

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRACY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 30 JUNE 2021

Present: Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Cooke, Cooper, English, Hastie, Perry, Purle (Chairman), M Rose and R Webb

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

3. ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Purle be elected as Chairman of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2021/22.

4. ELECTION OF THE VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Mrs Blackmore be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2021/22.

5. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

6. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

Note: Councillor Hastie joined the meeting at 6.34pm during this item.

7. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

8. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

9. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

10. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 10 MARCH 2021 AND 31 MARCH 2021

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meetings held on 10 March 2021 and 31 March 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed.

11. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

12. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

13. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

14. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance highlighted that the Review of Church Road, Otham had been rescheduled to November, due to resources being directed towards the governance review.

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager proposed that, subject to the approval of the Chairman and Vice Chairman, two additional items would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee: Posthumous Award of Honorary Alderman Status and Parliamentary Constituency Changes (the Boundary Commission for England).

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

15. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports of Outside Bodies.

16. APPOINTMENT TO SOUTH EAST EMPLOYERS

A nomination form had been received from Councillor English to be appointed to South East Employers. Councillor Cooke requested to be appointed to the outside body and outlined previous experience relevant to the role.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Clive English and Councillor Gary Cooke be appointed as representatives to South East Employers.

17. GOVERNANCE REVIEW: CHANGING TO AN EXECUTIVE MODEL

The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance introduced the report which was brought to the Committee following the motion to review governance arrangements approved at the Annual Council Meeting. When reviewed previously, a working group was formed to develop the new

arrangements and this was the preferred option for the current review as it offered more flexibility to meet more often. It was explained that extra resource may be required to support with the development of a new Constitution, and for support from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. If the Committee agreed that extra resource would be required, this would need to be approved by the Policy and Resources Committee.

The Committee discussed option 2, the formation of a working group, as the preferred route to developing the new governance arrangements, with regular progress reports presented back to the Committee. It was felt that all Members should be invited to take part in the working group meetings in order to enhance collaboration, but that a core membership should be appointed from the Committee.

The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance informed the Committee that all-Member workshops had previously taken place to ensure every Member had opportunities to input, which could be arranged for the current review.

RESOLVED: That a working group be formed to develop the new executive arrangements, appointed from Committee Members, and to include the Chairman, two further Members from the Conservative Group, one Member from the Liberal Democrat Group and one Member from the Labour Group.

18. WHOLE COUNCIL ELECTIONS - CONSULTATION STAGE APPROVAL

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager introduced the report, highlighting the amendments since it was presented to the Committee in January 2021. The financial considerations had changed due to the election cycles changing, and reference was made to the statement on 10 June 2021 to the House of Commons outlining the Government's preference for whole council elections. At least one whole council election would take place due to the local government boundary review, which would be in 2024.

In response to questions, the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager confirmed that whole council elections would be synchronised with Parish Council elections, and the Police and Crime Commissioner elections would also fall into the same cycle.

RESOLVED: That

1. The medium consultation option, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be undertaken; and
2. The outcome of the consultation be reported back to the Committee in September 2021 for a recommendation to be made to Council in September 2021.

19. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSIONS FOR MEMBERS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AT COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager introduced the report, explaining that option 3(i) would be preferable from a service delivery perspective due to the impact on resources of the major projects being undertaken within the team.

RESOLVED: That option 3(i) of the report, to maintain the status quo, be agreed, but that Member feedback on this issue be taken by officers as part of the development of the new Constitution.

20. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30pm to 7.29pm.