

GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 12 September 2017

Present:

Councillor Ian F. Payne (Chairman)
Councillor Stephen Wells (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Vanessa Allen, Nicholas Bennett J.P.,
Kim Botting FRSA, Simon Fawthrop, David Livett,
Tony Owen, Charles Rideout QPM CVO, Tim Stevens,
Teresa Te and Michael Turner

Also Present:

Councillor Colin Smith

270 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mary Cooke (who was replaced by Councillor Simon Fawthrop), Councillor Ellie Harmer and Councillor Pauline Tunnicliffe. Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Kim Botting.

271 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

272 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

No questions had been received.

273 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11TH JULY 2017

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th July 2017 (excluding exempt information) be confirmed.

274 AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2016/17 Report FSD17066

The Committee considered a report setting out the Council's 2016/17 statutory accounts for approval by Members in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The report also detailed the conclusions and significant issues arising from the work carried out in relation to the audit of the 2016/17 accounts.

The Committee were advised that the Council's accounts and related records were made available for public inspection for 30 working days between 3rd July 2017 and 11th August 2017. This was a requirement of the Regulations and had to take place prior to the completion of the audit. An elector in the Bromley borough had raised two objections to the 2016/17 accounts:

- Waste Management and Street Cleansing Services;
- Trade Waste Collection Service.

Although the objections had no bearing on the accuracy of the accounts, the audit could not be formally concluded and an audit certificate issued until they had been resolved.

Philip Johnstone and James Seegar of KPMG, the Council's external auditors, attended the meeting to answer questions from the Committee. A Member commented that it appeared that smaller, local accountancy firms were being excluded from being able to bid for this work. Officers confirmed that there was a tendering exercise undertaken by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) and Mr Johnstone added that smaller firms did not usually meet the specified criteria to be included on the register of approved auditors.

Members questioned the auditors about the process of considering the objections. This was a long process involving discussions with the objector and the relevant Council departments – Mr Johnstone confirmed that the objections had not yet been formally accepted. There were a range of actions open to him as the auditor, which could include bringing in specialist expertise if necessary. He also confirmed that the objections had not been made solely on the basis of Internal Audit reports and that there were other matters he needed to consider.

The Committee considered the Auditor's formal recommendation about setting up a separate Pension Fund Bank Account. Officers confirmed that a cost/benefit analysis had previously been undertaken and details presented to Audit Sub-Committee. Mr Johnstone confirmed that no issues had been identified during the audit and, while required to raise the issue, the Auditors accepted the Council's position.

A Member commented on the payment of £258k to a senior officer who had left the Council. It was confirmed that this would most likely include the costs of early release of pension and was not solely related to a redundancy payment. The authority to agree redundancies had previously been delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader.

Members raised the issue of Journal Posting. The Auditors recommended a monthly process be put in place for a sample of journals to be checked to see that they are correct. Officers responded that they were not aware of any priority one recommendations relating to this issue, but undertook to discuss this recommendation with Internal Audit. A Member requested that this matter be referred to Audit Sub-Committee for consideration.

RESOLVED that

- (a) The Council's statutory accounts for 2016/17 be approved;**
- (b) In accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, following approval, the Chairman of this Committee shall sign and date the statutory statements on page 1 as a formal record of the Committee's approval;**
- (c) The external auditor's report be noted;**
- (d) The auditor's conclusion on VFM be noted;**
- (e) Agreement with the auditor's conclusion on their independence and objectivity be confirmed;**
- (f) The objections to the accounts as set out in the report be noted;**
- (g) The Chairman of this Committee be authorised to sign the letter of representation for 2016/17 on behalf of the Council as set out in Appendix 2 of report FSD17066; and**
- (h) The Annual Governance Statement accompanying the statutory statement of accounts be approved.**

**275 FEEDBACK ON THE 2017 UK PARLIAMENTARY (GENERAL)
 ELECTION
 Report CSD17025**

The Committee considered a report advising Members on the key issues relating to the UK Parliamentary (General) Election held on 8 June 2017.

There had been an incident at Darrick Wood School where a member of the public had required first aid. A Member asked whether qualified First Aiders were in place at each polling station. Officers confirmed that there was no requirement for this and it would not be practical, but this was covered in the training for poll staff and in their instruction packs.

Officers confirmed that alternative sites to schools were inspected, but in many cases the school was the only practical site available. Where there were no safeguarding issues, and there was sufficient separation, schools could remain open. A catholic church had been inspected as an alternative to Darrick Wood School, but there were access issues as the hall was on the first floor, and it was in frequent use by clubs.

Some 460 postal votes had been rejected – officers confirmed that this was usually because either the signature or the date of birth was missing. Officers were required to write to the elector with an explanation of why the vote was rejected. Members requested that postal votes should be allocated at General Elections by ward rather than by constituency. Officers confirmed that there were different requirements for different types of elections, that for General

Elections there was no requirement for postal votes to be allocated by ward and to do this would be inefficient.

Members requested to be supplied with the results from the three wards in the Lewisham West and Penge constituency. It was confirmed that Bromley provided the staff for these polling stations, in consultation with Lewisham.

Residents in a small area of Beckenham (16 households, containing 41 electors) had complained that they had received duplicate polling cards. This had been investigated – it was still not clear what had happened, but it might have been linked to stops in the print run.

Some Members expressed concern that more should be done to root out postal vote fraud and abuses such as students being able to vote in two locations. Other Members commented that although the Council should investigate reported incidents it was not necessary to proactively seek out double voting. Officers confirmed that the issue of double voting was being considered at a national level by Electoral Officers and by the Cabinet Office, and the Committee therefore decided to await the outcome of these discussions.

The Chairman congratulated officers on the smooth running of the election

RESOLVED that the report be noted, and a report back on double voting be made in due course.

276 PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 2018 LOCAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS
Report CSD17130

The Committee considered a report from the Returning Officer advising Members on the proposed key electoral arrangements in regard to the Local Council Elections to be held on 3 May 2018. The count had to be accurate and timely, and the major issue was whether the votes would be counted immediately following the close of the polls (overnight), or the next day. It was intended to hold the count at the Kent County Cricket Ground in Beckenham, but the Returning Officer sought the Committee's views on the timing before he made his final decision. One Member commented that the overnight count in 2006 had not gone well, and overall the Committee supported a daytime count.

The Council was waiting to hear whether it would be included in a pilot scheme requiring voters to provide a specified form of identification before being issued with a ballot paper.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

277 COMPLAINTS - ANNUAL OMBUDSMAN LETTER
Report CS18064 ID

The Committee considered a report informing Members of the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) annual review letter 2016 and providing a summary of complaints and enquiries received and the decisions made by the LGO about the London Borough of Bromley for the year ending 31 March 2017.

Members commented that comparable data from previous years and other authorities would be useful. The LGO reported figures individually to each authority, so a broader picture was difficult to establish, but there was data from previous years in the Council's Getting it Right reports which could identify trends. There was an increase in social care complaints to the Ombudsman, particularly related to housing issues.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

278 TEACHERS PAY POLICY-CENTRALLY BASED STAFF
Report CEO 1631

The Committee considered a report setting out the main changes in relation to Teachers' Pay and Conditions and proposing a model pay policy for all centrally based teachers. It was confirmed that strike pay for centrally based teaching staff was calculated on a different basis to other Council officers (1/195 per day) – this was determined centrally.

RESOLVED that

(1) The report be noted; and

(2) The model pay policy in respect of Centrally based Teaching staff employed by the Local Authority which provides flexibility for Managers in determining arrangements for Pay and Progression for all Teaching staff consistent with the letter and spirit of the statutory guidance be agreed.

279 FORMAL CONSULTATION ON OUTLINE SERVICE PROPOSALS AND PROCUREMENT STRATEGY FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF AN ACTUARY
Report FSD17068

The Committee considered a report setting out proposals to re-tender the Council's contract for the provision of actuarial services for a period of six years, with an option to extend for a further period of three years. With a potential nine year contract term, the total value of the contract was estimated to be approximately £1,080k (based on estimated activity levels) and, in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, the approval of the General Purposes and Licensing Committee was therefore required to enable the procurement process to commence.

Amended recommendations had been circulated proposing that the decisions be referred to the Pensions Investment Sub-Committee. The Chairman suggested that, in future, meetings of the Pensions Investment Sub-Committee should be scheduled to take place just before the General Purposes and Licensing Committee.

RESOLVED that authority be delegated to the Pensions Investment Sub-Committee to –

- (i) agree that the contact for the Council’s actuary be tendered and the tender process to be followed;**
- (ii) agree the contract period, including any optional extension periods;**
- (iii) award the contract following the tender process; and**
- (iv) agree the approval process for any optional contract extensions.**

280 LICENSING ACT 2003 LICENSABLE ACTIVITIES
Report ES17068

The Committee considered a report updating Members on licensable activities under the Licensing Act 2003 following recent changes to the law.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

281 LICENSING UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2017
Report ES17069

The Committee considered a report updating Members on decisions made by the Licensing Sub Committee between 14 June and 24 August 2017. Four cases had been considered –

- 14th June 2017: Langtry’s/Bridge Bar, High Street, Beckenham: Application of a Temporary Event Notice
- 27th July 2017: Langtry’s/Bridge Bar, High Street, Beckenham: Application to extend the hours of operation
- 27th July 2017: Crystal Palace Park: Application for a one day Premises Licence by Jamaica Basic Schools Foundation
- 10th August 2017: Two Ten, High Street, Beckenham: Application to vary the Premises Licence

The Committee decided to consider the issues relating to Two Ten, High Street Beckenham in part 2 as the case was due to be considered in the Magistrate’s Court.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

282 INDUCTION ARRANGEMENTS FOR NEW MEMBERS IN 2018
Report CSD17121

The Committee considered a report which summarised the initial plans for Member Induction after the 2018 local elections, including induction arrangements and Member IT. The plans were at an early stage and Members' views on the proposals were sought. It was intended that a survey would be carried out seeking Members' views on the Induction Programme. This would be used to make the final proposals as useful and effective as possible.

The Chairman suggested that training should be mandatory, and commented that Portfolio Holders should be actively involved in presenting the training related to their portfolios.

Although some Members liked the i-pads issued in 2014, others commented that they had limitations, and were not fit for purpose. Officers confirmed that it was intended that in 2018 there would be a choice of equipment available – probably either an i-pad or similar device, or a 2 in 1 Microsoft device. Access to the Council's systems from Members' own IT equipment via Citrix would continue.

Councillor Simon Fawthrop declared an interest during the consideration of this report as an employee of British Telecom.

RESOLVED that the current plans for Member Induction in 2018 be noted.

283 HR KEY ISSUES PRESENTATION

The Committee received a presentation from the Director of Human Resources entitled "Managing a Dream Organisation." The presentation summarised the Committee's personnel responsibilities as the employer of Council staff responsible for setting all employment frameworks and emphasised the aim of making Bromley a great place to work.

The staff headcount was now 1,556 (1,298 full time equivalents) plus 1,217 (816 full time equivalent) schools staff. The ratio of female to male staff was roughly 70/30, with 3% disabled and 14% BME. Turnover rates were 17.4% (although higher in Children's Services) with a relatively low average of 6 days sick leave taken per person per annum. Bromley was the first and only authority to leave the national terms of employment, and now offered pay awards on time every year and higher than the national settlements.

In recent years, the Council had set up a revitalised Departmental Representatives (Dep Reps) Forum, introduced the Bromley Stars awards, automated many HR processes, responded to the Apprenticeships levy and continued to provide graduate internships. Challenges included the need to train and develop the workforce, particularly to address capacity/capability

issues such as contract monitoring and management, and recruiting and retaining key staff in hard to fill roles.

284 WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18
Report CSD17120

The Committee considered its work programme for 2017/18.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

285 PENSIONS INVESTMENT SUB-COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16TH MAY 2017, EXCLUDING EXEMPT INFORMATION

The minutes of the Pensions Investment Sub-Committee's meeting on 16th May 2017 (excluding exempt information) were received.

286 AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21ST JUNE 2017, EXCLUDING EXEMPT INFORMATION

The minutes of the Audit Sub-Committee's meeting held on 21 June 2017 (excluding exempt information) were received.

287 APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10TH JULY 2017, EXCLUDING EXEMPT INFORMATION

The minutes of the Appeals Sub-Committee's meeting on 10th July (excluding exempt information) were received.

288 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) ORDER 2006 AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

RESOLVED that the Press and public be excluded during consideration of the items of business referred to below as it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the Press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

**The following summaries
refer to matters
involving exempt information**

**289 AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE: EXEMPT MINUTES - 21ST JUNE
2017**

The exempt minutes of the Audit Sub-Committee meeting held on 21st June 2017 were received.

**290 APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEE: EXEMPT MINUTES - 10TH JULY
2017**

The exempt minutes of the Appeals Sub-Committee meeting held on 10th July 2017 were received.

The Meeting ended at 9.42 pm

Chairman