

## **GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 6 November 2019

### **Present:**

Councillor Pauline Tunnicliffe (Chairman)  
Councillor Stephen Wells (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillors Gareth Allatt, Vanessa Allen, Mary Cooke,  
Kira Gabbert, Josh King, Russell Mellor, Tony Owen,  
Neil Reddin FCCA, Melanie Stevens, Harry Stranger and  
Michael Turner

### **Also Present:**

Councillor Nicholas Bennett J.P.

### **33 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Robert Evans and Christopher Marlow.

### **34 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **35 QUESTIONS**

No questions had been received.

### **36 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2019**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019 be confirmed.

### **37 FEEDBACK ON THE 2019 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION**

Report CSD19156

The Committee received a report reviewing the key issues arising from the European Parliamentary Election held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2019.

The Mayor informed the Committee that he and the Deputy Mayor had visited thirty polling stations on election day, and found them all to be very well-run. He also reported that he would be receiving the writ for the General Election at 12 noon the next day.

Members thanked the Electoral Services Manager and her Team for an excellent report and a well-conducted election.

**RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.**

**38 REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES  
2019**  
Report CSD19157

The Committee were advised of the recommendations of the Returning Officer following a review of all polling districts and polling places in the borough.

It was clarified that the aim was to have no more than 2,000 electors per polling station, but there could be more than one polling station at each polling place. The Boundary Commission's draft proposals for new ward boundaries in 2022 would potentially require new polling stations to be found, but existing locations would be used as far as possible. The new boundaries might assist in finding suitable locations to replace the current portakabin arrangements in two locations.

The electoral register for the General Election had been published on 1<sup>st</sup> November. Contingency plans were in place for postal votes in the General Election should the threatened postal workers strike go ahead in December. These involved employing the staff from the canvass to deliver postal votes, and using locations such as libraries and polling stations to collect them.

In response to a question about tellers having to stand out in the cold for the forthcoming December election, it was confirmed that the majority of polling places had some form of lobby or entrance corridor where tellers could stand, as long as they did not enter the polling station. There were some polling places where this was not available, but the rules were clear that tellers could not enter the polling station.

A Member commented that using the Kent County Cricket Club ground in Beckenham for the count worked well. It was confirmed that this would continue to be used as the borough's count venue, except for London elections which were coordinated centrally at the Excel Centre.

**RESOLVED that**

- (1) The outcome of the review and the consultation undertaken be noted.**
- (2) The proposals and recommendations of the Returning Officer set out in the report and Appendix 3 be approved with effect from the publication of the revised Register of Electors on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2019.**
- (3) It is noted that, following the final recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission's Electoral Review (due early to mid-2020) a further and more thorough review of the polling districts and**

**polling places will be undertaken before the next compulsory review is required.**

**39 TEACHER PAY POLICY - CENTRALLY BASED STAFF**

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019 revised arrangements had come into force in relation to Teachers' Pay and Conditions through the publication of the statutory 2019 school Teachers' Pay and Conditions document. The report set out the main changes and three options for applying the statutory pay uplifts. It was recommended that Option B be approved - this was to uplift all scales in the salary ranges, not only the minimum and maximums, but also the intervening points, by 2.75%. This was the costliest option, but would ensure that all teachers received a consistent percentage increase and would assist in terms of recruitment and retention.

**RESOLVED that**

**(1) The report be noted and Option B be agreed in respect of Centrally Based Teaching staff.**

**(2) Officers be authorised to uplift pay scales within the current Pay Policy accordingly and to implement the new policy with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019.**

**40 ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT AND ANNUAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN'S LETTER 2018/19**

The Council produced an Annual Complaints Report setting out statistics on the complaints it received, and the Committee received the report for 2018/19. The report also provided oversight of the annual Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's letter, which summarised the complaints and enquiries received by the Ombudsman about Council for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

The Chairman and other Members commented that the Council performed well and received relatively few complaints. The most common causes of complaints were categorised as being about quality of service or lack of action. Members queried what lack of action might actually mean - it could include cases where the Council had decided not to take action, or where there was poor communication of the Council's position. One area which did need to improve was responding to internal stage 1 complaints within target times, where performance was around 50%. Performance on responding to Ombudsman complaints had been driven up to 97% and although it was accepted that some complaints were complex there was no reason why most stage 1 complaints could not achieve similar performance. A new complaints training course for officers had been put together, and an update to the corporate complaints IT system from April 2019 meant that better monitoring tools were available for senior managers.

It was confirmed that it was each service that responded to complaints. The Corporate Complaints Team provided support and quality assurance, and encouraged consistency and adherence to corporate standards. A Member suggested that more comparative data was required from previous years, as well as information about complaints processes in each department (there were slightly different procedures in Environment and Public Protection) - another Member commented that most complaints received by Councillors seemed to be about environmental issues. Changes to the IT system meant that comparable data was only available back to April 2017, but this could be built up in future years.

The report had already been scrutinised by the Adult Care and Health PDS Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2019 and the Children, Education and Families PDS Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019. The Children, Education and Families PDS Committee had requested that this Committee initiate a review of key areas for complaints, and actions taken in response, across all departments. The Vice-Chairman commented that it was up to each PDS Committee to drill down into their own services to check that complaints were addressed properly, and the Chairman offered to take this up with PDS chairmen.

**RESOLVED that the report be noted.**

**41 WORK PROGRAMME AND MATTERS OUTSTANDING**  
Report CSD19148

The Committee considered its work programme for 2019/20. It was noted that the special meeting proposed for 28<sup>th</sup> November 2019 would definitely be required to deal with a report on the Audit of Financial Statements 2018/19.

It was noted that there would be reports in 2020 on the conduct of the 2019 General Election and on the boundary commission review of electoral arrangements in Bromley.

**RESOLVED that the report be noted.**

**42 PENSIONS INVESTMENT SUB-COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 AUGUST 2019, EXCLUDING EXEMPT INFORMATION**

The draft minutes of the Pensions Investment Sub-Committee meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2019, excluding exempt information, were received.

**43 APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 SEPTEMBER 2019, EXCLUDING EXEMPT INFORMATION**

The draft minutes of the Appeals Sub-Committee meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2019, excluding exempt information, were received.

**44 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 summaries  
refer to matters involving exempt information**

**45 PENSIONS INVESTMENT SUB-COMMITTEE: EXEMPT  
MINUTES - 27 AUGUST 2019**

The draft exempt minutes of the Pensions Investment Sub-Committee meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2019 were received.

**46 APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEE: EXEMPT MINUTES - 27  
SEPTEMBER 2019**

The draft exempt minutes of the Appeals Sub-Committee meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2019 were received.

(A licensing briefing was held for members after the formal close of the meeting.)

The Meeting ended at 7.26 pm

Chairman