

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Monday, 2nd February, 2015

Present: Cllr M A C Balfour (Chairman), Cllr S R J Jessel (Vice-Chairman), Cllr T Bishop, Cllr P F Bolt, Cllr C Brown, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr D A S Davis, Cllr N J Heslop, Cllr H S Rogers and Cllr C P Smith

Councillors Mrs J A Anderson, O C Baldock, B J Luker, Mrs S Murray and M R Rhodes were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A W Allison, M A Coffin, Mrs C M Gale and Miss A Moloney

PART 1 - PUBLIC

GP 15/1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made in accordance with the Code of Conduct. However, in the interests of transparency in connection with the item on the Boundary Review of KCC Electoral Divisions, Councillor Balfour reminded the Committee that he was a member of Kent County Council.

GP 15/2 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 1 September 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

GP 15/3 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 13 November 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL

GP 15/4 LOCALISM ACT - PAY POLICY

The report of the Director of Central Services advised that the Localism Act 2011 required local authorities to review their pay policy statements for each financial year. The report summarised the requirements of the Act and presented an updated Pay Policy Statement for 2015/16. It was noted that there had been no changes in the Council's remuneration policy and the substantive content of the updated statement was identical to that adopted by the Council in February 2012.

RECOMMENDED: That the Pay Policy Statement 2015/16 set out in Annex 1 to the report be commended for adoption by the Council.

* Referred to Council

DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH 3, PART 3 OF THE CONSTITUTION

GP 15/5 BOUNDARY REVIEW OF KCC ELECTORAL DIVISIONS

The report of the Chief Executive outlined the timetable for the current review of the Kent County Council electoral divisions being undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in time for the next scheduled County Council elections in May 2017.

Details were given of a suggested response to the consultation on division arrangements, proposing that any new county divisions be coterminous with local borough and district wards and be based on the new wards taking effect within Tonbridge and Malling at the May 2015 elections.

RESOLVED: That the Council's response to the consultation on KCC electoral divisions, as set out in the table at paragraph 1.2.2 of the report, be approved.

GP 15/6 PAY AWARD 2015

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Executive which examined a range of factors relevant to the issue of a pay award for employees in 2015/16. These included prevailing economic conditions, comparative pay settlements, movement in the retail price and consumer price indices and the Council's budget position.

In introducing the report the Chief Executive made reference to the provision for a pay award in the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the appropriateness of considering a measured award in recognition of the continuing efforts of staff, particularly given the increases being considered elsewhere in Kent and the National Employers settlement. It was considered that the proposal for a 1% pay award was an appropriate response in the light of the Council's budget position and employees had been fully informed of the financial challenges facing the authority through the Joint Employee Consultative Committee and Unison.

Members commended the efforts of staff during challenging financial circumstances and their commitment to the Council.

RESOLVED: That subject to final ratification of the Council's 2015/16 budget by the full Council, a 1% pay award for the 2015/16 financial year be approved payable from 1 April 2015.

GP 15/7 ACCOUNTING POLICIES FOR 2014/15 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The report of the Director of Finance and Transformation presented the Accounting Policies proposed to be used in the preparation of the Financial Statements for 2014/15. It was noted that the only change resulted from Grant Thornton's recommendation following the audit of the 2013/14 Accounts in respect of the interim revaluation of assets. The report set out the proposed new accounting policy in respect of Land and Buildings.

It was noted that the Audit Committee, at its meeting on 26 January 2015, had commended the Accounting Policies for adoption.

RESOLVED: That the Accounting Policies to be used in the preparation of the Financial Statements, as set out at Annex 1 to the report, be approved.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE

GP 15/8 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chairman moved, it was seconded and

RESOLVED: That as public discussion would disclose exempt information, the following matters be considered in private.

PART 2 - PRIVATE

DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH 3, PART 3 OF THE CONSTITUTION

GP 15/9 ESTABLISHMENT CHANGES

(LGA 1972 Sch 12A Paragraph 1 – Information relating to an individual)

The report of the Management Team presented for approval a number of establishment changes arising from the on-going operational management of the Council's services. It was noted that the proposals would result in net establishment savings of £5,487 inclusive of oncosts.

RESOLVED: That the following adjustments be endorsed:

- (1) post DF0511 Benefit Assistant (37 hours) scale 2/4 be deleted with immediate effect;

- (2) a new post of Senior Revenue and Benefits Liaison Officer (37 hours) scale 5/6 be created;
- (3) the hours of post DF0915 Senior Revenue Assistant (37 hours) scale 4/6 be reduced to 27 hours with immediate effect;
- (4) post DF0907 Revenue and Benefits Liaison Officer (37 hours) scale SO/M9 be re-designated as Revenue and Benefits Liaison Manager;
- (5) a new post of Overpayment Recovery Officer (22 hours) scale 5/6 be created with immediate effect;
- (6) post DF0529 Overpayments Recovery Clerk (23.25 hours) scale 1/2 be deleted with immediate effect;
- (7) the reduction in the hours of post DF0503 Benefit Office Supervisor scale 5/6 from 37 to 32 hours be confirmed;
- (8) the reduction in the hours of post DF0602 Fraud Investigation Officer scale 4/6 from 22.5 to 21.5 hours be confirmed;
- (9) the transfer of post DF0105 Administrative Assistant (37 hours) scale 2/3 from the 'central' administrative team within Finance and Transformation to the Revenue and Benefits Section be noted;
- (10) post DF0406 Clerical Assistant (Exchequer Services) (8 hours) scale 1/2 be deleted with immediate effect;
- (11) the hours of post DF0524 Clerical Support Officer scale 1/2 be increased from 30 to 37 hours with immediate effect;
- (12) the hours of post DF0904 Revenue Assistant scale 2/4 be increased from 35 to 37 hours with immediate effect;
- (13) post DF1004 Verification Officer (37 hours) scale 2/3 be re-designated Administrative Assistant with immediate effect;
- (14) the reduction in hours of post DG3002 Senior Administration Assistant scale 3/4 from 37 to 33 hours be confirmed;
- (15) the extension until 31 December 2015 of the 3 additional hours temporarily worked by post DG3004 Administration Assistant (27.5 hours) scale 2/3 be noted;
- (16) the increase in hours of post DG3009 Administration Assistant scale 2/3 from 18.5 to 22 hours be confirmed;

- (17) post DR0302 be re-designated and regraded from Assistant Land Charges Manager (scale 4/5) to Land Charges Team Leader (scale SO), effective from June 2015;
- (18) the hours of re-designated post DR0302 be increased from 15 to 30 hours per week effective from June 2015;
- (19) a new post of Land Charges Officer (Scale 4/5 - 37 hours per week) be created for a fixed period of 2 years, effective from February 2015;
- (20) posts DR0301 (Land Charges Manager) and DR0303 (Senior Land Charges Officer) be deleted upon retirement of the existing post holders;
- (21) a sum of £10k be ring-fenced from the overall savings in respect of the Land Charges proposals for future operational adjustments; and
- (22) the net contribution of £5,487 towards future savings targets be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm