

Central Bedfordshire Council

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Thursday, 26 October 2017

Wixams Joint Development Control Committee - Membership

Responsible Director(s): Charles Warboys, Director of Resources,
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Purpose of this report

1. To recommend to Council an amendment to the Terms of Reference of the Wixams Joint Development Control Committee to reduce the number of Councillors appointed to the Committee from 9 to 6.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to recommend to Council:

1. an amendment to the terms of reference of the Wixams Joint Development Control Committee to reduce the number of Councillors appointed to the Committee from 9 to 6 Councillors from Central Bedfordshire Council;
2. to appoint 6 Councillors to the Wixams Joint Development Control Committee and up to 3 substitutes in line with political proportionality. Nominations for the places on the Wixams Joint Development Control Committee will need to be sought at Council on 16 November 2017;
3. to authorise the amendment of the Constitution as detailed in Appendix A; and
4. that the above resolutions are subject to similar amendments by Bedford Borough Council becoming effective after their full Council meeting on 6 December 2017.

Background

2. The current Terms of Reference for the Wixams Joint Development Control Committee requires that 18 Councillors be appointed to the Committee. This being 9 Councillors from Central Bedfordshire Council and 9 Councillors from Bedford Borough Council.
3. Up to 4 named substitutes may also be appointed by each authority, although the number of which shall not exceed 50% of the total seats held by a political group on the joint committee with a minimum of 1 substitute per group.

4. Appointments to the Committee should, as far as practicable, reflect political balance within each Council.
5. The Chairman of each Council's Development Management Committee or Planning Committee shall normally be included in the membership.
6. Each Council shall appoint its Members to the Joint Committee in accordance with the requirements of Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Amendments to the Terms of Reference

7. On 27 June 2017 the Wixams Joint Development Control Committee agreed that the membership of the Committee should be reduced to 12 Councillors; 6 Councillors from each Authority and their terms of reference amended accordingly. It is therefore necessary for the General Purposes Committee to consider whether or not to recommend approval of the revised terms of reference to Full Council.
8. The remainder of the terms of reference will remain the same.

Allocation and Appointments of Seats

9. At Annual Council on 18 May 2017 the allocation of seats and substitutes to the Wixams Joint Development Control Committee were approved in accordance with the political balance rules. The table below sets out the current and revised allocation of seats.

A2. Joint Committee (proportionate but not part of the overall seat allocation)					
	Total seats	Cons	Ind	Lab	LD
Current	9 (4)	8 (3)	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Revised	6 (4)	6 (3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

10. If the revised terms of reference are approved at Council on 19 November 2017 and by Bedford Borough Council on 6 December 2017, Council will be required to appoint 6 Councillors to sit on the Committee and up to 3 substitutes.

Bedford Borough Council

11. As this is a joint committee with Bedford Borough Council, the terms of reference in both Council's Constitution should be the same. Therefore this proposal is being considered by Bedford Borough Council's General Purposes Committee on 31 October 2017 followed by their Full Council meeting on 6 December 2017.

12. It is proposed that any resolution of the Council is subject to similar amendments by Bedford Borough Council becoming effective. If Bedford Borough Council rejects the recommendation to change the membership and update the terms of reference for the Joint Development Control Committee, the current arrangements will remain or will be subject to a further report that will come back to the General Purposes Committee.

Council Priorities

13. The proposed action will enable the Joint Development Control Committee to support the following Council priorities:
 - Enhancing Central Bedfordshire
 - Creating stronger communities.

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

14. The Council's Constitution sets out the terms of reference of committees and joint committees, which should be fit for purpose. The Constitutions of both Councils should contain identical terms of reference for the joint committee to ensure clarity and consistency.

Financial and Risk Implications

15. There are no financial implications.

Equalities Implications

16. When decisions are made, decision makers must have the relevant data, including the results of equality impact assessment, and of consultation and involvement, to ensure they reach an informed decision.

Conclusion and next Steps

17. The Committee is asked to make recommendations to Council, as set out above, to enable the Wixams Joint Development Control Committee terms of reference to be updated and reflect identical provision in the Constitution of each participating Council.

Appendices

Appendix A: Proposed amendment to the terms of reference.

Background Papers

None

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