

Minutes of the Meeting of the General Services Committee held on 15 June 2021 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Robert Gledhill (Chair), John Kent (Vice-Chair), Mark Coxshall, Shane Hebb, Fraser Massey, Victoria Holloway and Barry Johnson

In attendance: Ian Hunt, Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Matthew Boulter, Democratic Services Manager

1. Minutes

The minutes of the General Services Committee held on 3 March 2021 were approved as a correct record.

2. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

3. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Response to Motion at Council 27 January 2021 - Request for Committee

Officers introduced the report and highlighted that although all topics included in the terms of reference were covered elsewhere across multiple committees they were not collected into one single committee. The report provided a terms of reference for the new committee should it be agreed.

Cllr Kent noted that 'counter extremism' was not expressly worded in the terms of reference and this was a key element to the Prevent agenda and there was a danger this proposed new committee would not focus on the exact priorities of Prevent. Cllr Coxshall recognised this absence and suggested that the term 'Prevent' was expanded in 1.1a) in the terms of reference.

Cllr Gledhill felt that serious criminal gangs were a key element to the issues contained in the terms of reference, such as unaccompanied asylum seekers. He therefore suggested the addition of 'tackling criminal gang associations' as a new 1.1d) and also in 2.3.

Cllr Kent felt this was deviating from the key request of the Council motion, which was to set up a committee to focus on the objectives and strategy of the Prevent agenda, which was based around counter terrorism. Cllr Kent felt that

by spreading the same topics over numerous committees there was a risk of the topic itself being lost and not properly covered at all. Cllr Johnson felt the more committees looked at an issue the better and Cllr Hebb agreed stating that the new committee would be more pointed in its look at criminal gangs.

Cllr Coxshall recognised Cllr Kent's point and stated that the term 'criminal gang' needed to be defined as those gangs involved in nationally significant crimes and not local gangs committing anti-social behaviour as this would divert the new committee's attention away from its role. He also felt that the Council report could indicate that this committee recommended no further additions to the terms of reference.

Cllr Holloway was concerned that adding unrelated issues to a Prevent committee would go beyond the request of the Council motion and also dilute the primary role of the committee. It was clarified by officers that whatever this committee decided the full council would get the final vote on whether the terms of reference were accepted or not. Cllr Massey expressed his support for allowing Council to decide whether to accept the recommendations of this committee.

Cllr Kent stated he was willing to support the additions as Council was able to form any committee it wished to and to look at any topics it wanted. However, he noted that by deviating from the priorities of the Prevent agenda, the committee's focus on that role would be eroded.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. The General Services Committee recommends to Council it establishes a Hidden and Extreme Harms Prevention Committee with the following provisions:**
- 2. The Terms of Reference set out in the report be adopted with the following amendments:**
 - **The addition of 'counter extremism' in 1.1a) alongside other key terms which are covered by the Prevent agenda.**
 - **The addition of 'tackling criminal gang associations at 1.1d) and 2.3.**
- 3. In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, the allocation of seats to political groups, on the committee, be approved as Conservative 4, Labour 2.**
- 4. The nominations be received at the meeting for the positions of chair and vice chair of the committee and approved.**
- 5. The Prevent and Violent Extremism Members Working Group as referred to in Chapter 12 of the constitution be formally disbanded.**
- 6. Amendments to chapter 1, 5 and 12 of the constitution, as set out in paragraphs 3.7, 3.17 and 3.24 be approved.**

7. The Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to make the necessary consequential amendments to the constitution.

5. Constitutional Change - Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Board

Officers explained that amendments to the Health and Wellbeing Board's terms of reference over time had developed restrictions in appointing Members to the Board with out of date titles remaining. The report sought to reinforce the Leader's legal ability to appoint members to this Board rather than be led by portfolio holder titles.

RESOLVED: That:

1. Full Council are recommended to change the constitution of the council to:

- **Permit the Leader of the Council to appoint up to 5 elected Members to the Health and Wellbeing Board.**
- **Permit the Chair of the Board to be appointed by the Council.**

The meeting finished at 7.27 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk