

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRACY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 29 JANUARY
2020

Present: Councillors Cuming, Hastie, Joy, Lewins, Perry, Purle and Webb (Chairman)

Also Present: Councillor Kimmance

57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from

- Councillor Gooch
- Councillor Chappell-Tay

58. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Cuming was present as a Substitute for Councillor Chappell-Tay.

59. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

60. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Kimmance was present as a Visiting Member and indicated that he wished to speak on Item 14 – Reference from Council – Motion – Membership of Committees.

61. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

62. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillor Joy stated that she had been lobbied on Item 14 – Reference from Council – Motion – Membership of Committees.

63. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

64. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 NOVEMBER 2020

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 November be approved as a correct record and signed.

65. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

66. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

67. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

68. CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

It was decided that Agenda Item 16 – Pay Policy Statement 2020 and Agenda Item 17 – Workforce Strategy Update Report would be discussed after Agenda Item 13 – Reports of Outside Bodies.

69. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager advised that there would be an additional report at the next Committee Meeting, with suggested changes to the constitution on Member and Public speaking at Committee Meetings. Some Members had expressed concerns about how these rules are implemented at Committee Meetings as the rules within the Constitution are meant for Council Meetings.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

70. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no Reports of Outside Bodies.

71. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2020

The Head of Mid Kent HR introduced the report on the Pay Policy Statement 2020, as part of the Transparency Legislation which came into effect in 2012, which summarised the following:

- The policy must be agreed by the Committee so that approval would then be sought from Full Council; and
- The payment information from 2019/20, Trade Union facility time and senior staff salaries have all been updated.

RESOLVED: That the Council be recommended to agree the proposed Pay Policy Statement set out in Appendix 1 to this report, prior to publication on the Council's website.

72. WORKFORCE STRATEGY UPDATE REPORT

The Head of the HR Shared Service introduced the Workforce Strategy Update Report which was to be noted, which included the following points:

- The first in-house employment engagement survey had been designed and would be sent out soon;
- Mental Health training was introduced for Managers in November 2019;
- Managers had been completed a survey on the HR Service Delivery Model which had been introduced in April 2019, with positive feedback received;
- HR surgeries had been introduced every other month for staff members; and
- Work experience at the depot had been provided to 5 young people from the Grow 19 College.

The Committee welcomed the update report and expressed support for the actions that Human Resources had undertaken over the previous year.

RESOLVED: That the progress of the actions set out in the Workforce Strategy be noted.

73. REFERENCE FROM COUNCIL - MOTION - MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance introduced the motion submitted to Council in December 2019 and the Briefing Note which accompanied it.

It was confirmed that there was no statutory reason why Councillors could not serve on both Licensing and Planning Committees, with reference made to the House of Lords Select Committee post legislative review of the Licensing Act 2003.

During the debate Members expressed both their support for and opposition to the motion. Some Members felt that attendance on both Committees could cause a conflict of interest. It was highlighted that Committee Members from both Committees had not been consulted for their views on the motion.

In opposing this view, some Members felt that as it was not a legal requirement that Members could not be on both Committees and it was an unnecessary requirement of Maidstone Borough Council's Constitution. In response to the potential for a conflict of interest, it was noted that the code of conduct would cover this as Members would need to manage any conflict of interest.

The Committee felt that the motion should be deferred in order that the views of Planning and Licensing Committee Members and Substitute Members could be obtained.

RESOLVED: That the motion be deferred until the next Committee Meeting, during which time both Members and Substitute Members of the Licensing and Planning Committees would be consulted by Officers, via email, for their views on the motion.

74. PLANNING COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE - 6 MONTH UPDATE

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager introduced his report, concerning the impact of the changes related to the terms of reference for Planning Committee, as agreed by Council in April 2019.

It was confirmed that there had been no negative impact resulting from the changes following his attendance at a KALC Committee Meeting.

RESOLVED: That no further amendments are required to the Planning Committee Terms of Reference as a result of the review.

75. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.03 p.m.