19-20 Appointment of Chairmen and Vice Chairmen to Committees

Purpose

Members had requested that a report be brought to them to address the way in which the Chairmen of Committees, other than the Executive, were currently appointed and any future options.

Summary of discussion:

Before the Committee was a report by the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 8.

Members had requested that a report be brought to them to address the way in which the Chairmen of Committees, other than the Executive, were currently appointed and any future options.

The Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer briefly outlined the report for Members and advised that whilst it was a statutory requirement that Councillors were appointed to non-Executive Committees by the Council in accordance with the political balance rules, it was the Council's own adopted constitutional arrangements that governed the appointment of Chairmen and Vice Chairmen.

In discussion, Member's opinions varied, some Members felt no change to the procedure was necessary, others that it should be the role of the Committee to determine the Chair of that Committee, and be appointed via a secret ballot. Other Members believed an opposition Member should chair JOSC to allow fair and effective scrutiny of the Council and avoid unconscious bias.

In conclusion, following debate, as a Joint Committee, legal advice was given that any proposals to make a recommendation to Council should be dealt with separately by each Council.

It was proposed, seconded and agreed that a recommendation be made to both Councils that the Joint Governance Committee and Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs be elected by the Members of that Committee at the first meeting following Annual Council, via a secret ballot.

It was proposed and seconded that a recommendation be made to both Councils that the Chairman of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee, however appointed, be a Member of the opposition or Independent Member.

It was proposed and seconded that a recommendation be made to both Councils that the Chairman of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee, however appointed, be a Member of the opposition or Independent Member.

Both motions failed.

Resolved

That the Joint Governance Committee considered and noted the content of the report and made recommendations to Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council that the Committee Chairs be elected by the Members of that Committee at the first meeting following Annual Council, via a secret ballot.