

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2023 at 3.30 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor Ash Ashbee (Chair); Councillors Austin, J Bayford, R Bayford, Everitt, Ovenden, Rawf, D Saunders, M Saunders, Scobie and Wright

23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Albon, substituted by Councillor Scobie.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

25. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor David Saunders proposed, Councillor Bob Bayford seconded and Members agreed the minutes as a correct record of the General Purposes Committee meeting that was held on 4 November 2022.

26. SENIOR MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Colin Carmichael, Interim Chief Executive introduced the report and made the following comments:

- This was an important subject that needed progressing as part of implementing the recommendations from the Independent Monitoring Officer's report;
- Currently the Chief Executive had the authority to make decisions on the appointment of Heads of Service and Directors;
- The General Purposes Committee was being asked to endorse the recommendations in the CEx's report regarding the restructure of the senior management structure;
- With the agreement of members the CEx will proceed with the new proposed structure and replace the current temporary arrangements with the new permanent staff structure;
- Adoption of the new structure would enable the CEx to recruit to any vacancies;
- A two stage consultation was carried out with all the staff as part of the formal exercise.
- Officers who working in an acting capacity to these vacant roles were working hard in those roles and the level of commitment had been impressive;

- There were a number of projects that the Council was implementing that included the Levelling Up Funds and Town Deal projects. These projects had significant fund allocations and required a stable senior management team to implement them successfully;
- There was a need to set up an Appointment Sub Committee of the General Purposes Committee whose role would be to appoint Chief Officers. This sub committee was quite traditional in Local Government;
- It was important to establish a good structure for the incoming CEx;
- The CEx also proposed that Director of Service titles be replaced by Heads of Service job titles. This would eliminate any confusion that currently existed by the use of Corporate Director and Service Director titles. This proposal was

supported by most of the staff who responded to the CEx's consultation on the matter;

- The responses from the staff consultation on the senior management restructure was pleasing;
- A new structure chart proposed in Annex 1 to the committee report, would be populated with officer names to the new roles.

Members asked questions and made comments as follows:

- One Member said that this was an excellent and detailed report. Members were in agreement with the principles relating to Member involvement in the recruitment process of senior council officers (i.e. chief officers);
- Since GPC did not have the authority to change the scheme of delegations, any changes to the terms of reference of the GPC or the creation of the Appointment Sub Committee would need to be approved by Full Council, with changes also being made to the Council Constitution;
- Establishing a politically balanced sub committee although appropriate, would not necessarily guarantee inclusion of all political groups that make up the council;
- Could Members be involved in the temporary appointment to the director roles or would they only be involved in the permanent appointment to these roles?
- Previously Members were not involved with the appointment of interim senior officers;
- This proposal for Member involvement in the recruitment of directors was an excellent approach which brought the TDC process more in line with how the same process is managed by other Councils;
- What were the timescales for the appointment to the new structure?
- It would be more helpful if all Members were informed of and got involved in the new recruitment process;
- There used to be a committee that would shortlist three candidates for then CEx post and forward the list to Full Council for final decision;
- Would a set up where Open Spaces operatives (who can work across tasks) could report to a Cleansing Head of Service and not to the Head of Open Spaces be the best approach?
- One Member said that Statutory Officers had to be appointed by Full Council;
- Another Member said that there should be a limited opportunity for Full Council to ask a limited number of questions of the of the CEx and Head of Paid Services;
- The Appointment Sub Committee could be set up by the end of February 2023.

The Chair suggested that Members be involved in the recruitment to the Directors of Place and Environment posts which were being proposed in the new structure. In order to enable Member oversight over this matter, the Chair then proposed that Recommendation 7 in the committee report be amended to read as follows:

That the appointment of Directors and CEx that would be made by the newly created Appointment Sub Committee be formally approved by Full Council.

After some debate, the Chair withdrew the amendment.

Colin Carmichael and Sameera Khan, Interim Head of Legal & Monitoring Officer responded to Member comments and questions as follows:

- Candidates at this level of senior management role would be used to Member involvement in the recruitment process;
- S151 Officer role could be attached to the director level role;
- Full Council had also to formally approve the Monitoring Officer appointment;

- Officers had just started making draft changes to the Council Constitution to be through Constitutional Review Working Party, Standards Committee and Full Council before end of February;
- An external company was assisting with the constitutional changes work stream;
- Members should be involved in the appointment to fill in temporary or permanent Director posts;
- Once GPC had approved the officer recommendations, appointment to the senior posts would be done as soon as was possible, with the first option being 1 March 2023 but not later than 1 April 2023;
- Slotting and ringfencing would be done in the week beginning 30 January 2023;
- Advertising to the vacant posts would be done in early February with most appointments being done by 1 March;
- Some of the officers would still be in an acting capacity until those roles were filled. This would be the case with the Head of Operations role;
- Setting up of the sub committee would be a Full Council process, which could be done at the 23 February Council meeting;
- The appointment interview to the CEx role would be better delegated to a sub committee than be conducted by Full Council;
- Where to place the Open Spaces staff on the organisational structure was a hot topic, with some staff responding to the consultation saying that the operatives should fall under the Street Cleansing Services;
- CEx opted to use functions in assigning where the operatives would go. That meant assigning them to the Beaches, and Coastal Areas;
- Colin Carmichael suggested that all the appointments be made by the Interim CEx and the GPC would then be requested to endorse the appointments
- Any changes to the recruitment process of senior management could be made after the May 2023 Local Government elections if Members wished to revisit the issue.

Councillor Bob Bayford proposed, Councillor Everitt seconded and the General Purposes Committee UNANIMOUSLY AGREED to adopt the following recommendations:

1. To endorse the proposed Senior Management Structure as set out in the report at paragraph 6.8 to the committee report;
2. To authorise the Chief Executive to determine the operative date of the new structure;
3. To recommend to Council that the terms of reference of the General Purposes Committee should explicitly cover the approval of any future substantial changes to the senior management structure (which by definition will be the scope and reporting lines of the posts of Chief Executive, Directors, and Heads of Service);
4. To delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, any future non-substantial changes to the senior structure;
5. To note that changes may be made to the structure, depending on appointments to the vacant posts;
6. For this exercise only, to delegate to the Chief Executive the responsibility of making appointments to all of the new senior structure at the ring-fencing/slotting stage, and to any vacant posts of Head of Service at the competitive recruitment stage;
7. For this exercise only, to delegate to the Chief Executive the responsibility of recommending shortlisted candidates to the vacant posts of Director of Place and Director of Environment at the competitive recruitment stage to the appointment sub-committee for interview and formal approval. In addition to delegate to the Chief Executive all responsibilities regarding the existing temporary acting arrangements for directors.
8. To recommend to Council the creation of a politically balanced Appointment Sub Committee of the General Purposes Committee as soon as possible with terms of reference to oversee the process of recruitment to the posts of Chief Executive and

Directors, including the final decision on successful candidates; and to take on the responsibility of hearing Grievances at this level;

9. To agree to delegate the appointment of Heads of Service (deputy Chief Officers) to the Chief Executive.

This was subject to the Interim Chief Executive, Leader of Council and Committee Clerk amending the wording to Recommendations 7 and 8 above.

Meeting concluded: 4.28 pm