

Minutes of the Meeting of the General Services Committee held on 7 December 2016 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Robert Gledhill (Chair), Shane Hebb, Barbara Rice, Graham Snell, Roy Jones, Bukky Okunade and Mark Coxshall

Apologies: Councillors John Kent (Vice-Chair)

In attendance: Lyn Carpenter (Chief Executive)
Jackie Hinchliffe (Director of HR, OD & Transformation)
David Lawson (Deputy Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer)
Karen Wheeler (Director of Strategy, Communications and Customer Services)
Matthew Boulter, Principal Democratic Services Officer

12. Minutes

The Minutes of the General Services Committee held on 27 June 2016 were approved as a correct record.

13. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

14. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

15. Review of Electoral Arrangements

The Monitoring Officer introduced the report explaining that Full Council had agreed to consult on four yearly elections having formerly received a recommendation from overview and scrutiny. The proposed consultation would start in January 2017 and run for twelve weeks and the results would return to the General Services Committee for comment. The latest a Council meeting could be convened to decide on the results would be November 2017 as any changes to elections would need to be in place for May 2018. It was explained that the information on the consultation document was kept simple and factual and officers were keen for feedback on the wording of the consultation question.

Councillor Rice felt that the question should use the term 'election' rather than 'Members to be elected' as elections were much better understood in the general public. Councillor Snell felt that the terms 'proposed new system' and

'existing system' could be added appropriately in brackets at the end of each option.

Councillor Okunade felt that there should be an equal amount of pros and cons for each option and suggested that the existing system could have a pro of 'continuity of elected members', which the committee agreed was a valid point.

Councillor Coxshall noted that the form asked for a postcode but wondered whether an email address could also be requested to allow the Council to inform residents of the results.

The committee briefly discussed Councillor Aker's comments at the previous Council meeting about value for money on the consultation and all recognised that the proposed consultation was cost effective and reaching many residents with low cost.

The Committee agreed to amend the wording of the question in line with Councillor Rice's suggestions and this would be agreed by the committee via email.

Resolved: That:

- 1. The Consultation process, timeline and format set out in this report and Appendix 2 be approved as amended by the Committee.**
- 2. The committee note a special meeting of Council will need to be convened by November 2017 in order for the Council to consider the results of the consultation and determine proposals for any change in its electoral governance arrangements.**
- 3. A report be brought to General Services Committee to consider the results of the consultation and make a recommendation to be considered by Full Council.**

16. Variation of Notice Periods for Employees

The Director of HR, OD and Transformation informed the committee that extending notice periods would enable the Council to maintain continuity in service delivery, help the recruitment process and reduce the need for agency workers. The proposed extensions would bring Thurrock in line with other councils and the proposals had been agreed by the trades unions, People's Board and Directors Board. These bodies had also agreed for the Council to introduce extended notice periods with new employees immediately. Extended notice periods had also been assigned to hard to recruit posts.

Officers confirmed that the extension of notice periods was a low risk action and it was unlikely to put people off joining the Council as it simply aligned with what other councils were doing. Officers added that the policy was flexible enough for them to review those roles considered hard to recruit. It was also clarified that contractual notice periods applied to redundancies as well and the Council would honour these.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The Committee approve the contractual notice periods for employees of the council as set out in 5.2 of the report:

- **With immediate effect for new employees**
- **With effect from 1 April 2017 for all current employees.**

17. Chief Executive Performance Appraisal Procedure

The Committee confirmed that the stakeholders to be involved in the Chief Executive's appraisal would not be confined to the public sector and would include key partners relevant to the objective set.

Councillor Hebb felt the Performance Development Review (PDR) form needed to be amended for next year to show how well the Chief Executive fulfilled her day to day job but also identified the value added work she did, her behaviours and how these all linked to the key ambitions and visions of the Council. Councillor Hebb also felt these changes could be made across all Council PDRs. Officers agreed to have a discussion with Councillor Hebb outside the meeting and bring any subsequent proposals to the committee. The Committee agreed to leave the process and procedure as it was for this year.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. The revised Performance Appraisal Procedure for the Chief Executive be agreed.**
- 2. Members note the procedure will apply for the end of year appraisal 2016/17.**

18. Chief Executive Performance Appraisal

The Chair stated that the process of agreeing the Chief Executive's PDR was very open and was to be commended. It was clarified that the ratings for each objective were formed via consensus and reached by the Chief Executive having conversations with each group leader throughout the year, plus the stakeholder assessments. The final ratings would then come to the General Services Committee for agreement. The Chief Executive stated that she

sought meetings with each group leader throughout the year and expected feedback from them at these meetings.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. Members note the mid-year appraisal review of the Chief Executive.**
- 2. Members agree the objectives for the remainder of 2016/17.**

The meeting finished at 7.43 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**