

# DEMOCRACY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Wednesday 1 July 2020

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Remote Meeting - The Public proceedings of the Meeting will be broadcast live and recorded for playback on the Maidstone Borough Council Website

Membership:

Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Chappell-Tay, Mrs Gooch (Chairman), Hastie, Joy, Lewins, Perry, Purle and Webb (Vice-Chairman)

*The Chairman will assume that all Members will read the reports before attending the meeting. Officers are asked to assume the same when introducing reports.*

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## AGENDA

Page No.

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Notification of Substitute Members
3. Urgent Items
4. Notification of Visiting Members
5. Disclosures by Members and Officers
6. Disclosures of Lobbying
7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.
8. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 11 March 2020 1 - 4
9. Presentation of Petitions (if any)
10. Question and Answer Session for Members of the Public
11. Questions from Members to the Chairman (if any)
12. Committee Work Programme 5
13. Reports of Outside Bodies

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**Issued on Tuesday 23 June 2020**

**Continued Over/:**

*Alison Broom*

**Alison Broom, Chief Executive**

14. Member Agenda Item Request from Cllr Jonathan Purle - Review of Arrangements Empowering Planning Officers to Defer or Overturn Planning Refusals by Elected Members	6 - 9
15. Extension of the Appointment of the Independent Person	10 - 14
16. Member Training 2020-21, Discussion Paper	15 - 19
17. Outside Bodies - Current Status	20 - 25

## **INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC**

In order to ask a question at this remote meeting, please call **01622 602899** or email [committee@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:committee@maidstone.gov.uk) by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Monday 29 June 2020). You will need to provide the full text in writing.

If your question is accepted, you will be provided with instructions as to how you can access the meeting.

In order to submit a written statement in relation to an item on the agenda, please call 01622 602899 or email [committee@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:committee@maidstone.gov.uk) by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Monday 29 June 2020). You will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to comment on.

If you require this information in an alternative format, please call **01622 602899** or email [committee@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:committee@maidstone.gov.uk).

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## MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

### DEMOCRACY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

#### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH 2020

**Present:** Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Chappell-Tay, Mrs Gooch (Chair), Hastie, Joy, Lewins, Perry, Purle and Webb

76. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

77. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

78. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

79. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

80. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

81. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

82. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The Committee Meeting was adjourned between 6.32 p.m. and 6.35 p.m., in order that Maidstone's Honorary Alderman could be presented with their broach, in recognition of the position awarded.

83. EXEMPT ITEMS

**RESOLVED:** That all items be taken in public as proposed.

84. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2020

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed.

85. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

86. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

87. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

88. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager noted that an additional column to display the origin of an item had been included in the Committee Work Programme. It was confirmed that no further items would be added to the Committee Work Programme, due to the possibility that the work schedule for the Committee may differ in the next municipal year.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

89. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Joy presented an update report on the Maidstone Street Pastors.

**RESOLVED:** That the Reports of Outside Bodies be noted.

90. CONSULTATION RESPONSE ON THE MOTION - MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager introduced the report, reminding the Committee that there was no affirmative recommendation on the report due to the Consultation being as a result of a Member request.

It was confirmed that the majority of Members consulted were in favour of the Motion (proposed at Full Council on 18 December 2019) and that the risks arising from this change were low, as summarised in Section 4 of the report. A proposed protocol in choosing Members for Licensing Sub-Committee was shown in section 4.3 of the report. It was stated that the enforcement of this protocol would be the responsibility of the Licensing Committee.

Members of the Committee thanked Officers for the work associated with the Motion since it had been moved.

**RESOLVED:** That;

1. The motion concerning Membership of Committees be approved; and
2. Full Council be recommended to approve the amendments arising from this motion, to the Constitution.

91. AMENDED CONSTITUTION 2020/21 - REFORMATTING, MINOR AMENDMENTS, AND MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS AT COMMITTEE

The report was introduced by the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager, noting that some of the changes proposed to the Constitution originated through its difficulty being used in practice. This included the layout, formatting, incorrect references and the changes in officer structure not being noted, amongst others.

It was noted that:

- Appendix A included the proposed changes to the Constitution, such as to the procedure rules which govern public and member questions at Committee Meetings; and
- The Code of Conduct would not be revised as a new standards code is due to be launched by the Local Government Association in the Summer of 2020.

The Committee felt that Rule 14, which allows Members to ask questions of the Chairman at Committee Meetings, was valued and wished to be kept in operation as a tool of scrutiny.

