

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday, 22nd January, 2025

Present: Cllr M R Rhodes (Chair), Cllr A McDermott (Vice-Chair), Cllr B Banks, Cllr K Barton, Cllr A G Bennison, Cllr M A Coffin, Cllr J Clokey, Cllr D A S Davis, Cllr B A Parry, Cllr R V Roud and Cllr K B Tanner

Cllrs R P Betts, M D Boughton*, D Keers*, P M Hickmott, W E Palmer* and Mrs A S Oakley* were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

(*participated via MS Teams)

PART 1 - PUBLIC

GP 25/1 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute members.

GP 25/2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

GP 25/3 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 9 October 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL

GP 25/4 LOCALISM ACT - PAY POLICY

The report of the Director of Central Services and Deputy Chief Executive summarised the requirements of the Localism Act and presented an updated Pay Policy Statement for 2025/26 as set out in Annex 1 to the report.

Members noted that as there had not been many significant changes in the Borough Council's remuneration policy and that the substantive content of the updated Pay Policy Statement in Annex 1 was nearly identical to the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25. The key

updates related to the actual pay received by staff, the pay multiple data and the number of officers in specific graded posts.

RECOMMENDED*: That the Pay Policy set out in Annex 1 be commended for adoption at the Council meeting on 18 February 2025.

***Recommended to Council**

MATTERS FOR DECISION UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

GP 25/5 PAY AWARD 2025/26

The report of the Chief Executive provided Members with information to determine the Council's pay award for employees for 2025/26.

The Chair proposed and it was seconded that Council Procedure Rule No 10.11 be suspended, to allow a representative of UNISON to address the Committee on behalf of its members, during which concern was raised in respect of the rise in the cost of living and the impact of inflation. Furthermore, concern was expressed in regard to the negative impact on the recruitment and retention of staff and the sustainability of the Council's operations. Following the statement from UNISON, Council Procedure Rules were reapplied.

Members noted that the Borough Council employees had a term in their contracts which read 'Salaries will be revised on 1 April each year by an amount determined by the Authority having regard to movements in the Retail Price Index, comparative pay settlements and prevailing economic conditions' and the Borough Council therefore determined its own pay awards and was not tied into the national process of collective bargaining. The Borough Council's current salary scales were attached at Annex 1 of the report and UNISON's pay claim for 2025/26 at Annex 2.

During discussion, Members were made aware of the on-going need to make savings and transformation contributions in the context of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and took into consideration the above inflation rise of the National Living Wage from 1 April 2025 which would increase from £11.44 per hour to £12.21 per hour and the impact on the Council's grades at the lower end of the salary scales.

Councillor J Clokey proposed, seconded by Councillor B Banks that existing salary scales 1 and 2 and spinal point 315 of salary scale 3 be deleted from the Council's pay scale, that the hourly rate of spinal point 316 be increased to £12.60 per hour and that a pay award of 2.9% be applied to all other salary scales, with effect from 1 April 2025. Following a formal vote, the proposal was carried.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) salary scales 1 and 2 of the Council's pay scale, be deleted;
- (2) spinal point 315 of salary scale 3 of the Council's pay scale, be deleted;
- (3) the hourly rate of scale 3, spinal point 316, be increased to £12.60 per hour; and
- (4) a pay award of 2.9% be applied to all other salary scales, with effect from 1 April 2025.

GP 25/6 ADOPTION OF THE MENOPAUSE IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY

The report of the Director of Central Services and Deputy Chief Executive introduced the draft Menopause in the Workplace policy, attached at Annex 1 of the report. The aim of the policy was to demonstrate the Council's commitment to advocating menopause awareness within the workplace.

The implementation of the policy would help ensure that women were not disadvantaged in the workplace and its aim was to ensure that the Council continued to provide a supportive and inclusive working environment for all.

The policy had been developed by Human Resources in liaison with members of the Corporate Safety and Wellbeing Officer Steering Group and had been shared with the Council's Joint Employee Consultative Committee and with UNISON.

RESOLVED: That the Menopause in the Workplace policy, attached at Annex 1 to the report, be implemented.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE**GP 25/7 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**MATTERS FOR DECISION UNDER DELEGATED POWERS****GP 25/8 ESTABLISHMENT REPORT**

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

The report set out for Members' approval a number of establishment changes recommended by Management Team. Members noted that, in accordance with adopted conventions, all of the savings/costs referred to in the report reflected the salary at the top of the scale/grade plus associated on costs.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) an allowance paid to the Senior Information Risk Owner for undertaking additional duties, be established;
- (2) the hours of the Senior Planning Officer, post DJ0166, M9, be permanently reduced from 37 to 22.5 hours from 1 April 2025;
- (3) the hours of the Senior Planning Officer, post DJ0167, M9, be permanently reduced from 37 to 30 hours from 1 April 2025;
- (4) the hours of the Team Leader Development Management, post DJ0177, M7, be permanently reduced from 37 to 29.5 hours;
- (5) a new Senior Planning Officer, M9, 29 hours post be permanently established from 1 April 2025;
- (6) the resource from the current vacant posts within the Waste Services Administration Team be transferred to the Customer Contact Centre; and
- (7) posts DG3005, DG3006 and DG3011 be deleted from the Waste Services Administration Team (1.7 FTE) and two new Customer Service Advisor posts (one full time post and one 0.7 FTE post) be created.

RECOMMENDED*: That

- (1) the fixed term post DC0107, Climate Change Officer, 37 hours, be permanently established with effect from 19 February 2025;
- (2) post DJ0318, Principal Planning Officer, be permanently increased from 24 to 32 hours per week;

- (3) post DJ0319, Senior Planning Officer, be permanently increased from 20 to 30 hours per week;
- (4) the vacant post DJ0315, Principal Planning Officer, 37 hours per week, M8, be deleted;
- (5) a new full time, permanent Planning Policy Team Leader post at grade M7, be created;
- (6) post DR0014, Contracts, Procurement and Property Lawyer, be deleted;
- (7) two new part time posts, a Contracts and Procurement Lawyer and a Property Lawyer at 21 hours per week each, be created; and
- (8) the additional costs arising from the report as set out in paragraph 7, be included in the budget for 2025/26.

***Recommended to Council**

The meeting ended at 8.16 pm