

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 June 2016

Report of the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer

Part 1- Public

For decision

1 REVIEW OF MAYORALTY FUNCTION

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This report asks Members to consider a review of the Mayoralty function.

1.1.2 We have not previously undertaken a review of the Mayoralty/ civic function. However, in the current climate of limited financial resources, it is important to demonstrate to residents and businesses within the Borough that they receive value for money from the office of Mayor in the same way that they do from all other council functions.

1.1.3 The overall objectives of the proposed review would be

- To ensure that the Mayoralty is modern and fit for purpose, whilst respecting the traditions of the historic office of mayor;
- To consider whether the role of Mayor should be redesigned so that it links to the Council's corporate strategy;
- To review the expenditure supporting the Mayoral function

1.2 Background

1.2.1 Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires all local authorities to elect a Chairman. The only authorities who may use the alternative term 'Mayor' are those, like Tonbridge and Malling, which have been granted a Royal Charter and given the status of Borough or City.

1.2.2 An equivalent requirement to appoint a Vice-Chairman/ Deputy Mayor exists under section 5 of the 1972 Act.

1.2.3 Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council has had a ceremonial Mayor since December 1983, having been granted a Royal Charter earlier that year. The Mayor is the borough's First Citizen and is elected annually by fellow councillors for one year at the annual meeting of the Council in May. The Mayor chairs the full Council meetings and, in common with most other ceremonial mayors, and unlike

directly elected mayors, remains apolitical throughout their period of office. Indeed, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are not eligible to serve on Cabinet during their tenure in these roles.

- 1.2.4 In addition, the Mayor also represents the Council as the civic head of the borough at official functions and attends, on average, approximately 250-300 events during their term of office. At functions in the borough, the Mayor takes precedence over other citizens. The only exception to this is when Royalty or the Lord Lieutenant is visiting the borough
- 1.2.5 The Mayor can be invited to attend functions or activities, arranged and organised in the Borough, where they will act as ambassador for the Council and provide community leadership and engagement with local residents. These range from meeting Royalty and welcoming overseas visitors to opening school fetes and attending productions by local amateur dramatic groups.
- 1.2.6 The Mayor currently attends a number of annual Civic events. These are the Annual Council (held in May), the Civic Service (June) and the Garden Party (July).
- 1.2.7 The Council may pay the Mayor and Deputy Mayor such allowance as it thinks reasonable for the purpose of enabling him to meet the expenses of his office. These allowances are currently £5990 and £1420 respectively.

1.3 **Scope of review**

- 1.3.1 It is proposed that the review could usefully consider the following areas
- Role of the Mayor – to consider how the role of Mayor can best promote the Borough and the local economy, whilst continuing to perform an important role in the local community.
 - Mayoral engagements – to consider the appropriate emphasis for selection of Mayoral visits, both inside and outside of the Borough
 - Mayoral transport – to consider the efficacy of the current arrangements
 - The fund-raising role of the Mayor
 - The Mayoral budget
 - The role of the Macebearer
 - The Mayor and Deputy Mayor's allowance

1.4 **Review process**

- 1.4.1 Given the range of possible consultees to the proposed review, it is suggested that it should be taken forward by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee itself

rather than through a Scrutiny Review Group. If Members are minded to approve the scope of the review set out in paragraph 1.3.1 of this report, it is suggested that a detailed report be brought forward to the next meeting of this Committee for further consideration.

1.5 Legal Implications

1.5.1 Any arising will be addressed as part of the review.

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.6.1 Any arising will be addressed as part of the review.

1.7 Recommendation

1.7.1 That the proposed scope of the review of the civic function be endorsed.

Background papers:

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Nil

Adrian Stanfield

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