Additionally, there was discussion concerning Rule 13.1 which allows Group Leaders to respond to Public questions at Full Council. It was felt that the rule was not conducive to public engagement, in that it allowed Members to spend long periods of time answering each question. The Committee decided to amend the proposed rule change, to remove the group leader's capacity to respond after the appropriate Chairman had responded. This amendment was to apply to Committee Meetings also.

The Committee expressed thanks for the work undertaken by officers in updating Maidstone Borough Council's Constitution.

**RESOLVED:** That;

1. The amendments to the Constitution set out in Appendix A, be agreed, subject to the following:

- the continued application of Rule 14 to Committee Meetings; and
- Rule 13, Section 13.1, be amended to read as follows:

'At ordinary meetings of the Council members of the public may ask questions of the Chairman of any Committee provided written notice has been given in advance as set out below. This question and answer session will be limited to one hour.'

2. Subject to the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager finalising further corrections in the document, the reformatted and amended Constitution be recommended to Council for adoption.

92. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.07 p.m.

## 2020/21 WORK PROGRAMME

	Committee	Month	Origin	CLT to clear	Lead	Report Author
Timetable for Community Governance Review	D&GP	02-Sep-20	Governance	No	Angela Woodhouse	Ryan O'Connell
Workforce Strategy Update	D&GP	02-Sep-20	Officer Update	?	Bal Sandher	Bal Sandher
Workforce Strategy Update	D&GP	27-Jan-21	Officer Update	?	Bal Sandher	Bal Sandher
Pay Policy Statement 2021	D&GP	27-Jan-21	Governance	?	Bal Sandher	Bal Sandher
Review of Governance arrangements	D&GP	27-Jan-21	Governance	Yes	Angela Woodhouse	Ryan O'Connell
Democratic Representation Review - Community Governance Review	D&GP	TBC	Governance	Yes	Angela Woodhouse	Ryan O'Connell
Member Training Plan	D&GP	TBC	Governance	No	Angela Woodhouse	Ryan O'Connell

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# Agenda Item 14

**Democracy and General  
Purposes Committee**

**1 July 2020**

**Member Agenda Item Request from Cllr Jonathan Purle:  
Review of Arrangements Empowering Planning Officers to  
Defer or Overturn Planning Refusals by Elected Members**

**Issue for Consideration:**

1. Councillor Purle has submitted a Member Agenda Item Request as set out in Appendix 1.
2. Member Agenda Item Requests arise as set out in the Constitution under part 3.1, 3.2 'Business'.

**Recommendation:**

That the Committee consider the request from Cllr Purle and decide whether to take the matter further and request an officer report on the item.



Cllr Fay Gooch  
Chair, Democracy & General Purposes Committee  
Maidstone Borough Council  
Maidstone House  
Maidstone  
ME15 6JQ

21 June 2020

Dear Cllr Fay

**RULE 3.2: AGENDA ITEM REQUEST  
REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS EMPOWERING PLANNING OFFICERS TO DEFER OR OVERTURN  
PLANNING REFUSALS BY ELECTED MEMBERS**

1. I write to request that the following matter is included in the agenda of the Democracy & General Purposes Committee on 01 July 2020.
2. I would like a review of Rule 30.3 in the Council Procedure Rules (contained in Section 3.1 of MBC's Constitution), being the powers of the MBC's senior planning officers where members wish to refuse a planning application: -

**30.3** (a) If the Head of Planning and Development, on the advice of the Legal Officer present at the meeting, believes that the Planning Committee's reasons to justify refusal/the imposition of conditions are not sustainable, the decision of the Planning Committee will be deferred to its next meeting. The Committee itself may also agree to defer consideration of an application for the same reasons.

(b) If, at that meeting, the Planning Committee votes to continue with a decision which it has been advised cannot be sustained at appeal and which could have significant cost implications for the Council's budget, the Head of Planning and Development, on the advice of the Legal Officer present, will request Councillors to refer the consideration of the application to Part II of the meeting, to offer Councillors further advice on the legal and financial implications, and the likelihood of success at appeal. If the Committee still decides to refuse the application/impose an unreasonable condition, the Head of Planning and Development will on the advice of the Legal Officer present and in consultation with the Chairman of the meeting, immediately after the vote has been taken, refer the application to the Policy and Resources Committee for determination.

