

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2021 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Mr Peter Tucker (Chair); Councillors J Bayford, Crittenden, Duckworth, Fellows, Kup, Scobie, Dennis, Quittenden (Minster Parish Council), Crow-Brown (Minster Parish Council) and Peter Lorenzo (Independent Member of the Standards Committee)

In Attendance: Cllr Ashbee

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Lee Wellbrook and Dennis James.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Mr Tucker proposed, Cllr Fellows seconded and members agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair gave a brief verbal update on the work of the Standards Committee, commenting that:

- There had only been one complaint regarding member behaviour since the last meeting of the Standards Committee.
- The CRWP also met once to comment on the draft Member Parental Leave Policy.

5. MEMBER PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

Nick Hughes, Committee Services Manager, introduced the report.

He outlined the report and made the following points:

- The policy was aimed at those considering becoming councillors, more than those currently in the position.
- One third of female councillors at childbearing age found a lack of maternity leave to be a barrier to fulfilling their role.
- A councillor on parental leave would always be entitled to the basic allowance, the policy only related to Special Responsibility Allowances.
- The policy agreed a blanket acceptance that parental leave was an acceptable reason for an extension of time as per section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972; requiring attendance of at least one meeting in any six month period.
- The Constitutional Review Working Party highlighted that the policy also covered adoption leave and that TDC would be amongst the first councils in Kent to adopt it.
- The CRWP also felt that comparing the compensations and benefits of the vastly different roles of officers and councillors wasn't reasonable.

During discussion it was noted that:

- There would be communication between the person on parental leave and any appointed replacement, but the role itself would be only undertaken by the replacement.
- The councillor on parental leave would continue to have voting rights at Full Council.
- Options 2 & 3 in the report were considered most generous and viewed favourably.

Following discussion a vote was taken on options 2 & 3. Cllr Kup proposed, Cllr Bayford seconded and members agreed that Option 2 be recommended to Full Council on 15 July 2021, namely:

- 6 months full pay of Special Responsibility Allowances where applicable, with any remaining leave being unpaid.

6. STANDARDS COMPLAINT STATISTICS

Members noted the statistics.

Meeting concluded : 7.16 pm