

## **Extract from the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Governance Working Group**

### **5 Public Participation at Planning Committee.**

The Chairman welcomed Tom James to the meeting for the item on Public Participation at Planning Committee and thanked him for providing the benchmarking information against neighbouring local authorities. It was noted that a supplementary paper had been circulated with further amendments for three of the four items on the agenda proposing amendments to the Constitution.

Tom stated that the current Constitution permitted public speaking at Planning Committee for applications which had received 10 or more individual objections received by the deadline of 14 days' prior to the meeting. The proposal before the Working Group was to amend the threshold to 5 objections and also include supporters of applications. It was noted that the current arrangements had been introduced in 1997 at a time when the delegations to officers were at a much lower level, meaning that there were generally 15-20 items for determination at each meeting. It was noted as important to ensure the workings of the Committee continued to be efficient and fit for purpose moving forward.

Discussion ensued as to whether there should be a threshold at all for public speaking. Tom advised that the arrangements differed by authority, for example Tandridge did not set a threshold but had much greater level of delegation available. It was felt that the report should be recommended to the Standards and Audit Committee without amendment, however the option could be raised by Members at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 16 October 2023 at which the report was being received. It was suggested that, subject to the agreement of the Councillor Brown as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, that Councillor Morales be invited to attend the meeting as Chairman of the Planning Committee.

In addition, it was noted that the proposals would be received by the Planning Committee at its next meeting on 7 November 2023. The Chair referred to his email in advance on residents' rights to speak not being curtailed at paragraphs 4.6, 4.9, 4.12 etc and being genuine and legitimate at 3.7.

It was noted that, if possible, the publication of papers for the Corporate Governance Working Group being circulated ten days in advance would be welcomed, which could also be strived towards more broadly across the Council's Working Groups. The Chair and Frank discussed that this could become a protocol aspired to for all papers to be circulated in advance of all Council meetings.

The Group agreed the recommendations as amended by the supplementary report.

#### **RECOMMENDED to the Standards and Audit Committee for recommendation thereon to Council That**

- (i) the amended Public Speaking at Planning Committee section of the Constitution (Appendix 2 to the report) be adopted;**

- (ii) the authority delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make minor amendments to the Constitution be noted, including amendments to references within the document and section numbering; and**
- (iii) the Monitoring Officer be instructed to make the agreed changes to the Constitution.**