

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SELECTION AND MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Selection and Member Services Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 29 June 2022.

PRESENT: Mr N J Collor (Chairman), Mr M C Dance, Mr C Simkins, Mr B J Sweetland, Mr B H Lewis and Mr P J Oakford

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr B Watts (General Counsel) and Mr T Godfrey (Senior Governance Manager)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

8. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting.

(Item 2)

No declarations were made.

9. Minutes

(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2022 were an accurate record and that they be signed by the Chair.

10. Rochester Bridge Trust - arrangement changes

(Item 4)

- 1) Mr Cook (Clerk) introduced the report, clarifying that further to correspondence shared with the Committee regarding membership arrangements and appointments arising outside of the Committee cycle, the paper sought formal approval for proposed revisions to the Trust's membership arrangements. These covered matters such as term limits and nomination processes.
- 2) Responding to questions, Mr Cook and Mr Watts explained that transitional arrangements set out within the papers were applicable to serving Trustees so as allowing for the continued appointment of relevant Members, noting also that the paper included a recommendation to extend KCC's current appointee's term to accord with the new arrangements.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

- i. approve the changes to the Trustee nomination process sought by the Rochester Bridge Trust as set out in Appendices 1 and 2; and
- ii. agree to extend the term of Ms Hohler as Trustee by one year so that her current term will expire on 31 May 2026.

11. Pension Fund Governance

(Item 5)

- 1) Alison Mings (Treasury and Pensions Strategic Advisor) introduced the report, explaining the background to the governance review conducted by Barnett Waddingham with a view to updating and improving the governance processes surrounding the Council's pension management activity.
- 2) Ms Mings advised the Committee that a key finding of the review was that the Terms of Reference and supporting arrangements for the Council's Pension Board should be updated and enhanced. Consequently, revised Terms of Reference had been prepared for consideration by the Committee with a request that they be recommended to County Council for approval.
- 3) Mr Simkins, as Chair of the Pension Fund Committee, highlighted to the Committee that there was a positive working relationship between the Pension Fund Committee and the Pension Board and he hoped the revised arrangements would support this in future by better developing the important role of the Board.
- 4) Members discussed membership arrangements for the Board, noting the challenges around recruitment. Ms Mings advised that the new Terms of Reference and arrangements would support a more regular and effective meeting schedule of the Board. She also clarified that the Board was not a legal committee of the Council but rather a forum required by statute to be established so that it can support the Pension Fund Committee in the exercise of its functions.

RESOLVED that:

- i. the revised Pension Board terms of reference be recommended to County Council for approval; and
- ii. that the Pension Fund Committee Terms of Reference document be noted.

12. Member development and support

(Item 6)

- 1) Mr Watts gave a verbal overview of the report which outlined the existing provision of Member development and support delivered by Governance, Law and Democracy, as well as planned enhancements which were being developed within the existing resource envelope, factoring in Members' needs. He highlighted recent improvements to Member signposting, which including the renovation of the Members Area on the KNet intranet. The scope of the soon to be established Member Development Sub-Committee was addressed. He invited the views of the Committee with regard to Members' civic functions as well as the level of support desired, noting that the wider Membership would be further engaged through a series of surveys and workshops.
- 2) A Member noted that many Members were twin hatters, serving on both the County and district councils in executive or non-executive positions, they asked whether conflicts of interest given the intertwining roles required further

investigation. Mr Watts agreed to further investigate the issue with governance officers and provide a briefing for Members at the appropriate time.

- 3) Public speaking workshops for new Members were encouraged by a Member.
- 4) Members emphasised the diverse needs of Members based on their Council appointments and experiences.
- 5) A Member commented that Members' experiences and camaraderie were affected by the working environment which hadn't fully returned to pre-pandemic arrangements.
- 6) The use of hybrid meeting arrangements to increase meeting accessibility were recognised by a Member, whilst it was noted that networking was more difficult in virtual settings.
- 7) Members emphasised the need to ensure it was straightforward for them to contact relevant officers. It was noted that oversight of developments within their electoral divisions could be negatively impacted by poor communication. Improved signposting as well as triaging were mentioned by a Member as means of improving access. Mr Watts agreed to investigate the problems raised by Members and liaise with the respective service directors.
- 8) Mr Watts further explained how expanded Member and governance services had been delivered with existing resources and that innovation would be further enhanced by a forthcoming intake of graduates into Governance, Law and Democracy.
- 9) Members shared their concerns that new Member conduct in some formal meetings had been inadequate, with the emergence from the pandemic and its different ways of working at the beginning of the County Council's term cited as a contributing factor.
- 10) A Member asked that visits and events at Invicta House be expanded as a way of increasing Member-officer interaction and the understanding of the work carried out by services across the Council.
- 11) Members raised concerns regarding the varying effectiveness of Joint Transport Boards across the county, they asked that the existing agreements and meeting arrangements be reviewed in order to maximise Member and officer productivity. Mr Watts agreed to discuss the issues raised with district monitoring officers at a future meeting of Kent Secretaries.

RESOLVED to:

- a) Support the proposed survey of Members on their support needs;
- b) ask the Member Development Sub-Committee to consider the Member development content as part of its work programme; and
- c) Support the proposal to explore increased Civic event activity and the relevant Member involvement.