

## **Council Meeting – 25 October 2018**

### **Agenda Item CC1918/18**

#### **Re-organisation of Council Business and Meetings**

##### **Background**

Members will recall that at the Council Meeting on 27 September it was agreed that each of the Council's committees should review how they work in terms of carrying out the business and functions for which they are responsible and to consider the frequency of meetings needed to perform those functions.

Further background was provided by way of the supporting paper for the Finance and Administration Committee meeting on 13 September 2018 (FA1388/18).

The committees have undertaken their reviews during October and their findings and recommendations are below.

##### **Discussion**

###### *Delegation of Decision Making to Committees and Committee Membership*

In principle all committees agreed that there should be fewer meetings and that Council should give greater delegation to them in order to be more effective in making decisions and delivering the service. In particular, the committees consider that decisions should be made at committee level and that there should not be a need for the matter to be referred to Council with a recommendation, and to debate the matter again, to reach a final decision. Any decisions at committee level would be within the constraints of their respective budgets both for the existing budgeted items that would have been approved by Council whilst setting the Precept and for any new items provided that funding within the committee budget can be made available. The E&A and P&D Committees would not be able to draw on the Council's Reserves and any request for additional funding over and above their agreed budgets would have to be approved by the Finance & Administration Committee.

As Members are aware, the existing committee structure sets a limit on the number of Councillors that can sit on each committee, namely seven for E&A and P&D (with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council ex officios) and six on the F&A. The Committees appreciate that there may be Members whose preference is to sit on a particular committee but are unable to do so as the maximum number of Committee Members has been reached. Equally, it is recognised that if a large number of Members sit on one particular committee there may be a risk that insufficient members would be available for the other committee and this would potentially compromise the quorum of the meeting. To overcome this it is being recommended that there should be a minimum number of six Councillors on the E&A and P&D Committees but no maximum level set. As is the usual case, Members will decide at the Annual general Meeting in May each year which committees they wish to attend as a voting member and if they choose to do so can sit on both Committees. All

Councillors will continue to be able to attend meetings but non committee members will not have voting rights.

In the case of the F&A Committee whose membership is currently made up of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council and the E&A and P&D Committees (six members in all), it is proposed that there should be two additional members on the Committee, bringing its membership to eight. The two additional members will be appointed at the Council's AgM in May each year.

Given the proposed greater delegation to Committee from Council to make definitive decisions, the committees consider that there may be occasion where an item on the Committee Agenda is of interest to a non-committee member who would wish to express their view about the matter in hand at their meeting. They would be able to express their view at the meeting but would not have a right to vote for the final decision. Accordingly, it is being proposed that there will be a "Call-in" procedure on new items not contained within the agreed budget whereby if two members at the meeting whether they are voting members or not have concerns that the decision likely to be reached requires more detailed scrutiny by all Council Members, they may request the matter is 'called-in' to be placed on the Council Agenda to give all Council Members the opportunity to vote to reach a decision. The call-in procedure could only be invoked at a meeting and could not be invoked from purely seeing an item on an Agenda. The call-in procedure will be documented in Standing Orders so it becomes a right of Councillors to use the process. Whilst it has been discussed whether there should be maximum number of times per year an impending Committee decision can be called into Council for debate and decision, at present it is not proposed to set a maximum number unless it becomes evident that the call-in procedure is being abused.

### *Meetings*

At present the E&A Committee and Council meet once a month with the exception of May and August with the P&D having two meetings per month – a minimum of 55 meetings per year. In many instances matters that have been discussed at committee level are put forward to Council for ratification and the matter is debated again. It is considered that with the greater delegation to committees to make their own decisions, this duplication of effort would mean that there is a less of a need for monthly meetings and would make the Council more efficient in carrying out its duties. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Committees and Council meet every two months with the F&A and Council meetings held on alternate months. It is to be noted that in an Election year (which 2019 will be), the E&A Committee will not meet in May resulting in having five meetings rather than six.

It should be noted that it is recommended that an extraordinary meeting of Council to consider the Annual Governance Statement and Annual Accounts (the Annual Return to the external auditor) exclusively would follow the Annual Parish Meeting in April. There would also be a Council meeting in May which would follow the Annual general Meeting.

At present the HR and Compliance Committee would only meet as required i.e. on an ad hoc basis, but it is now recommended that there should be a minimum scheduled meeting and it is proposed that this should be held in July.

A draft meeting timetable is attached.

Members discussed the possibility of changing the start time of meetings to 7.30pm but it was considered that the 8pm start was the most appropriate time given Members other work commitments.

## *Terms of Reference*

**Environment and Amenity Committee** - Attached is a draft revised set of the E&A Committee terms of reference. It is also considered that the name of the committee should be changed to more accurately reflect its responsibilities. The proposed name is "Leisure, Events & Environment Committee".

**Finance and Administration Committee** – no changes are currently being put forward to the existing terms of reference (attached) but given the increased delegation to the E&A and P&D Committees to make decisions within their approved budget and additional funding to the committees over and above their budget would need to be approved by the F&A Committee.

The current Financial Regulations in Standing Orders (paragraph 3.2, page 23) currently permits the F&A Committee to authorise a virement of funds. However, it is considered that this matter should be clearly stated within the F&A terms of reference. It is therefore recommended that an additional clause be added to the terms of reference as follows:

"n. To authorise the virement of funds from unspent and available amounts from the Council's budget or to and from general and earmarked reserves."

**Planning & Development Committee** – whilst the main role of the P&D Committee is to review planning applications with delegated authority from Council to do so (see attached), the other functions of the committee need to be expanded upon and accordingly further consideration should be given to revise their terms of reference.

## **Recommendations**

1. That Council give full delegation to each Committee to manage and disburse funds from within their agreed budget;
2. The minimum number of members on each committee is six and in the case of the E&A and P&D Committee's no maximum number;
3. That the F&A committee membership is extended from the Chairman and Vice Chairman of E&A and P&D to include two additional members;
4. A 'Call-in' procedure is adopted whereby two councillors be they voting or non-voting members of a committee can refer a matter from Committee to full Council for a decision;
5. That the Committees and Council meet every two months with the F&A and Council meetings held on alternate months – noting exceptional arrangements in an election year;
6. That the E&A and F&A terms of reference are updated as set out above (and attached);
7. That the P&D terms of reference be updated;
8. That Standing Orders are updated to take account of the above recommendations.

David Allison  
Clerk to the Council



## Notice of Meetings 2018/2019

**DRAFT – PROPOSED NEW OUTLINE ONLY**

	2018												2019				
	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug Recess	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec			
Environment & Amenity Committee	6	4	8		5		*E&A		2		3		5				
Planning & Development Committee	1	6	3	7	7	4		6	4	1	5	3	7	5			
Finance & Administration Committee	8	13		14		11	9 AgM <sup>2</sup>	13	HR 11		12	10		13			
Planning & Development Committee	15	19	17	21	21	17	16	20	18	25	19	17	21	19			
Council Meeting	29	20	31		28	25 APM <sup>1</sup>			25		26		28				

All Meetings are held in the Council Chamber and commence at 8.00pm unless otherwise notified.

Members of the Press and Public are welcome to attend.

**Note:** Please speak to the Clerk prior to the meeting in the event that there will be audio or video recording of the meeting.

<sup>1</sup>APM (Annual Parish Meeting) is a meeting for the electorate. <sup>1</sup>An EOM Council meeting follows the APM to consider Annual Return/Accounts.

<sup>2</sup> A Council meeting follows the AgM

\*No E&A meeting in election year (2019)

P&D provisional dates for second meeting if required.

## **Environment and Amenity Committee – Terms of Reference**

(Leisure, Events & Environment Committee)

### Committee purpose

- To maintain Croxley Green as a place to live, work and flourish
- To protect and maintain the open spaces and woodland within the parish boundary
- To ensure that the use of land enhances Croxley Green and protects the environment
- To maintain the parish's semi-rural character by protecting and improving the green spaces and keeping rights of way
- To keep the community 'family friendly'
- To enhance community wellbeing by facilitating events and projects that improve life in Croxley Green

### The committee's responsibilities:

- Manages and enhances community assets in the ownership or under the control of the Parish Council;
- Reviews work programmes planned to be carried out by parish rangers;
- Offers services and funding that enhance community wellbeing;
- Makes budget proposals, oversees its budget; has delegated authority to spend the budget ;within the approved total and has indirect responsibility for parish resources used in delivering the services above; and
- Monitors and progresses the successful delivery of budgeted projects and events.

