

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 25th January, 2023

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 D A S Davis, Cllr N J Heslop, Cllr D Keers, Cllr D W King, Cllr D Lettington, Cllr W E Palmer, Cllr R V Roud, Cllr Mrs M Tatton and Cllr D Harman.

Virtual: Councillors Mrs J A Anderson, V M C Branson, M D Boughton, R W Dalton, 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.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M A Coffin.

PART 1 - PUBLIC

GP 23/1 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Notification of substitute members were recorded as set out below:

- Cllr Harman substituted for Cllr Coffin

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

GP 23/2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

GP 23/3 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 3 October 2022 and the extraordinary meeting held on the 23 November 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL

GP 23/4 LOCALISM ACT - PAY POLICY

The report of the Director of Central Services summarised the requirements of the Localism Act and presented an updated Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24 as set out in Annex 1 to the report.

Members noted that as there had not been any changes in the Councils remuneration policy, the substantive content of the updated Pay Policy Statement in Annex 1 was identical to the Council's first Pay Policy Statement (adopted by the Council on 16 February 2012).

RESOLVED: That the Pay Policy set out in Annex 1 be commended for adoption at the Council meeting on 21 February 2023.

DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

GP 23/5 PAY AWARD 2023-24

The report of the Chief Executive requested that Members consider a pay award of 5% for employees for 2023/24. Members noted that 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 Council therefore determined its own pay awards and was not tied into the national process of collective bargaining. The impact of a 5% pay award in the Council's salary scales was attached at Annex 1 of the report and UNISON's pay claim for 2023/24 at Annex 2.

The Chair proposed and it was seconded that Council Procedure Rule No 10.11 be suspended, to allow representatives of UNISON to address the Committee on behalf of its members, during which concern was raised in respect of the increase in cost of living, in particular the impact on those staff on lower salaries.

During discussion, it was noted that if Members were minded to agree a 12% pay award, the additional costs would have a significant impact on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Members considered a redistribution of the total amount based on 5%, so those on a lower pay scale were awarded a higher percentage increase in their pay. Attention was brought to the impact that this would have on the stability of the pay structure, recruitment and retention.

In addition to the pay award, it was proposed to increase the leave entitlement for all staff by one day with effect from 1 April 2023.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the financial provision in the 2023/24 Estimates and Medium-Term Financial Strategy for the pay award be capped at the equivalent of a 5% pay award;
- 2) a range of options to be presented to an extraordinary meeting of the General Purposes Committee, that take into account those factors raised by Members; and

- 3) an increase of one day to the annual leave entitlements of all Officers as detailed in section 1.6 of the report from 1 April 2023, be agreed.

GP 23/6 URGENT ITEMS

The requisite notice having been given to the Chief Executive and in accordance with s100B (4) of LGA 1972, the Chair was of the opinion that the Amendment of Final Proposals for Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places should be considered as a matter of urgency by reason of special circumstance regarding the configuration and technical changes required to elections software in advance of the local elections in May 2023.

GP 23/7 AMENDMENT TO FINAL PROPOSALS FOR REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

Following agreement of the final proposals of the Ward Boundaries and Polling Districts at the General Purposes Committee meeting of 12 September 2022, on making the technical changes in the Elections software, it brought to light some amendments required for three parish ward polling districts. A list of the new wards and the amended final proposed Polling Districts and Polling Places that were within each Polling District was attached at Annex 1 to the report and the final proposal Polling Districts and Polling Places map attached at Annex 2.

The main changes were:

- New Polling District called Walderslade Woods
- New Polling District called Aylesford Station
- New Polling District called Snodland Central

RESOLVED: That the amendments to the final proposals, as set out in paragraph 1.2.3 of the report and Annex 1 attached to the report, be endorsed.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE

GP 23/8 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**GP 23/9 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) the Sports Development Officer post DG0405 be deleted, with effect 1 April 2023;
- (2) the reduction in hours of post DG3001, Senior Administration Assistant, to 26.5 hours be agreed with immediate effect;
- (3) post DB0340 Gateway Manager, 37 hours per week, grade M9, be deleted from the Establishment with immediate effect; and
- (4) the creation of a new full time, permanent, Gateway and Customer Services Manager post (M8) be agreed, with immediate effect.

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm