

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 on Monday, 1 July 2019.

PRESENT: Mr R H Bird (Substitute for Mrs T Dean, MBE), Mr D L Brazier (Substitute for Mr B J Sweetland), Mr P B Carter, CBE, Mr M C Dance, Mr G K Gibbens (Substitute for Mr J P McInroy), Mr E E C Hotson and Mr G Lymer

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr B Watts (General Counsel), Mr T Godfrey (Scrutiny Research Officer) and Mr A Tait (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Membership

(Item 1)

The Committee noted the appointment of Mr G Lymer in place of Mrs A D Allen.

2. Election of Chairman

(Item)

(1) Mr M C Dance moved seconded by Mr E E C Hotson that Mr G Lymer be elected Chairman for the meeting.

Carried with no opposition

(2) Mr Lymer thereupon took the Chair.

3. Minutes - 14 November 2018

(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2018 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

4. Structural Revision of the Constitution

(Item 5)

(1) The General Counsel introduced the report, explaining that its aim was to restructure the Constitution in order to make the County Council's governance arrangements simpler and more transparent. Although some minor alterations had been included, the draft revision did not contain any significant change to the substantive content to the Constitution.

(2) The Committee Members indicated a preference for the County Council to consider the revised Constitution on September 2019, which would allow all Members of the Council to consider what was proposed and to respond either in writing or verbally during drop-in sessions which would be arranged by the General Counsel.

(3) Members commented on the revisions as set out below:-

(a) Could the General Counsel check and confirm that all the County Council's Committees were set out in the revised draft Constitution?

(b) There was an apparent omission in that the Constitution set out that Substitutes needed to receive training before they sat on the Planning Applications Committee, but there was no similar requirement for the Committee Members themselves.

(c) Consideration should be given to asking Members to sign County Council attendance sheets at both the morning and afternoon sessions.

(d) Section 14.24 specified that the Leader "may reply to each Opposition Leader's comments for up to six minutes for each comment." Could this provision be reviewed?

(e) Section 17.52 might need to be amended so that Members of the Scrutiny Committee could not vote on an agenda item that had been considered by a Cabinet Committee which they had attended.

(f) The link between the Constitution and Operating Standards should be clarified.

(g) There was an overall need to proofread the revised Constitution before presenting it to the County Council for approval.

(4) RESOLVED that subject to (3) above and to further consultation with all Members of the County Council:-

(a) the revised version of the Constitution be recommended for adoption by the County Council at its meeting in September 2019; and

(b) should the consultation with Members lead to significant revisions to the draft Constitution, further consideration be given to this matter at an ad hoc meeting of the Committee, provisionally set for 10 am on 2 September 2019.

5. Members' Allowances and Expenses 2018/19

(Item 6)

(1) The General Counsel introduced a report which invited the Committee to note and approve for publication the annual return for Members' allowances and expenses, together with details of the costs of the County Car service and taxis for Members for 2018/19.

(2) RESOLVED that the report be noted and that the allowances and expenses for 2018/19 set out in Appendix A to the report be published as required by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

6. Proportionality and appointments to Outside Bodies

(Item 7)

- (1) The Chairman agreed treat this as an Urgent item on the grounds that the County Council needed to take a decision on revised proportionality at its meeting on 11 July 2019. The Committee therefore needed to consider the report if it wished to make a recommendation to the County Council.
- (2) The Committee considered a report which adjusted the proportionality figures to take account of Mr James Clinch becoming a Member of the Independents Group.
- (3) The Committee noted in respect of paragraph 3 of the report that the Labour Group had given up its seat on the Superannuation Committee in 2017.
- (4) The General Counsel advised that as this was a very minor adjustment, there was no need for the County Council to consider the report.
- (5) The Leader confirmed the offer made at the June 2019 meeting of the County Council that the Conservative Group was prepared to give up 3 seats.
- (6) RESOLVED that delegated powers be given to the General Counsel to make the necessary adjustments to Committee places so that the Independents Group gains 2 seats and Mr Messenger 1 seat with the Conservative Group losing 3 seats.

7. Recording of Exempt items

(Item 8)

With the permission of the Chairman, the General Counsel informed the Committee that he intended to set up an informal cross-party group to consider the issue of recording the discussion of Exempt items.