### Community assets means:

- All current and potential village greens, parks, recreation grounds, allotments, public open spaces, ponds and other community land;
- Automated External Defibrillators; and
- Street furniture including, as appropriate, litter bins, dog waste bins, salt bins, bus shelters, notice boards and Council signage.

### Enhancing community wellbeing means:

- Delivering community events;
- Making possible, subscribing to, sponsoring, funding or partially funding community events and community assets and other leisure and environmental projects;
- Community and environmental enforcement work, including for example, illegal tipping and litter picking in areas owned, controlled or managed by the parish council; and
- Encouraging councillors, staff and members of the public to make suggestions for new and improved services and amenities within the committee's scope to be provided by the council.

### The Committee

- Recommends to the Council the budget and resources required for the provision of existing and proposed services;
- Reviews its own work and recommends improvements or reductions in services;
- Makes transfers (virements) within the committee's budget as the community's needs vary;
- Seeks F&A approval for funding for any projects outside its agreed budget if this cannot be resourced from within its existing budget;
- Establishes service policies, approves programmes of work, monitors performance and takes decisions in respect of budgeted costs; and
- Provides reports on its work to the Council.

### **Finance and Administration – Terms of Reference**

- a. To advise the Council in formulating its objectives and priorities and in establishing programmes. To recommend such steps as are necessary to achieve objectives.
- b. Without detracting from the duties and responsibilities of the other Committees, to review the effectiveness of the whole of the Council's organisation, its standards and levels of service.
- c. To consider and make recommendations to the Council on the policies of all Committees and, where appropriate, to make recommendations thereon to the Council.
- d. To consider and make recommendations on any matters referred to it by the Council or other Committees.
- e. To consider and submit to the Council budget proposals for each financial year after considering proposals submitted by other Committees.
- f. To consider all matters relating to property owned by the Council.
- g. To consider and make recommendations to the Council on policy in respect of asset replacement.
- h. To consider and advise on write off irrecoverable monies
- i. To consider and make recommendations to the Council concerning any proposed expenditure or reduction in income for which no provision has been made in the approved budgets.
- j. To consider and advise on all matters relating to Council personnel.
- k. To deal with any matter not specifically allocated to another Committee.
- l. To consider and make recommendations to the Council on policy in respect of Police Community Support Officers within Croxley Green.
- m. To approve the payment of Accounts and to monitor the level of income/expenditure.
- n. To authorise the virement of funds from unspent and available amounts from the Council's budget or to and from general and earmarked reserves.

## **Planning and Development – Terms of Reference**

- Town Planning:
  - a. Considers and comments upon planning applications submitted to the District Council
  - b. Reviews decisions made by the District Council on planning applications
  - c. Responds to any consultation documents on planning matters
- Public Transport
- Road Safety
- Village Appraisal
- Sign Posting.

## **HR and Compliance Committee – Terms of Reference**

- a. Recruitment of Proper Officer, Responsible Finance Officer and other staff as required.
- b. Recruitment and selection procedures.
- c. To undertake the Proper Officer's appraisal and review staff appraisal and development
- d. Review of staff contracts, grievance and discipline policies every two years
- e. Review of staff and accommodation requirements.
- f. Review the management of rights relation to leave, time off and illness.
- g. To ensure that the Proper Officer has everything required for managing other staff.
- h. To oversee the health and safety of all staff and review risk assessments.
- i. By input from the Proper Officer, to be kept up to date with developments in employment law.
- j. The HR and Compliance Committee will serve as the disciplinary or grievance panel for staff and Councillors.
- k. To agree the members to sit on an appeals panel to hear appeals against a decision on a grievance.
- l. Review of updates to the Staff Manual.
- m. Oversee the implementation and co-ordination of a Councillor training programme.
- n. Consider all other matter relating to the employment of staff within the Council.
- o. Undertake sample auditing of office functions.