

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Monday, 23rd June, 2014

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

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A W Allison, Miss A Moloney and H S Rogers

PART 1 - PUBLIC

GP 14/1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

GP 14/2 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 2 September 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

GP 14/3 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 29 October 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL

GP 14/4 REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

The Committee received the Minutes of the meeting of the Electoral Review Working Group held on 18 March 2014 together with the report of the Chief Executive on final proposals for the review of polling districts and polling places in the Borough. It was noted that the final recommendations were the same as those presented to the Working Group subject to a slight formatting correction.

RECOMMENDED: That the final proposals set out at Annex 2 to the report be approved by the Council.

*** Referred to Council**



GP 14/5 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION - PUBLICATION SCHEME

The report of the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer presented a revised publication scheme under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which complied with the model publication scheme published by the Information Commissioner in August 2013.

RECOMMENDED: That the revised publication scheme set out at Annex 1 to the report be adopted. ◀

* Referred to Council

GP 14/6 HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY UPDATE

The report of the Director of Central Services updated the Committee on progress in achieving the improvement priorities in the Human Resources Strategy for 2013/14 and identified actions to be implemented in the period April 2014 – March 2015. The updated strategy also contained the statutory equality monitoring required by the Equality Act 2010.

RECOMMENDED: That the outcomes of the equality monitoring reported in Section 4 of the Human Resources Strategy, as set out in Annex 1 to the report, be noted and the actions listed in Section 5 thereof be commended to the Council. ◀

* Referred to Council

GP 14/7 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 2014/15. 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. Members were advised that the statement would be updated to reflect the decisions at Minute GP 14/15.

RECOMMENDED: That the Pay Policy Statement 2014/15 set out in Annex 1 to the report, as updated, 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 14/8 2014/15 PAY AWARD

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 2014/15. 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 elsewhere in Kent and the current offer of the National Employers. It was noted that the proposal for a 1% pay award had been informally tested with both staff and Unison and content expressed.

Members commended the efforts of staff during challenging financial circumstances and their commitment to the Council, exemplified in the responses to the flooding emergency.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) a 1% pay award for the 2014/15 financial year be approved backdated to 1 April 2014; and
- (2) thanks be recorded to all staff for their commitment to the work of the Authority.

GP 14/9 PENSIONS DISCRETIONS POLICY

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Central Services regarding endorsement of an amended Pensions Discretions Policy in response to changes in pensions legislation. It was noted that the policy referred to nine discretions including five that were 'mandatory' and in each case the discretion was not offered by the Council.

RESOLVED: That the amended Pensions Discretions Policy, as set out at the Annex to the report, be endorsed.

GP 14/10 WHISTLEBLOWING CHARTER (CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING CODE)

The joint report of the Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Transformation presented a draft Whistleblowing Charter (Confidential Reporting Code) which contained a number of minor amendments. It

was noted that the Code had been considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 16 June 2014 and commended for endorsement.

RESOLVED: That the draft Whistleblowing Charter, as set out at Annex 1 to the report, be endorsed.

GP 14/11 COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS ON AUDITING

The report of the Chairman of the Committee gave details of the assurance given to the External Auditor that the Council had complied with the International Standards on Auditing. In view of the timescale of meetings it was noted that the assurance from the Audit Committee and the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee had been accepted.

RESOLVED: That following consideration of the evidence provided by the Audit Committee and Management Team, the assurance given by the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee that the standards have been complied with be endorsed.

GP 14/12 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2013/14

The Director of Finance and Transformation reported that the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2014 and the unaudited Accounts for 2013/14 had been endorsed and recommended for approval by the Audit Committee on 14 April and 16 June 2014 respectively.

The unaudited Accounts for 2013/14 were presented in the format specified by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2013/14 and Members were advised that they included the proposals being recommended to the Cabinet on 25 June 2014. Attention was drawn to the more significant changes applying to the 2013/14 financial year.

A number of key messages underpinning the Statement of Accounts were highlighted. Reference was made to the transfer of responsibility for the management of the Council's leisure facilities to the Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust, the implications of the introduction of the business rates retention scheme and the future position regarding capital expenditure.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Annual Governance Statement for the year ending 31 March 2014 be endorsed to accompany the 2013/14 Statement of Accounts;

(2) the Statement provided by the Director of Finance and Transformation in support of assertions made in the Statement of

Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts, as set out at Annex 2 to the report, be noted and endorsed;

(3) the recommendations detailed at paragraph 1.6.3 of the report following a review of the specific earmarked reserves held by the Council be noted and endorsed; and

(4) the unaudited set of Accounts for 2013/14 be received and approved and the Chairman be authorised to sign the Accounts in the appropriate place.

