

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 Thursday, 25 February 2021.

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

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr B Watts (General Counsel) and Mr A Tait (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Dates of future meetings

(Item 3)

The Committee noted the following future meeting dates:-

Thursday, 29 April 2021;
Thursday, 20 May 2021;
Tuesday, 29 June 2021;
Wednesday, 2 September 2021;
Friday, 1 October 2021;
Thursday, 4 November 2021;
Thursday, 25 November 2021;
Tuesday, 18 January 2022;
Friday, 11 February 2022;
Friday, 25 February 2022;
Tuesday, 29 March 2022;
Wednesday, 27 April 2022;
Wednesday, 25 May 2022;
Wednesday, 29 June 2022.

2. Minutes - 19 November 2020

(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2020 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

3. Local Government Elections - Presentation by General Counsel

(Item 5)

(1) The General Counsel gave a presentation. The accompanying slides are contained within the electronic papers on the KCC website.

(2) The General Counsel's presentation began by covering nominations and campaigning. He said that the number of subscribers required for a nomination paper had been reduced from 10 to 2 in order to reduce the travel and contact involved with the nomination process. Leafleting and door-knocking by party activists would not be permissible under the current lockdown rules, although the government had uprated election expenses for council candidates to provide greater opportunity for them to campaign via digital channels.

(3) The Government was supporting proxy voting by allowing people to apply for a proxy vote until 5pm on polling day, without having to find someone to attest their application. Meanwhile, the Royal Mail had agreed to prioritise the delivery of election mail, whilst a series of Covid-compliant measures would be put in place for those voting in person.

(4) The General Counsel then summarised the pre-election guidance, which would come into force on 19 March 2021, as well as the process for nominating candidates. Nomination forms could only be submitted between Monday 22 March and Thursday 8 April on working days between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm.

(5) The General Counsel informed the Committee that full details on all areas covered by the presentation would be posted on the KCC website.

(6) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

4. Update on Induction and Training (Oral Report)

(Item 6)

(1) The General Counsel reported on arrangements for induction and training for Members following the Local Government Elections. These would have to follow the operating rules that were in force, including social distancing and the capacity of various venues. This would necessarily mean that virtual training would be a significant aspect of the process.

(2) The General Counsel then said that all Members of the Council would be sent a short survey so that they could provide valuable input for the development of the programme.

(3) The General Counsel said that the current Covid-10 Regulations were due to end in early May 2021. It would nevertheless not be possible for the County Council's Annual Meeting to be held in County Hall. Whichever venue was chosen would also need to ensure that the public could safely attend. If the lockdown were to end in June 2021 as the government intended, the public health guidance would be followed at all times.

(4) The General Counsel said that he would cost all the options for induction, training and Council meetings as well as for ICT equipment. It might be necessary to arrange another meeting of the Committee before its next scheduled date of 29 April 2021.

(5) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

5. KCC Combined Member Grant

(Item 7)

(1) The General Counsel introduced a report on the provisional grant recipient list of Combined Member Grants from 2017/18 to 2020/21. He stressed that the list for 2020/21 was not the final version.

(2) Members of the Committee said that the wording for some of the Grants, whilst correct, could be open to misinterpretation and suggested that the reduction of £5k per Member should have been the subject of an Equality Impact Assessment in order to ensure that the areas of greatest need within the county were not over-penalised.

(3) The General Counsel said that the guidelines on Member Grants were under review and that a report would be made to the Committee after the Local Government Elections. He agreed to provide all Members of the Committee with the current guidelines.

(4) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the provisional grant recipient list of Combined Member Grants from 2017/18 to 2020/21 be noted;
- (b) approval be given to the list being uploaded to the KCC website for information; and
- (c) the plans for future uploads be noted.

6. KCC Combined Member Grant - Whitstable East and Herne Bay West

(Item 8)

RESOLVED that the receipt of and approval process for the final applications for Whitstable East and Herne Bay West be noted in respect of the following applications:-

- (a) 6th Whitstable Scout Group – Roof Insulation and small additional projects;
- (b) CTiW Haven – Homeless Care;
- (c) Retreat into Wonderland CIC – Animal Sanctuary Flood Protection; and
- (d) The Charitable FC – Mental Health Sports Programme.