3. I have studied the standing orders of a number of neighbouring councils so as to establish whether these contain any comparable provisions to MBC's Rule 30.3. Where careful reading has not

identified such powers, I have contacted a senior member or officer of that council so as to “double check”.

4. In summary, of the councils surveyed, MBC appears to give the most power to its senior planning officers to frustrate elected members wishing to refuse a planning application.

	Officer Power to defer decisions (Note 2)	Officer Power to move to closed session (Part II)	Officer Power to refer decision to another body	Minimum no of meetings to refuse (where opposed by officers)
Maidstone	✓	✓	✓	3
Ashford				1
Canterbury				1
Medway				1
Sevenoaks	(Note 1)			1
Swale	✓			2
Ton & Malling	✓		✓	3
Tunbridge Wells				1

Notes

1. At Sevenoaks, Officers can recommend a matter be deferred but a decision on deferral is solely at the discretion of the chairman of SBC’s Development Control Committee.
  2. There are of course member powers to defer decisions.
5. There have been at least two instances in the past eighteen months where the Planning Committee has moved to refuse planning permission and planning officers have intervened to in effect disallow the proposed decision.
- 5.1. On 08 November 2018, MBC’s Planning Committee voted 7-4 (with 1 abstention) to refuse planning permission for the later stage of the Hermitage Park development. Planning officers intervened and the matter was instead deferred so as to allow “another go”. On 29 November 2018, the Planning Committee gave in to officer-pressure and narrowly voted to allow the application.
  - 5.2. On 11 June 2020, MBC’s Planning Committee voted narrowly to refuse an application for outline planning permission for 440 houses at Otham. This was followed by a clearer vote (9-3 with 1 abstention) to refuse detailed planning permission for the same scheme. Again, Planning officers intervened so as to defer the two applications with these due to return to the Planning Committee on 25 June 2020 i.e. this week.

It is notable in this case that the interregnum created by the planning officers’ deferral is facilitating all manner of sabre-rattling by the developer. It might be suggested that this is intended to add to pressure on elected members.

## **Conclusion**

6. In my view, Rule 30.3 ought to be removed. It is elected members who are accountable to the voters in this Borough for planning committee decisions, whether those decisions are to grant permission for unpopular developments or increase the risk of adverse costs. The role of unelected planning officers should be to support elected members, including where elected members wish to refuse applications that planning officers had otherwise recommended for approval. Of course, another option available to members would be to remove just some of the aspects of Rule 30.3.
7. You will be aware that should the matter be discussed at our meeting on 01 July 2020, the method of progressing the matter open to the committee would be to request an officer-report on the subject. Consequently, I would suggest including this matter on the agenda for that meeting should not create any difficulty whatsoever.

Yours sincerely



**Jonathan Purle**  
**Conservative Councillor for Bridge Ward**

E: jon@bridgeconservatives.com

T: 01622 807060

**CC.** Cllr Richard Webb, vice-chairman, Democracy & General Purposes Committee

# Agenda Item 15

## Democracy and General Purposes Committee

1 July 2020

### Extension of the appointment of the Independent Person

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Democracy and General Purposes Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Patricia Narebor, Head of Mid Kent Legal Partnership
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Patricia Narebor, Head of Mid Kent Legal Partnership
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards

#### Executive Summary

The Localism Act 2011, section 28(7) requires at least one Independent Person to be appointed, who should be consulted and whose views are to be taken into account, by the Council before it makes a decision on an allegation that it has decided to investigate regarding a breach of the members code of conduct.

The proposal is to extend the appointment of the current Independent Person for one year from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021 and to advertise the role and a reserve position for appointment in 2021.

#### Purpose of Report

Decision

#### This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. To recommend to Council that the term for the current Independent Person be extended for one year from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021.
2. That the role of the Independent Person and a reserve position be advertised.

#### Timetable

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Corporate Leadership Team	16 June 2020
Democracy and General Purposes Committee	1 July 2020
Council	15 July 2020

## Extension of the appointment of the Independent Person

### 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	<p><i>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure</i></li> <li>• <i>Safe, Clean and Green</i></li> <li>• <i>Homes and Communities</i></li> <li>• <i>A Thriving Place</i></li> </ul> <p><i>The extension of the appointment of the Independent Person will contribute to the Council fulfilling the key objectives relating to Homes and Communities. The Council has undertaken to work with its partners to improve the quality of community services and facilities including for health care and community activities.</i></p> <p>The Council's values include taking responsibility. Taking into account the environment that the Council works in, the Council has undertaken to take ownership for its actions, which includes actions taken by Councillors. The value includes making the right choices and decisions that lead to a satisfactory outcome for all.</p> <p>Approving the recommendation will enable the Council to discharge its statutory responsibility and the objectives and values outlined in the Strategic Plan.</p>	Head of Mid Kent Legal Partnership
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	Not applicable.	Head of Mid Kent Legal Partnership
<b>Risk Management</b>	Approving the recommendations will address the risks outlined in paragraph 5 of the report.	Head of Mid Kent Legal Services

<b>Financial</b>	The position of Independent Person attracts an allowance of £750.13 a year (or as revised by the Members Remuneration Allowance Scheme) together with reasonable travel and subsistence expenses. The cost falls within the existing approved budget.	Head of Mid Kent Legal Partnership
<b>Staffing</b>	There are no staffing implications.	Head of Mid Kent Legal Partnership
<b>Legal</b>	The Localism Act 2011, section 28(7) requires at least one Independent Person to be appointed, who should be consulted and whose views are to be taken into account, by the Council before it makes a decision on an allegation that it has decided to investigate regarding a breach of the members code of conduct.  The recommendations of the report will enable the statutory duty to be discharged by the Council.	Head of Mid Kent Legal Partnership
<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	This report will not impact the personal data processed by the Council.	Head of Mid Kent Legal Partnership
<b>Equalities</b>		Head of Mid Kent Legal Partnership
<b>Public Health</b>	There are no public health implications.	Head of Mid Kent Legal Partnership
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	There are no crime and disorder implications.	Head of Mid Kent Legal Partnership
<b>Procurement</b>	There are no procurement implications.	Head of Mid Kent Legal Partnership

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Localism Act 2011, section 28(7) requires at least one Independent Person to be appointed, who should be consulted and whose views are to be taken into account, by the Council before it

makes a decision on an allegation that it has decided to investigate regarding a breach of the members code of conduct.

- 2.2 The proposal is to extend the appointment of the current Independent Person for one year from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021 and to advertise the role and a reserve position for appointment in 2021.
  - 2.3 The term of the current appointment expires on 31 July 2020 and the Council is required to appointment or extend the term of the current appointment to enable the statutory duty to be extended. The proposal is to extend the appointment of the current Independent Person for a year and to advertise the role and a reserve position to be appointed in July 2021. The role of the Independent Person assists the Council in dealing with complaints effectively and efficiently and is essential in ensuring high standards of conduct amongst members are upheld as this is an integral part of the decision making process regarding code of conduct complaints.
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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 That the Council extends the term of the current Independent Person for a period of one year until 31 July 2021; and
  - 3.2 That the Council advertise the role of the Independent Person and a reserve for appointment in 2021.
  - 3.3 Or for the Council to do nothing. This is not an option since the legislation requires at least one Independent Person to be appointed.
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### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the term of the current Independent Person be extended for a period of one year until 31 July 2021. This will ensure that the Council complies with the statutory requirement for at least one Independent Person to be appointed by the Council and for a vacancy to be avoided. The extension will enable the Council to maintain high standards as the current Independent Person is experienced in dealing with such matters.

- 4.1 Advertising the role will enable the Council to make arrangements for the appointment of the Independent Person and a reserve on expiry of the term of the current Independent Person.
- 

### **5. RISK**

- 5.1 Without the extension of the appointment of the Independent Person, the position will be vacant from 1 August 2020.

- 5.2 Should the Council choose to advertise for a new Independent Person, an appointment is unlikely to be made by 1 August 2020 which will result in the position being vacant.
- 5.3 There is a risk that limited applications may be received from experienced candidates and/or the current Independent Person chooses not to apply for the role to commence from 2021. The risk will be mitigated by advertising the role widely.
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## **6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 6.1 The monitoring officer has consulted with the Independent Person and she is in agreement with the extension.
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## **7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 7.1 If the Democracy and General Purposes Committee agree to recommend the extension to Council, this will be considered at the Council Meeting on 17 July 2020.
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## **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

None

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## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None



## Democracy and General Purposes Committee

**1 July 2020**

### Member Training Update

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Democracy and General Purposes Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

#### Executive Summary

This report updates the Committee on Member Learning and Development activities undertaken in 2019-20 and requests member engagement in the programme for 2020-21

#### Purpose of Report

Discussion and noting

#### This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. The Member Learning and Development Update be noted and the proposed approach to the programme for 2020-21 be agreed.

