

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SELECTION AND MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Selection and Member Services Committee held in the Online on Wednesday, 29 July 2020.

PRESENT: Mr B J Sweetland (Chairman), Mr R H Bird (Substitute for Mrs T Dean, MBE), Mr M C Dance, Mr D Farrell, Mr R W Gough, Mr E E C Hotson, Mr G Lymer and Mr C Simkins

ALSO PRESENT: Mr A H T Bowles, Mr G Cooke, Mr B H Lewis, Mr R A Marsh and Mr P J Oakford

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr B Watts (General Counsel), Mr S Jones (Director of Highways, Transportation and Waste) and Mr A Tait (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

11. Minutes - 23 June 2020
(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2020 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

12. Future of the Selection and Member Services Committee
(Item 4)

(1) The General Counsel introduced the report, the purpose of which was to set out a draft proposal for expanding the work and remit of the Committee, aiming to achieve agreement on draft changes to the Committee's Terms of Reference for recommendation to the County Council, as well as on the areas of work that the Committee would like to see as regular items on its agenda.

(2) The General Counsel's report included an Appendix which set out the changes to the Committee's terms of Reference which would be needed in order for it to be given the remit to review Member Grants; set up and receive reports from a Member Development Sub-Committee; and to receive reports from Informal Member Working Groups where the outcomes of their work were not reported elsewhere.

(3) During discussion of this item, the following points and observations were made:-

(a) There should be a regular item on Member accommodation and New Ways of Working.

(b) The membership of the proposed Member Development Sub-Committee would need to be politically proportional. Its meetings would nevertheless be open to all Members to attend and contribute.

(c) There was no intention for the Selection and Member Services Committee Members to undertake all of the work of the Member Development Sub-Committee and the Informal Working Groups. The Committee's remit would be to consider on behalf of the County Council how the conclusions of these bodies should be progressed,

(4) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the proposed changes to the Committee's Terms of Reference be recommended to the County Council;
- (b) the areas of work set out in the report as regular items on the agenda be agreed; and
- (c) the comments made during the meeting be noted.

13. Update on Council Meetings *(Item 5)*

(1) The General Counsel introduced the report which provided background information and advice around future planning for meetings during and beyond the restrictions put in place for the Coronavirus pandemic.

(2) The General Counsel's report included legal advice which was that it would remain unwise to hold a physical meeting, whether hybrid or not, unless there was a real need to do so which could not be met by remote meeting. Even if there was a real need of this nature, the number of people meeting physically should be kept as low as possible and that any meeting would need to be carefully risk assessed. The equalities implications of any such meeting would need to be considered including the equalities impact on those attending the meeting as Members/Presenters, those supporting the meeting as well as the public.

(3) The General Counsel referred to surveys conducted with Members and Officers in respect of holding physical meetings. The responses had indicated clear health and safety concerns, although there were areas such as Home to School Transport Appeals where Members in particular believed that there was a need to offer appellants the opportunity to put their case in person to a physical meeting of the Appeal Panel.

(4) During discussion of this item, it was agreed that the General Counsel would agree the content of a survey with the Chairman of Regulation Committee of parents who had appealed to the Home to School Transport Appeals Panel with the aim of ascertaining whether they would prefer to attend a physical meeting of the Panel, for their appeals to be considered virtually or by a paper-based exercise.

(5) RESOLVED that the report be noted and that:-

- (a) agreement be given for a full risk assessment to be carried out and circulated to all Members of the Council on the potential for formal meetings in the Council Chamber by 31 August 2020;

- (b) the arrangements for meetings for the period from 30 September 2020 to 31 December 2020 be further discussed between the General Counsel and Members, including the Opposition Group Leaders, with a further paper being brought back to the Committee in September 2020; and
- (c) the General Counsel be asked to agree the content of a survey with the Chairman of Regulation Committee of parents who have appealed to the Home to School Transport Appeals Panel with the aim of ascertaining whether they would prefer to attend a physical meeting of the Panel, for their appeals to be considered virtually or by a paper-based exercise.

14. Members' Allowances and Expenses 2019/20
(Item 6)

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that the allowances and expenses for 2019/20 detailed in Appendix A be published as required by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

15. KCC Combined Member Grants - Whitstable East and Herne Bay West Divisions
(Item 7)

1) The General Counsel informed the Committee of an additional proposal for a contribution of £1,000 to the Battle of Britain Memorial from the Combined Member Grant for the Whitstable East and Herne Bay West Division. This was agreed.

(2) RESOLVED that:-

- a) approval be given to the proposal for the distribution of the Combined Member Grant for the Whitstable East and Herne Bay West Division as and when the need arises; and
- b) approval be given to the following Combined Member Grant applications:-
 - (i) a minibus for a charity;
 - (ii) a Graffiti cover-up project;
 - (iii) a wildlife and environmental improvement project;
 - (iv) tree Planting on Bridgefield Road; and
 - (v) a contribution of £1,000 to the Battle of Britain Memorial.

16. Functions delegated by Members to Officers
(Item 8)

RESOLVED that the draft amendments to the Delegation Table set out in the report be recommended to the County Council for approval.

17. Robert Thompson Charities
(Item 9)

(1) The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which responded to a request from the Chairman of Robert Thompson Charities to amend its membership provisions to read: "a person nominated by Kent County Council" rather than "the County Councillor for the Elham Division of Kent for the time being".

(2) The Democratic Services Officer reported correspondence from Mr R Love and Miss S C Carey which explained that Saltwood Parish was entirely contained within the Cheriton, Sandgate and Hythe East Division.

(3) RESOLVED that the Robert Thompson Charities be advised that Kent County Council agrees to the revision of its Charitable Scheme so that its KCC representative is described as "a person nominated by Kent County Council" and that the General Counsel be given delegated powers to make the appointment once the views of Messrs Love and Whybrow have been sought.