

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 April 2015 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor Mrs. S. Tomlinson (Chairman); Councillors Bayford, Campbell, I Gregory, King, Johnston, Poole and M Tomlinson

In Attendance: Councillor Gibson

78. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the following Members:

Councillor Fenner;
Councillor Everitt, substituted by Councillor Johnston;
Councillor Marson, substituted by Councillor M. Tomlinson.

Councillor Gibson left the meeting at 7.05pm.

79. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

80. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Campbell proposed, Councillor Poole seconded and Members agreed the minutes of the General Purposes Committee held on 9 February 2015.

81. APPOINTMENT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES AND SECTION 151 OFFICER

Steven Boyle, Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the item for debate. He said that the report had been necessitated by the departure of Paul Cook, Director of Corporate Resources & Section 151 Officer. The meeting was advised that the recruitment process was in progress to find a permanent replacement for Mr Cook. It was necessary and important to get an interim in post in order to ensure that the Council had the services of the statutory Section 151 Officer.

Members were concerned that they were being requested to approve the appointment of the interim Director of Corporate Resources and S151 Officer without adequate information about the candidate being made available to Members. It was suggested that part of the discussion of this issue could have been held in private in order for Members to receive the confidential personal information relating to the candidate's curriculum vitae (CV).

Mr Boyle indicated that there was a necessity to have a Section 151 officer in place and assured Members that an external recruitment agency had been commissioned to undertake the recruitment process of both the interim and longer term appointment to this post and had therefore considered the candidate's CV and ensured that they had the relevant experience and qualification. Members also suggested that in future the General Purposes Committee could be given a more significant human resources function largely in recruiting key Council staff. This will enable Members to consider all the relevant confidential information required to make an appointment, rather the current arrangement where part information is made available to the Committee.

Members observed that lessons had been drawn regarding the shortcomings of combining the CEx and S151 officer roles because once an incumbent who played that dual role left Council's employment it meant Council was left without a statutory Section 151 officer in post. They said that Council should endeavour to develop within their staff numbers individuals who could stand in for a S151 Officer. Mr Boyle said that Council was in the process of recruiting a Head of Financial Services who would be the Deputy Section 151 Officer and hence add resilience to that statutory function moving forward.

Councillor I. Gregory proposed, Councillor Campbell seconded and Members agreed that Wendy Allan is appointed as interim Section 151 Officer and Director of Corporate Resources with immediate effect and until the successful appointment of a permanent Director of Corporate Resources and Section 151 officer is made.

Meeting concluded: 7.30 pm