

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRACY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 JUNE 2024

Attendees:

Committee Members:	Councillors English (Chairman), Cooke, Mrs Gooch, Jeffery, T Sams, M Thompson, S Thompson and D Wilkinson
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6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

7. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

8. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

9. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

10. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

11. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

12. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That all items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

13. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 MARCH 2024

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed.

14. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 MAY 2024

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed.

15. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

16. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS

There were no questions from members of the public.

17. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

18. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Following a request for clarification, the Director of Strategy, Insight and Governance advised that a training programme had been put in place following Member feedback from the 27 March 2024 Committee meeting including Nolan Principles and two Member induction sessions to make attendance flexible. Some training from June and July had to be moved due to the election, but Members would be advised when this is rescheduled.

It was advised that Members contact the Democratic Services team if there was any additional training they wanted as there was a small budget to accommodate this. Correspondence would also be sent to remind new Members of training offered by outside organisations, for any updates on proposed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training and to promote training for Planning and Licensing.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

19. REFERENCE FROM THE AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE - REVISED MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH COUNCILLOR CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the reference and explained that the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee had made a recommendation for the Democracy and General Purposes Committee to agree for recommendation to Council:

- The revised Member Code of Conduct; and
- revised arrangements for dealing with Councillor conduct complaints.

In response to queries, the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager stated that item 2.1 and 7.4 to the report would be suggested for rewording for clarity.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the COUNCIL: That

1. The revised Member Code of Conduct (Appendix 1) and revised arrangements for dealing with Councillor conduct complaints (Appendix 2) be used to update the Constitution; and
2. The Monitoring Officer consider the comments made by the Committee.

20. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports of Outside Bodies.

21. OUTSIDE BODY APPOINTMENTS

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager introduced the report and explained the following proposed amendments: That

- An additional recommendation be added, as detailed in point 3.3 of the report, to recommend to the Council to expand Maidstone Street Pastor Management Committee to the Penenden Heath and Fant and Oakwood Members;
- The Constitution be amended to reflect the in practise allocation of Outside Body vacancies to Cabinet Portfolios as detailed in 2.1 to the report. If these changes were agreed, this would impact the number of vacancies available for the Maidstone Twinning Association; and
- The Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board have its membership restrictions changed to being able to appoint Cabinet Members for the reasons as set out in 2.2 to the report.

The Committee agreed the amendments with the addition that the Maidstone Street Pastor Management Committee be expanded to any Members interested from all wards in the Borough.

There were the following vacancies:

- One for Cutbush and Corral Charity. A nomination form had been received from Councillor Khadka;
- One for Kent AONB Joint Committee. A nomination form had been received from Councillor J Sams; and
- Two for Maidstone Twinning Association. Nomination forms were received from Councillors Higson, Thompson and Wales.

Members agreed the nominations for Cutbush and Corral Charity and Kent AONB Joint Committee. It was requested that the Maidstone Twinning Association be approached to request if all three nominees could be appointed. It was also agreed for a report on South East Employers to be brought to a future Committee meeting.

RESOLVED: That

1. Council be recommended to properly reflect which Outside Bodies are related to Cabinet portfolios and which are for appointment by this committee (as set out in table 2.3 to the report);
2. It be noted that, at the outside body's request, Relate Mid Kent in no longer an outside body and will be removed from the list of outside bodies;
3. The nominations as set out in Appendix 2 to the report for Cutbush and Corral Charity and Kent AONB Joint Committee be approved with Maidstone Twinning Association to be approached to request appointment of three Members;
4. The Maidstone Street Pastors Management Committee be expanded to include all wards;
5. A report on South East Employers be brought to a future meeting.

22. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager introduced the report and highlighted:

- A minor amendment for a typo in item 2.4 to the report, which should have read: Part C1, rule 18.2 reference amended *from* 18.4 to 18.3 (as the correct rule); and
- An amendment to delete point (i) in Part B4 2.2.3 Joint Transportation Board (JTB) – to remove the ambiguity of the bullet point and the interpretation that it restricts Council’s locus to appoint the Chairman or Vice-Chairman.

The Committee considered and accepted the proposals.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The proposed amendment outlined in paragraph 2.3 be agreed and recommended to Council; and
2. The use of the Monitoring Officer’s delegation to amend the Constitution as outlined in paragraph 2.4, be noted.

23. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.42 p.m.