#### Timetable

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Democracy and General Purposes Committee	1 July 2020

# Member Training Update

## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure</li> <li>• Safe, Clean and Green</li> <li>• Homes and Communities</li> <li>• A Thriving Place</li> </ul> <p>We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities. However, they will support the Council’s overall achievement of its aims as set out in the report</p>	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	<p><i>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Heritage is Respected</i></li> <li>• <i>Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced</i></li> <li>• <i>Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved</i></li> <li>• <i>Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected</i></li> </ul> <p>The member training programme should be designed with the cross-cutting objectives in mind.</p>	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
<b>Risk Management</b>	Covered in the risk section	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
<b>Financial</b>	There is a budget available of £10,000 for Member training for 2020-21. Any proposed programme following member consultation will need to be in budget.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
<b>Staffing</b>	We will deliver the recommendations with our	Head of Policy,

	current staffing.	Communications and Governance
<b>Legal</b>	There are no legal implications. However, under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended) the Council as a best value authority has a statutory duty to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Learning and Development Charter and this report assist in demonstrating best value and compliance with the statutory duty.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	There are no privacy and data protection implications.	Policy and Information Team
<b>Equalities</b>	No implications	Policy & Information Manager
<b>Public Health</b>	No implications	Public Health Officer
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	No implications	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
<b>Procurement</b>	Any training procured will follow	Head of Service & Section 151 Officer

## **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Council has in place a Member Development Charter agreed by the Democracy Committee in September 2018.
- 2.2 The Charter sets out the following criteria for Member Development:
- There is a clear commitment to councillor development and support
  - The council has a strategic approach to councillor learning and development
  - Learning and development is effective in building capacity

### Learning and Development Activities Undertaken in 2019/20

- 2.3 37 learning and development activities took place ranging from briefings, planning training and audit training to the new member induction.
- 2.4 Attendance at the training and briefing sessions has varied with some members having attended over 20 sessions and 8 councillors who have not attended any training sessions last year. The two training sessions with the lowest attendance were, New Member Induction day 2 and Planning Training Design Tour workshop.
- 2.5 Planning again proved to be the most popular of the training and briefing sessions run. Popular sessions last year included the Briefing on the Local Plan review with 29 attendees and the Public Consultation for the Local Plan Review with 21 in attendance. The Planning training on Enforcement had 13 out of the 15 required in attendance.
- 2.6 Audit Governance and Standards training was well attended by its committee members, with sessions running pre the scheduled meetings proving to be successful. Sessions ranged from a briefing on the Council Accounts to Standards and the Code of Conduct.
- 2.7 Following the committee structure review last year, charring skills training was held which five Councillors in attendance and this session included meeting procedures and rules.

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## **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 Training will continue virtually for councillors where appropriate and possible. As the rules change regarding social distancing and the alert levels change in relation to the pandemic we will review and adapt how training is delivered.
- 3.2 It would be beneficial to consult with Members on their training needs and committee specific training so we can put together a suitable programme

for 2020-21. A short survey is proposed to capture this information. The survey should also include information on learning styles.

- 3.3 Suggested training would include interests, meeting procedures and rules, specific committee training and skills for Councillors.
  - 3.4 Deciding not to run training and development sessions for members is not recommended as this would go against the Member Development Charter, good governance practice and constitutional requirements for committees.
- 

#### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 That last year's programme be noted and in line with the Member Development Charter members are asked to put forward suggestions for training and agree to a short survey to inform the Member Development programme for this year.
- 

#### **5. RISK**

- 5.1 This report is presented for information only and has no risk management implications.
- 

#### **6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 6.1 Each committee has the opportunity to identify training as appropriate throughout the year.
  - 6.2 The report proposes a short survey to capture members training needs and requests to inform the Member Development Programme.
- 

#### **7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 7.1 If approved a short survey will be conducted in July and a proposed schedule of training brought to this committee in September.
- 

#### **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

None.

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#### **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

# Agenda Item 17

## Democracy and General Purposes Committee

1 July 2020

### Outside Bodies – Current Status

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Democracy and General Purposes Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communication and Governance
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Ryan O’Connell, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager and Oliviya Parfitt, Democratic Services Officer.
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

#### Executive Summary

The report informs the committee that Outside Bodies administration is continuing but is considered a low priority. It also sets out the current information on Outside Body vacancies across committees.

#### Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the current status of Outside Bodies

#### This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the low operational priority currently being given to Outside Bodies administration and the update on Outside Body vacancies be noted.

