

COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on 2 November 2021 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor Jason Savage (Chair); Councillors Albon, Ara, Ashbee, Austin, Bailey, Bambridge, Braidwood, Coleman-Cooke, Crittenden, Currie, Day, Dexter, Duckworth, Everitt, Farrance, Fellows, Garner, Gregory, Hart, Hopkinson, Keen, Kup, Leys, Paul Moore, Ovenden, Parsons, L Piper, Rev. S Piper, Potts, Pugh, Rattigan, Rawf, Rogers, Rusiecki, D Saunders, M Saunders, Scobie, Scott, Shrubbs, Tomlinson, Towing, Wallin, Whitehead, Wing, Wright and Yates.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors J Bayford, R Bayford, Boyd, Dennis, Green, Huxley and Shonk.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. AUDITOR'S STATUTORY RECOMMENDATIONS ISSUED UNDER S24 OF THE LOCAL AUDIT AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT 2014

The Leader proposed and Councillor Everitt seconded that Council agreed to the four recommendations and actions proposed by the External Auditor Grant Thornton UK LLP, with the additional action that full Council would receive regular updates of the actions taken to address the recommendations, namely;

1. Commission an experienced, independent Monitoring Officer from a large local authority to report to the General Purposes Committee on:
 - A risk assessment of the current employment tribunal claims and proposed actions which safeguard the Council's best interests including a detailed financial analysis of the options available to the Council.
 - An assessment of the status of all outstanding grievances, alleged whistleblowing complaints and any continuing suspensions and propose a plan of action to address them.
 - A lessons learnt report collating themes and recommendations from all externally commissioned reports and any other appropriate evidence.
2. Bring the current IDSC process to a conclusion with clear actions that are reported and action monitored.
3. Revisit the financial plans and identify additional savings plans to address the further cost pressures created in resolving the grievances and whistleblowing complaints.
4. Agree an approach where the Council demonstrates that it is responding to the substance of concerns raised including a clear agreement on where Officer and Member responsibilities lie.
5. In addition to the recommendations proposed by the auditors, members agreed that regular updates of the actions to address the recommendations will be provided to full Council.

Mr Dossett, Head of Local Government and Ms Ironmonger, Director of Audit, from Grant Thornton, presented the report and responded to questions from Members.

After questions, Members then debated the recommendations.

Following the debate, Members agreed to conduct a recorded vote.

48 Councillors voted in favour of the motion, namely: Councillors Albon, Ara, Ashbee, Austin, Bailey, Bambridge, Braidwood, Coleman-Cooke, Crittenden, Currie, Day, Dexter, Duckworth, Everitt, Farrance, Fellows, Garner, Gregory, Hart, Hopkinson, Keen, Kup, Leys, Pat Moore, Paul Moore, Ovenden, Parsons, L Piper, S Piper, Potts, Pugh, Rattigan, Rawf, Rogers, Rusiecki, D Saunders, M Saunders, Savage, Scobie, Scott, Shrubbs, Tomlinson, Towning, Wallin, Whitehead, Wing, Wright, Yates.

0 Councillors voted against the recommendations.

0 Councillors abstained from voting.

The recommendations were carried

Meeting concluded: 8.00 pm