At a meeting of the General Purposes Committee held in the Council Chamber, Priory House, Chicksands, Shefford SG17 5TQ on Monday 9 September 2019, 10:00 AM — 10.45 AM

Present:
Cllr R Berry (Chair)
Cllr G Perham (Vice-Chair)

Members:
Cllrs J Baker
N Bunyan
S Dixon
A Dodwell
Cllrs E Ghent
P Snelling
R Wenham
A Zerny

Apologies:
Cllr J Jamieson
Cllr S Ford

Absent:
None

Members in Attendance:
Cllr T Stock
Cllr D Bowater (from 10.27am)

Officers in Attendance:
Ms S Hughes
Mrs C Jagusz
Mr J Partridge
Mr S Rix
Ms G Stanton
Mr C Warboys
Community Engagement Manager
Committee Services Officer
Head of Governance
Monitoring Officer
AD Service Development
Director of Resources

1. Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. Members' Interests

Cllr Wenham declared that he was the appointee for SEMLEP and it was agreed that, as this was an unpaid voluntary role, he could participate on Item 9 - Appointments to Outside Bodies.

3. Chair's Announcements and Communications

There were no announcements or communications from the Chair.
4. Petitions

None were received.

5. Questions, Statements or Deputations

None were received.

6. Electoral Review Work Group

The Committee considered the report of the Chair of the Electoral Review Working Group which presented the findings of the working group in relation to the proposed appropriate council size for Central Bedfordshire from May 2023 onwards.

In light of the report Members raised the following:-

- Whether the result of the submission to the LGBCE would be received before the next meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 17 October. The result was expected on 15 October but it was noted that it may not be in time for discussion at the meeting.
- Concern was raised that the process excluded those Members who were not part of the working group and that access to information was limited. In response it was noted that the working group were not required to make public their detailed considerations. However, the draft report detailed the matters that had been taken into account in drafting the submission. A motion was proposed that a sub-committee be established in place of the working group, not having been seconded, the motion was not debated.
- It was also noted that the second stage of the process would involve public consultation.

RECOMMENDED to Council

that the proposed Council size submission be submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).

7. Community Grants – Amendments to the Constitution

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources outlining the Community Grant Schemes approved by Executive on 20 August 2019 and the proposals for amendments to the Constitution to implement the schemes.

Points and comments included:

- Clarification was sought on who would monitor the allocated funding per group and it was confirmed that the Ward Member would alert the officer to any inappropriate spending.
RECOMMENDED to Council

that the proposed amendments to the Constitution, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be approved and the Constitution be updated accordingly.

8. Joint Committees Terms of Reference

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive which set out a single set of Terms of Reference for the Town Joint Committees in Central Bedfordshire.

Points and comments included:

- The previous review, which took place in 2016/17, revealed that a universal set of Terms of References would provide consistency and would establish a reporting mechanism into Central Bedfordshire Council.
- The proposed Terms of References had been considered by all four Joint Committees and had been approved for submission to the General Purposes Committee and then to Council.
- It was commented that decision making for removal of co-opted members could be either determined by the whole committee or by the Chair and Vice-Chair, depending on the preference of each joint committee. It was agreed for this to be added as an amendment to the submitted Appendix A.
- It was also asked if further detail could be added to the Governance section so that it confirmed that whilst minutes and actions were submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council, they should also be submitted to the Town Council to ensure that actions were not lost. It was agreed to add this as an amendment to the submitted Appendix A.

RECOMMENDED to Council

1. That the proposed Terms of Reference for the Town Joint Committees in Central Bedfordshire (Biggleswade, Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Leighton Linslade) be approved with the amendments requested; and
2. That the proposed Terms of Reference be adopted by Council and the Constitution be updated accordingly.

9. Appointments to Outside Bodies

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources which set out proposed additions to the list of Outside Bodies for appointment by Council or the Monitoring Officer and proposed amendments to the Constitution.
Points and comments included:

- The proposed amendments to the constitution would clarify the delegated authority of the Monitoring Officer to appoint where there is consensus between Group Leaders but to refer any appointments to Council should there be no consensus.
- Further to the report, it was stated that the appointee to SEMLEP, as per SEMLEP’s constitutional documents, would be either the Leader or the Deputy Leader of the Council as that was the requirement for SEMLEP’s Board membership.
- Concern was raised that it would not be possible to approve the recommendations without first seeing the evidence regarding the SEMLEP appointee being the Leader or Deputy Leader.
- The Committee were reminded that the recommendations proposed were not impacted by this concern but on being put to the vote it was agreed to defer this item by one cycle to the meeting of the Committee on 17 October 2019.

RESOLVED

that the report on the Appointments to Outside Bodies be deferred one cycle to the meeting of the Committee on 17 October 2019.

10. Work Programme

The Committee considered a report which set out the Committee’s Work Programme. Two items had been identified to be added to the Work Programme for 17 October 2019 as follows:

- Capital Project Approval limits
- Appointments to Outside Bodies (deferred from 9 September 2019)

It was queried whether the Boundary Commission Review could be added to the next meeting but noted that whilst it could be considered for information, the working group would need to have met regarding the LGBCE’s response before its findings were presented to a future meeting of this Committee.

RESOLVED

that the Work Programme for 17 October 2019 be updated with the following additional items:

- Capital Project Approval limits
- Appointments to Outside Bodies (deferred from 9 September 2019)

The meeting concluded at 10.45am.