

Recommendation from the General Purposes Committee: Wixams JDCC

Report of Councillor Mrs Jane Lawrence, Chairman of the General Purposes Committee

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Purpose of this report

This report sets out recommendations by the General Purposes Committee to amend the Terms of Reference of the Wixams Joint Development Control Committee (Wixams JDCC) to reduce the number of Councillors appointed to the Committee from 9 to 6.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that full Council:

- 1. Approves 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. Appoints 6 Councillors to the Wixams Joint Development Control Committee and up to 3 substitutes in line with political proportionality. Nominations received are Councillors Blair, Mrs Clark, Downing, Duckett, Matthews and Turner and nominations for the substitutes are Councillors Firth, Gomm and Morris;**
- 3. Authorises the amendment of the Constitution as detailed in Appendix A; and**
- 4. Resolves that the above recommendations are subject to similar amendments by Bedford Borough Council becoming effective after their full Council meeting on 6 December 2017.**

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

1. This matter has not been considered by overview and scrutiny because it falls within the remit of the General Purposes Committee.

Background

2. The current terms of reference for the Wixams JDCC requires that 18 councillors be appointed to the joint committee; the appointees 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 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. On 27 June 2017 the Wixams JDCC agreed that the membership of the Committee should be reduced to 12 Councillors; 6 Councillors from each Authority, and that the terms of reference should be amended accordingly.
5. At the subsequent meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 26 October 2017 the proposed reduction in the joint committee's membership was considered. It was noted that the Wixams JDCC's support for a reduction in its membership had arisen because of the difficulty in ensuring sufficient levels of attendance. It had also been noted that the Leader of Central Bedfordshire Council and the Mayor of Bedford Borough Council had considered a possible reduction in membership and were both in favour.

Allocation and Appointments of Seats

6. At Annual Council on 18 May 2017 the allocation of seats and substitutes to the Wixams JDCC was 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 (3)	6 (3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

7. If the revised terms of reference are approved by full Council it will be necessary to appoint 6 Councillors to sit on the Wixams JDCC and up to 3 substitutes. **Nominations received are Councillors Blair, Mrs**

Clark, Downing, Duckett, Matthews and Turner and nominations for the substitutes are Councillors Firth, Gomm and Morris.

Bedford Borough Council

8. As the Wixams JDCC is a joint committee with Bedford Borough Council, the terms of reference in both Councils' Constitutions should be the same. The recommendations were considered by Bedford Borough Council's General Purposes Committee on 31 October 2017 where the Committee resolved to recommend to their full Council meeting on 6 December 2017 the reduction in membership from 18 to 12.
9. If Bedford Borough Council rejects the recommendations to change the Joint committee's membership and update the terms of reference the current arrangements will remain in operation.

Council Priorities

10. The proposed action will enable the Wixams JDC C to support the following Council priorities:
 - Enhancing Central Bedfordshire
 - Creating stronger communities

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

11. The Council's Constitution sets out the terms of reference of committees and joint committees, which should be fit for purpose. The recommendations arising from the General Purposes Committee reflect the need to amend the membership of the Wixams JDCC. In addition the Constitutions of both Councils should contain identical terms of reference for the joint committee to ensure clarity and consistency.

Financial and Risk Implications

12. There are no financial and risk implications.

Equalities Implications

13. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

14. Report authors will be encouraged to work with the Corporate Policy Advisor (Equality & Diversity) in order to ensure that relevant equality implications are identified.

Implications for Work Programming

15. None.

Conclusion and next Steps

16. Approval of the General Purposes Committee's recommendations will contribute towards enabling the Wixams JDCC's membership and terms of reference to be updated. It will also be necessary to insure that identical provision is included in the Constitutions of each participating Council.

Appendices

Appendix A – Proposed amendment to the terms of reference.

Background Papers

None