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION

GP 14/13 AUDIT PLAN 2013/14

The report of the Director of Finance and Transformation introduced the Council's 2013/14 Audit Plan produced by Grant Thornton, the external auditors.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and noted.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE

GP 14/14 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 14/15 ESTABLISHMENT CHANGES AND CONTINUED MANAGEMENT RESTRUCTURING

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

The report of the Management Team presented for approval a number of management restructuring proposals together with adjustments approved by the Team on an operational basis. It was noted that the changes contributed net establishment savings of £86,000 per annum which could be set against the corporate savings target and incorporated within the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

RESOLVED: That the following proposals and establishment adjustments be endorsed:

(1) Post DV0003 Chief Environmental Health Officer be regraded from M5 to M4 with immediate effect;

(2) Post DE0210 Technical Assistant (15 hours) scale 3/4 be deleted with immediate effect;

(3) Post DJ0116 Planning Technician (37 hours) scale 3/4 - reduced to 30 hours;

(4) Post DJ0121 Planning Technician (22 hours) scale 3/4 - increased to 27.5 hours;

(5) Post DJ0125 Systems Support Assistant (37 hours) scale 5/6 - reduced to 30 hours;

(6) Post DV0111 Healthy Living Co-ordinator (30 hours) scale SO - formally moved to a new staff cost centre within Environmental Health and given a new post number (DV0201);

(7) new Post DV0202 Health Improvement Assistant (30 hours) scale 5 established, funded from external Public Health budgets;

(8) new Post DV0203 Health Improvement Assistant (20 hours) scale 5 established on a fixed term basis, funded from external Public Health budgets;

(9) Post DG0007 Waste and Street Scene Services Manager (37 hours) M7 be deleted with effect from 7 July 2014;

(10) Post DG2001 be redesignated from Waste Management Officer to Street Scene Manager (37 hours) and regraded from M9 to M8 with effect from 7 July 2014;

(11) a new post of Senior Waste Services Inspector (37 hours) grade 6/SO be created with effect from 7 July 2014;

(12) following a ring-fenced selection process, one of the existing Waste Inspectors (posts DG2002, DG2003, DG2004) be appointed to the role of Senior Waste Services Inspector and thereafter their post be deleted from the establishment;

(13) it be confirmed that the contract of Mr Phil Beddoes be terminated on 6 July on the grounds of redundancy, that in accordance with the Local Government Pension Regulations he should commence receipt of his pension from 7 July and his redundancy pay should be calculated as set out in the Reorganisation, Redundancy and Redeployment Procedures;

- (14) it be noted that Mr Dennis Gardner be appointed as Head of Waste & Street Scene (post DG0006) from 7 July 2014;
- (15) Post DG0108 be redesignated and regraded to Leisure Services Manager (Outdoor) grade M8, backdated to 1 April 2014;
- (16) Post DG0402 Youth & Play Officer (22.5 hours) scale SO - increased to 37 hours for a two year period from 1 April 2014;
- (17) Post DG0906 Administration Assistant (37 hours) scale 2/3 - temporarily regraded to scale 3/4 and redesignated Leisure Development Assistant for a two year period from 1 April 2014;
- (18) the deletion of Post DG3003 Administration Assistant (15 hours) scale 2/3 be confirmed with effect from 1 April 2014;
- (19) Post DG3004 Administration Assistant (18.5 hours) scale 2/3 - increased to 27.5 hours, with a further 3 hours being worked on a temporary basis until 31 December 2014;
- (20) Post DG3007 Administration Assistant (22 hours) scale 2/3 - increased to 27 hours;
- (21) Post DG3008 Administration Assistant (26.5 hours) scale 2/3 - reduced to 22.5 hours;
- (22) Post DG3009 Administration Assistant (18.5 hours) scale 2/3 - increased by an additional 3.5 hours on a temporary basis until 31 December 2014;
- (23) it be noted that the temporary staff provision within the Street Scene & Leisure Administration team of £1,000 is no longer required and has been deleted;
- (24) Post DF0907 Revenue and Benefits Liaison Officer be regraded from SO to SO/M9 and increased from 30 to 37 hours with immediate effect;
- (25) Post DA1102 Property Services Officer be regraded from SO/M9 to M8 with immediate effect;
- (26) subject to the confirmation of the Cabinet at its meeting on 25 June regarding the future arrangements for the service, Post DA0501 Courier (20 hours) scale 2 be deleted thereafter;
- (27) the extension of the temporary contract of Post DB0341 Welfare Advisor (scale 3) until 30 November 2014 and the marginal increase in hours from 35.5 to 37 hours per week be noted;

(28) the deletion of Post DB0327 Customer Services Advisor (37 hours) scale 2/3 be noted;

(29) Post DB0305 Senior Customer Services Advisor scale 3/4 - increased from 22.5 to 37 hours per week;

(30) Post DB0323 Customer Services Advisor scale 2/3 - increased from 21 to 22 hours per week;

(31) after utilising the ring-fenced management restructure allowance, it be noted that permanent net savings of £86,000 can be taken into the Medium Term Financial Strategy as a contribution towards the 2015/16 savings target; and

(32) the Committee's thanks be conveyed to Mr Phil Beddoes, Head of Waste and Street Scene, and Mr Paul Griffin, Revenue and Benefits Manager, for their service to the Council over many years together with best wishes for the future.

The meeting ended at 8.38 pm