

GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 5 April 2022

Present:

Councillor Pauline Tunnicliffe (Chairman)
Councillor Michael Turner (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Gareth Allatt, Vanessa Allen, Mark Brock,
Robert Evans, Simon Fawthrop, Kira Gabbert,
Alexa Michael, Keith Onslow, Neil Reddin FCCA,
Harry Stranger and Ryan Thomson

218 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Nicholas Bennett (who was replaced by Councillor Keith Onslow), Councillor Josh King (who was replaced by Councillor Vanessa Allen), Councillor Melanie Stevens and Councillor Stephen Wells (who was replaced by Councillor Simon Fawthrop.)

Apologies for lateness were received from Cllr Ryan Thomson.

Councillor Melanie Stevens joined the meeting online.

219 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

220 QUESTIONS

No questions had been received.

221 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 FEBRUARY 2022

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2022 be confirmed.

222 BROMLEY PENSION FUND - AUDIT RESULTS REPORT - YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

The Committee received an Audit Results Report from EY, the Council's external auditor, summarising its audit of the Bromley Pension Fund 2019/20, which was now substantially complete. The report was presented by Hannah Lill of EY. The report was largely positive, but set out changes to the risk assessment. In particular the judgement on going concern was satisfactory, though officers would need to project forward their assessment by thirteen months. Officers had agreed to correct a number of misstatements in the

accounts, but there was one misstatement relating to the Actuarial Present Value of Promised Retirements and the impact of the Goodwin case where it had been agreed with the auditor that an amendment was not required.

A Member commented that the Pension Fund's Actuaries, Mercers, were experts in the field and it was not necessary for the auditors to test their assessment. Another Member commented that the difference of opinion between the Auditor and the Actuary was insignificant in terms of the overall value of the Fund. Officers responded that auditing standards were now more robust than in the past and auditors were expected to challenge other experts.

RESOLVED that the report from EY be noted.

223 HONORARY FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH
Report CSD22023

At a special meeting on 18th October 2021, the Council had considered a motion proposing the award of Freedom of the Borough to Emma Raducanu, a resident of the borough, following her remarkable achievement in winning the US Open Tennis Championship. The issue had been referred to this Committee to consider a suitable celebration of Ms Raducanu's achievements. At its meeting on 30th November 2021 the Committee agreed that it would be useful to have some criteria for making future awards, in the same manner as for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen. A proposed Scheme of Appointment for Honorary Freemen was submitted (Appendix B), along with an updated Scheme of Appointment for Honorary Aldermen (Appendix A).

A Member commented that consideration should be given to having a Free-Woman of the Borough title, and to removing paragraph 3.1 (viii) of the proposed Scheme. It was confirmed that any privileges granted to Honorary Freemen would be entirely at the discretion of the Council.

Members supported the proposals with the following amendments -

- In 3.1 (iv) of both schemes the word "review" should read "receive."
- In 1.1 of the Honorary Freeman Scheme, the words "Normally such service will have been wholly or largely unpaid" were unnecessary and should be deleted.

RESOLVED that, subject to the amendments outlined above,

(1) The Scheme of Enrolment for Honorary Aldermen be approved as updated (Appendix A.)

(2) The Scheme of Enrolment for Honorary Freemen (Appendix B to the report) be approved.

224 HYBRID MEETINGS AND COUNCILLOR IT PROVISION
Report CSD22034

The report updated Members on provision for hybrid meetings given recent upgrades in equipment in the Council Chamber, and set out proposals for Members' IT provision from May 2022 onwards for approval. The aim was to equip Members for their role with the most appropriate equipment with access to the latest systems and security features and the most efficient levels of support. Priority would need to be given to equipping new Councillors, but the IT equipment issued to returning Members would also be upgraded in a second phase across the summer.

A Member commented that what he needed was to receive Council emails on his own smart-phone, and officers confirmed that this should be possible. Another Member commented that printers should be provided to Members – printers could be provided on request where necessary.

The report did not make a recommendation on whether live-streaming of meetings should be resumed, but the Chairman suggested that this could be considered by Members in the new Council year.

RESOLVED that

- (1) The Committee notes the provision of updated equipment and facilities in the Council Chamber, and the advice around hybrid meetings set out in this report.**
- (2) New Councillors will be offered a standard Council laptop with the latest software and security features.**
- (3) The reserve options of a Council iPad or BYOD connection remain available for those Councillors who choose not to opt for a standard laptop.**
- (4) Returning Councillors will be migrated to the same new equipment and software after new Members have been equipped.**
- (5) The desktop PCs in the Members Room be replaced with more modern PCs and docking stations for laptops.**
- (6) A Council smart-phone should be available if required to all Members.**

225 SCHEME OF DELEGATION TO OFFICERS
Report CSD22035

At its last meeting the Committee had received a report updating them on progress with the review of the Council's Scheme of Delegation. The Scheme described the basis for lawful decision making by officers, so it was necessary

to set out areas of responsibility clearly, be transparent and user friendly. It needed to be high-level but set out areas of limitation as appropriate. The current scheme was being updated to meet these requirements – a draft of a completely new Scheme of Delegation was circulated to Members before the meeting.

