

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday, 23rd November, 2022

Present: Cllr M R Rhodes (Chair), Cllr B J Luker (Vice-Chair), Cllr Mrs P A Bates, Cllr A E Clark, Cllr D J Cooper, Cllr N J Heslop, Cllr D W King, Cllr D Lettington, Cllr W E Palmer, Cllr R V Roud, Cllr Mrs M Tatton, Cllr R I B Cannon (substitute) and Cllr D Harman (substitute)

In attendance: Councillors D Thornevell was also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Virtual: Councillors R P Betts, M D Boughton, V M C Branson, M A J Hood, Mrs A S Oakley and K B Tanner participated via MS Teams and joined the discussion when invited to do so by the Chair in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M A Coffin, D A S Davis and D Keers

PART 1 - PUBLIC

GP 22/37 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Notification of substitute members were recorded as set out below:

- Cllr Cannon substitute for Cllr Davis
- Cllr Harman substitute for Cllr Coffin

In accordance with Council Procedure Rules 17.5 to 17.9 these Councillors had the same rights as the ordinary member of the committee for whom they were substituting.

GP 22/38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

GP 22/39 THE PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES BOUNDARY REVIEW

The report of the Chief Executive advised of the final proposals issued by the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) and invited Members to

consider a response on behalf of the Borough Council to be submitted by the consultation deadline of 5 December 2022.

Concerns raised previously in respect of the boundary review were summarised at 1.1.2. The final proposed maps for the constituencies encompassing Tonbridge and Malling were set out in Annex 2, whilst the first proposed and current maps for the constituencies were set out in Annex 3.

Members noted that the BCE proposed 3 County Constituencies (CC) of Chatham and Aylesford, Maidstone and Malling and Tonbridge to cover the Borough. None of which were co-terminus with the Borough boundary. The proposed Chatham and Aylesford CC lost Ditton and South Aylesford and gained more of Rochester/Chatham; the proposed Tonbridge CC lost some of the Mallings and gained New Ash Green, Hartley and part of Longfield and the new proposed Maidstone and Malling CC incorporated the Mallings, Barming, Allington and part of Maidstone.

Careful consideration was given to the proposals and Members reiterated concerns in respect of the loss of Aylesford South from the Chatham and Aylesford County Constituency; the weakening of community relationships as a result of dividing parishes and wards and the dislocated and inconsistent approach of the proposals. It was also felt that local knowledge and views should be reflected, as indicated in the consultation documents, and this point should be emphasised in the Borough Council's response.

Members were encouraged to submit either individual responses to the BCE or to provide feedback to the Head of Elections, the Chief Executive and the Leader which would be used to inform the Borough Council's final response.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the final proposals of the Boundary Commission for England in respect of the County Constituencies in Tonbridge and Malling, as set out in Annex 2, be noted; and
- (2) delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader, to submit the Borough Council's response to the proposals having due regard to the points and areas of concern raised by Members.

GP 22/40 SCHEME OF MEMBER'S ALLOWANCES

The report of the Director of Central Services and Deputy Chief Executive recommended that the Scheme of Member's Allowances remained unchanged for 2023/24 pending consideration of any proposals from the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel (JIRP).

Members were reminded that the Borough Council could not adopt a revised Scheme without first considering recommendations from an independent remuneration panel. In August 2022 the Brough Council had appointed a new Panel, jointly with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Sevenoaks District Council, to provide recommendations in relation to Member's Allowances. It was anticipated that the Panel would be in a position to provide recommendations by January 2023. Unfortunately, this would not allow sufficient time for Members to consider these recommendations and formulate proposals in time for budget setting for 2023/24.

In addition, following local elections in May 2023, the composition of the Borough Council would change from a cohort of 54 members to 44. Consequently, each Member would have a greater number of constituents and the Panel recommendations should take this into account.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Scheme of Allowances for the 2023/24 municipal year remain unchanged from the current Scheme for 2022/23; and
- (2) the Scheme of Allowances for 2023/24 be reviewed during the 2023/24 municipal year upon receipt of the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE

GP 22/41 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 TO BE TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

GP 22/42 ESTABLISHMENT REPORT

(Reasons: 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) the additional 18 month funding from the Climate Change reserve to recruit to the established Climate Change Officer post on a full time fixed term, 3 year, contract at grade SO be noted;
- (2) the creation of the Internal Communications Officer post on a part time 18.5 hours per week fixed term, 2 year, contract at grade SO be noted;
- (3) a temporary allowance be paid for 12 months to the Head of IT for undertaking the duties of Senior Information Risk Officer, for the period 1 October 2022 – 30 September 2023;
- (4) the creation of a new Principal Enforcement Officer post, full time on scale M8 with immediate effect be agreed;
- (5) the creation of a new Planning Enforcement Officer post on a full time, two year fixed term contract on scale 5 with immediate effect be agreed; and
- (6) that post DJ0137 (Planning Enforcement Officer) 37 hours per week scale 5 be deleted from the Establishment with immediate effect.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm