

GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 21 September 2021

Present:

Councillor Pauline Tunnicliffe (Chairman)
Councillor Michael Turner (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Nicholas Bennett MA J.P., Mark Brock,
Peter Dean, Simon Fawthrop, Christine Harris,
Colin Hitchins, Josh King, Alexa Michael,
Neil Reddin FCCA, Will Rowlands and Melanie Stevens

174 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gareth Allatt, Councillor Robert Evans (who was replaced by Councillor Christine Harris), Councillor Kira Gabbert (who was replaced by Councillor Simon Fawthrop), Councillor Harry Stranger (who was replaced by Councillor Will Rowlands), Councillor Ryan Thompson and Councillor Stephen Wells (who was replaced by Councillor Peter Dean.)

175 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Simon Fawthrop declared an interest as an employee of BT in relation to minute 181.

176 QUESTIONS

No questions had been submitted.

177 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 JULY 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2021 be confirmed.

178 FEEDBACK ON THE 2021 POLLS AND UPDATE ON ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

Report CSD21088

The Committee received a report advising Members on the key issues relating to the Greater London Authority (GLA) Elections and the Crystal Palace By Election held on Thursday 6 May 2021, and highlighting the forthcoming changes in electoral arrangements.

A Member noted that 1,200 duplicate registration applications between the start of the election and the registration deadline. It was noted that national publicity did not always make it clear that only persons not on the Register needed to register. About two hundred postal votes were received after the close of the poll, while about 25% of postal votes were not used.

A Member commented that there was a large number of spoilt ballot papers across London. It was confirmed that the GLA was reviewing the format of the ballot paper and voting systems, but it was unclear whether any changes could be implemented for the next GLA election.

A Member asked whether the number of schools resisting being used for elections could lead to increased costs for future elections. While schools were cheap to use as they were limited in what costs they could charge, many of the alternative venues used for the first time worked well and would be used again.

Officers confirmed that the Local Government Boundary Commission Review was now complete, and the new ward arrangements would come into effect for the local elections on 5th May 2022. The Returning Officer had no authority to make changes to the boundaries or ward names. The Council was carrying out a polling places review and the outcome would be reported to the Committee on 30th November. It was confirmed that the Council's election software would be able to cope with the changes, including the further changes to parliamentary constituency boundaries now being proposed.

The Chairman thanked the Electoral Services Manager and her Team for their very effective conduct of the election.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted and the Returning Officer be requested to take the Committee's comments into account when planning for future elections.

**179 ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
 AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN LETTER 2020/21
 CEF21028**

The Council produced an Annual Complaints Report each year setting out statistics on the complaints that it received. The Committee received the 2020/21 report, which had already been considered at the Adult Care and Health PDS Committee on 9th September 2021 and the Children, Education and Families PDS Committee on 14th September 2021. The report also included the annual Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman letter which summarised ombudsman complaints and enquiries received about the Council for the year ending 31 March 2021.

There had been a 17% reduction in complaints in 2020/21 compared to the previous year. This was probably due in part to the Covid-19 pandemic, with less activity in some service areas, but also reflected the Council's ethos of continuous improvement and using feedback from a variety of sources to

improve services. Response times to complaints had also improved, although the Chairman noted that they were still too long in a number of cases. It was also noted that Environment and Public Protection complaints were not overseen by the Corporate Complaints Team, and the statistics provided were not as detailed as for the rest of the Council.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

180 LICENSING ACT 2003 - AMENDMENT TO THE STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY FOR 2021 TO 2026 - CUMULATIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT
Report ES20119

Section 5 of the Licensing Act 2003 required a licensing authority to prepare and publish a statement of its licensing policy (SLP) at least every five years. During the five years, the policy must be kept under review and revised as necessary.

Bromley's draft SLP became effective on 7th January 2021 and expired in January 2026. The SLP contains a Cumulative Impact Policy (CIP) covering two areas – Beckenham and Bromley town centres. With the introduction of new legislation, the Police and Crime Act 2017, a Cumulative Impact assessment (CIA) had to be carried out every three years to support any CIP within the authority's SLP. At its meeting on 30th September 2020 the Committee had approved the Licensing Policy with the CIPs in place. In preparing a CIA, consultation had taken place between October 2020 and April 2021, and all responses were in favour of retaining the existing CIP without any extension.

The Committee discussed crime in Beckenham and Bromley town centres, including theft, drug offences and alcohol-related crime – this all supported the retention of the CIP. It was noted that the majority of the extra planters in high streets installed during the Covid pandemic were due to be removed in coming months. A Member asked for some figures on the number of applications submitted in the CIPs and those granted and refused, particularly over the Covid period. Officers emphasised that about 95% of applications were granted, and that the intention of the CIP was to restrict proposals that would have a negative impact.

A Member asked whether LB Lewisham was required to consult Bromley Council and residents about the recent CI Festival in Beckenham Place Park. Officers confirmed that there was no statutory duty for them to consult Bromley, but they had encouraged LB Lewisham to consult.

RESOLVED that

(1) The evidence received during the consultation be noted.

(2) The Cumulative Impact Assessment be approved and the Cumulative Impact Policy for Beckenham and Bromley Town Centres be retained within the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy 2021 to 2026 (option A in the report).

(3) Officers be authorised to update the Statement of Licensing Policy accordingly.

181 TRANSFORMING BROMLEY 2019 - 23: FIRST TWO YEARS
Report CSD21086

At its meeting on 30th June 2021 the Executive considered the attached report on the Council's Transformation Programme, and referred the report to all PDS Committees and General Purposes and Licensing Committee. The report has already been considered by Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS Committee at its meeting on 23rd June 2021.

RESOLVED that progress with the Transformation Programme be noted.

182 REVIEW OF THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION TO OFFICERS
Report CSD21099

At its last meeting on 6th July 2021, the Committee established a Working Group to conduct a review of the Scheme of Delegation to Officers. The Working Group had met and made recommendations to this Committee proposing that priority should be given to a complete re-draft of the Scheme and making a number of suggestions as to how the Scheme could be improved. The Working Group recognised that officer resources for completing this work were limited, and suggested that external consultants could be utilised.

The Committee discussed how to take forward the Working Group's recommendations. Members were not in favour of appointing consultants, but considered that it should be possible for officers to develop a new Scheme ready for the next Council year. Councillor Stephen Wells, who had chaired the Working Group, would oversee this process and liaise with the new Director of Corporate Services and Governance.

The Chairman thanked the Working Group for their conclusions.

RESOLVED that the Scheme of Delegation to Officers be amended and a revised draft version be presented to the Committee's meeting on 30th November or 9th February with a view to adopting a new Scheme for the next Council Year.

183 WORK PROGRAMME AND MATTERS ARISING
Report CSD21087

The Committee considered its work programme for 2021/22 and received updates on matters outstanding from previous meetings.

The Work Programme would be updated to include a further report on the Scheme of Delegation to Officers in November or February, and an update on the 2020/21 accounts in November. A Member noted that the Constitution would need some minor updates to reflect the reduced number of Councillors from May 2022 onwards.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted and updated.

**184 AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD
 ON 8 JUNE 2021, EXCLUDING EXEMPT INFORMATION**

The minutes of the Audit Sub-Committee meeting on 8 June 2021 were received.

**185 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 item 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 summary
refers to matters involving exempt information**

186 AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE: EXEMPT MINUTES - 8 JUNE 2021

The exempt minutes of the Audit Sub-Committee meeting on 8 June 2021 were received.

The Meeting ended at 8.05 pm

Chairman