#### Timetable

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Democracy and General Purposes Committee	1 July 2020

## Outside Bodies – Current Status

### 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	Good governance has an indirect impact on all Corporate Priorities.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	Good governance has an indirect impact on all Corporate Objectives.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
<b>Risk Management</b>	None – report for information	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
<b>Financial</b>	None – report for information	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
<b>Staffing</b>	None – report for information	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
<b>Legal</b>	Outside bodies are appointed to in accordance with the Council’s constitution and the standing orders/agreements of each outside body	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	None – report for information	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
<b>Equalities</b>	None – report for information	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
<b>Public Health</b>	None – report for information	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	None – report for information	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager

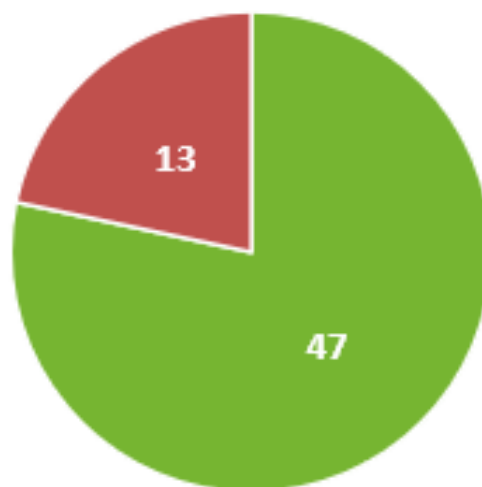
<b>Procurement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None – report for information</li> </ul>	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
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## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Outside bodies were reviewed at the end of 2019 with new rules introduced for advertising vacancies and considering whether to retain membership of the outside body where no nominees were forthcoming for two rounds of advertising.
- 2.2 Outside bodies are not easy to administer. This is due in great part to the need to liaise with 33 outside bodies to ensure that things are being run smoothly and good governance is in place. Although our internal processes are sound, due to a combination of staffing changes and the outbreak of Covid-19 the administration of outside bodies is set as a low priority. The basic administration is continuing with outside body reports going to committees and nominations still being sought, but more detailed work and reviewing the need for positions has been put on hold.
- 2.3 As a result this report only updates the committee on the current status of Outside Body vacancies and the diagram below sets out the current number of vacancies.

### Outside Body Summary

Total Number of Outside Bodies	
Total Positions	33
Not Vacant	60
Vacant	47
Vacancy Percentage	13
	22%



■ Not Vacant ■ Vacant



- 2.4 Appendix 1 sets out the details of the vacancies. A number of these are being advertised at the moment and the detail may have changed by the time of the Committee meeting.
- 

### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 The Committee is recommended to note the update.
- 3.2 In addition the committee could provide a steer on desired action or information on Outside Bodies from Democratic Services, or add a future item into the Committee work programme.
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### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 Due to the current workloads and staffing levels in Democratic Services it is recommended that the update be noted with no further action at this time.
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### **5. RISK**

- 5.1 The report has no significant impact on risk.

### **6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 6.1 None
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### **7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 7.1 None
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### **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Outside Body Detail

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### **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

## Outside Body Detail - Appendix 1

Outside Body	Total No. of Positions	Positions Vacant	Committee	Term of Office (Years)	Appointment Information/Criteria	Vacant Since
Vinters Valley Park Trust	1	1	Communities, Housing and Environment Committee	2	Boxley Ward Members to be appointed, unless no relevant Ward Member nomination is received	05-Jun-19
Action with Communities in Rural Kent	2	1	Communities, Housing and Environment Committee	4	Observer Role	03-Jul-19
Age UK	1	1	Communities, Housing and Environment Committee	3		03-Jul-19
Cutbush and Corrall Charity	4	1	Communities, Housing and Environment Committee	4		03-Jul-19
Relate West and Mid Kent	1	1	Communities, Housing and Environment Committee	2		03-Jul-19
South East Employers	2	2	Democracy and General Purposes Committee	1	Main & Substitute Representative	03-Jul-19
Relief in Need Charities	4	1	Democracy and General Purposes Committee	4		
Brenchley Charity	4	1	Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee	4	Nominative Trustee	03-Jul-19

Maidstone Area Arts Partnership	5	1	Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee	1		
Maidstone Twinning Association	4	1	Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee	3		
Maidstone Cycling Forum	2	1	Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee	4		03-Jul-19
Medway Valley Line Steering Group	2	1	Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee	~		03-Jul-19