

# **Guildford Borough Council**

**Report to:** Corporate Governance & Standards Committee

**Date:** 6 June 2024

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Report of Director:** Legal & Democratic Services

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**Report Status:** Open

## **Review of Task Groups reporting to the Corporate Governance & Standards Committee**

### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to review the work undertaken over the past 12 months by the two task groups which report to this Committee, and to note the programme of work for groups over the following 12 months.
- 1.2 Although the Councillor Development Steering Group was set up originally as an Executive working group, it was agreed in 2015 that the Steering Group would report on its work to this Committee. The Steering Group meets quarterly.

- 1.3 The Joint Constitutions Review Group was established jointly by this Committee and Waverley's Standards and General Purposes Committee in July 2023, and is meeting monthly.
- 1.4 This report asks the Committee to review the work carried out by the Steering Group and the Review Group over the past twelve months, and the work to be undertaken over the next twelve months. It is recommended that both groups should continue their important work.

## **2. Recommendations to Committee**

- 2.1 That the work of the Councillor Development Steering Group over the past 12 months be noted and that the Steering Group continues its work in accordance with its agreed terms of reference.
- 2.2 That the numerical allocation of seats on the Steering Group to each political group shall be one member per group, and that each political group be invited to make an appropriate nomination<sup>1</sup> for the 2024-25 municipal year.
- 2.3 That the work of the Joint Constitutions Review Group over the past 12 months be noted and that, subject to similar approval of Waverley Borough Council's Standards & General Purposes Committee, the Review Group continues its work in accordance with its agreed terms of reference.
- 2.4 That the numerical allocation of seats on the Review Group to political groups shall continue as follows:

2 x Liberal Democrats  
1 x Conservative  
1 x R4GV

and that the relevant political groups be invited to make an appropriate nomination(s) for the 2024-25 municipal year.

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<sup>1</sup> Group Leaders will be invited to submit nominations in respect of both the CDSG and JCRG, which will be reported to the Committee.

2.5 That, from among those councillors appointed, the Committee, appoints a co-chairman of the Joint Constitutions Review Group for 2024-25.

**3. Reason for Recommendation:**

3.1 To enable this Committee to review the continuation of the task groups reporting to it.

**4. Exemption from publication**

4.1 No part of this report is exempt from publication.

**5. Purpose of Report**

5.1 This report asks the Committee:

(a) To review the work carried out by:

(i) the Councillor Development Steering Group (CDSG) over the past twelve months and the work it is likely to undertake over the next twelve months, and

(ii) the Joint Constitutions Review Group (JCRG) over the past twelve months and the work it is likely to undertake over the next twelve months.

(b) To agree that both groups should continue with their work and to agree their composition.

**6. Strategic Priorities**

6.1 The work of councillor task groups should assist in the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities.

## 7. Background

- 7.1 The Committee reviews annually the work of the task groups for which it is responsible. The CDSG and the JCRG (in conjunction with Waverley) are such groups.
- 7.2 This report sets out in **Appendix 1**:
- (a) the current composition and respective terms of reference of the CDSG and JCRG, and
  - (b) a summary of general progress in respect of both groups, including work undertaken, and work still to be carried out.
- 7.6 Clearly, the work of the CDSG has been vital to ensure that the Councillor training and development programme continues to meet the needs of councillors, particularly bearing in mind the various recommendations contained in the proposed Corporate Improvement Plan considered by the Committee at its special meeting on 15 May 2024. Officers recommend that the Steering Group continues its work.
- 7.7 Similarly, the work of the JCRG carried out since its first meeting on 30 November 2023 has been very important for the purpose of bringing forward proposals for changes to both councils' Constitutions in order to align our governance processes where it is practicable to do so. Similarly, the proposed Corporate Improvement Plan makes a number of recommendations relating to the need for changes to various aspects of the Constitution.
- 7.8 Each of the relevant political groups have been asked to submit nominations for appointments to the two groups in accordance with their current composition. Details of the nominees received at the point the agenda for this meeting was published are set out below. Any late nominations will be reported to the Committee at the meeting.

Councillor Development Steering Group: (one councillor from each of the five political groups)

**Nominations received to date:**

Cllr Bob Hughes

Cllr Patrick Oven

Cllr James Walsh

Joint Constitutions Review Group: (2 x Lib Dems, 1 x Conservative, 1 x R4GV)

**Nominations received to date:**

Cllr Richard Mills OBE

- 7.9 Appointments to either Group do not have to be made from the membership of the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee.

**8. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 8.1 The Groups are responsible for having due regard to the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) when making any policy recommendations.

**9. Financial Implications**

- 9.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. Any proposals, projects, or suggestions from the groups with financial implications will either be contained within approved budgets or considered as part of the Service and Financial Planning cycle.

**10. Legal Implications**

- 10.1 There is no legal requirement to establish working groups or task groups, but most councils use them for purposes similar to ours. There is also no legal requirement for them to be politically balanced.

## **11. Human Resource Implications**

11.1 Currently, we are able to service both groups from within existing staffing resources in the Democratic Services team.

## **12. Summary of Options**

12.1 The Committee is asked to agree that the CDSG continues with its work and agree to appoint one member from each of the five political groups on the Council to it for the 2024-25 municipal year.

12.2 The Committee is also invited to agree, in conjunction with Waverley's Standards and General Purposes Committee, that the JCRG should continue with its work and agree to appoint four councillors to it for the 2024-25 municipal year, in accordance with the following numerical allocation:

2 x Liberal Democrats

1 x Conservative

1 x R4GV

and also to appoint a co-chair from among the appointees.

## **13. Background Papers**

Guildford Borough Council Constitution

## **14. Appendices**

Appendix 1: Table showing details of the Councillor Development Steering Group and Joint Constitutions Review Group including work undertaken over the past 12 months, and work to be carried out during the year.