Members pointed out that the provisions around the “call-in” of planning applications needed to be corrected to reflect the latest changes to the Local Planning Protocol and Code of Conduct. The draft document would be checked and developed further and then reported to the Working Group before being referred to the annual Council meeting for approval.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Wells and the Member Working Group who had initiated the review of the Scheme, and also the officers who had been involved.

RESOLVED that

(1) That progress on developing a new Scheme of Delegation be noted.

(2) That authority be delegated to the Director of Corporate Services and Governance to finalise the Scheme of Delegation for Member approval.

(3) That Members consider whether the new Scheme should be submitted to the annual Council meeting on 18th May for approval, or back to this Committee’s next meeting on 26th May prior to Council approval.

(4) Note that the Leader will be asked to approve the executive delegations to officers within the Scheme.

226 MINOR CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Report CSD220

The report sought authority to make some minor changes to the Council’s Constitution to ensure that it was up-to-date for the new Council to be elected in May 2022, and also proposed that Members enhance the status of the Audit Sub-Committee by replacing it with an Audit and Risk Management Committee reporting directly to Council.

The report proposed that this Committee should retain its responsibility for external audit and the annual statements of accounts, but Members considered that it would be more consistent for these to transfer to the new Audit and Risk Management Committee.

RESOLVED that Council be recommended that -

(1) Authority be given to the Director of Corporate Services and Governance to make minor changes to the Constitution to ensure that

the wording is kept up to date, in particular in respect of the reduction in the number of Members after the 2022 local election and officer titles.

(2) That (d) External Audit and Annual Statement of Accounts,” “(d) Probity Strategy,” “(e) Audit” and “(g) Fraud Prevention” be removed from the terms of reference of the General Purposes and Licensing Committee (with other items re-numbered) and an Audit and Risk Management Committee be set up in the new Council year to replace the Audit Sub-Committee, with the Terms of Reference set out in paragraph 3.2 in the report, subject to External Audit and Annual Statements of Accounts being included in the new Committee’s terms of reference.

227 REPORTS FROM EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS
Report CSD22032

As part of this Committee’s decisions in relation to the Members’ Allowances Scheme 2008/09, it was agreed that this Committee should receive an annual report from each of the Executive Assistants outlining the work they have undertaken over the past year in justification of the receipt of their allowance (currently £3,746pa). This decision was reaffirmed by the Committee at subsequent meetings, and is referred to in the Guidance Note: Executive Assistants at Appendix 7 to the Council’s Constitution. There were currently five Executive Assistants -

Adult Care & Health - Cllr Mike Botting
Executive Assistant to the Leader - Cllr Aisha Cuthbert
Renewal, Recreation & Housing - Cllr Hannah Gray
Children, Education & Families - Cllr Kieran Terry
Environment & Community Services - Cllr Will Rowlands

Reports had been requested from the current Executive Assistants for 2021/22 and included in the report as Appendix A, with the reports from Councillors Rowlands and Terry circulated before the meeting. The Chairman particularly highlighted Cllr Cuthbert’s work on the Loneliness Strategy.

A Member commented that PDS Committees should scrutinise the work of Executive Assistants – other Members commented that this was already done by some PDS Committees.

RESOLVED that the reports from Executive Assistants summarising their work during 2021/22 be noted.

228 WORK PROGRAMME AND MATTERS ARISING
Report CSD22036

The Committee considered matters outstanding and the draft work programme for 2022/23. The Chairman noted that the Committee would be making appointments to outside bodies at its first meeting in the new Council year, and informed Members that in some case it was possible to nominate appropriate local people to these roles, as well as Councillors.

RESOLVED that matters outstanding and the draft work programme be noted.

**229 AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD
 ON 2 MARCH 2022, EXCLUDING EXEMPT INFORMATION**

The minutes of the Audit Sub-Committee's meeting on 2nd March 2022 were received.

**230 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**

231 AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE: EXEMPT MINUTES - 2 MARCH 2022

The exempt minutes of the Audit Sub-Committee's meeting on 2nd March 2022 were received.

As this was the last meeting before the local elections, the Chairman thanked Members for their work on the Committee throughout the year, and also thanked the officers for their support, particularly Ms Shawkat, Mr Dobbs and Mr Walton.

The Meeting ended at 7.54 pm

Chairman