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GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2014 at 5.30 pm in Austen Room, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor Michelle Fenner (Chairman); Councillors Binks, Everitt, I Gregory, C Hart, King, Kirby, Marson, Poole and Wiltshire

34. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor S Tomlinson, for whom Councillor Binks was present as substitute.

35. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor Poole and seconded by Councillor Hart that Councillor Fenner be elected Chairman. There being no further nominations, Councillor Fenner was declared elected, whereupon she took the Chair.

COUNCILLOR FENNER IN THE CHAIR

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

37. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 February 2013 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

38. PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE DESIGNATION OF THE TWO STATUTORY POSTS OF CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER AND MONITORING OFFICER

It was proposed by the Leader of Council, Councillor C Hart, and seconded by Councillor Fenner that the recommendations as set out at paragraph 6.1 of the report be adopted, namely:

“THAT General Purposes Committee confirms agreement with the proposal as set out in the report and recommends to Council that:

- 1) The statutory post of Chief Financial Officer is designated to the Director of Corporate Resources;
- 2) The statutory post of Monitoring Officer is designated to the Legal Services Manager.”

Sue McGonigal, Chief Executive, who outlined the main objectives of the proposals as being to achieve financial savings and enhance resilience in key areas of the organisation, also made the following points in relation to the staff restructure:

1. It was important to consider the changes as relating to posts, not individuals.
2. Statutory consultation with staff had occurred in October and November 2013, and feedback received had resulted in revising the restructure to include designating the post of Monitoring Officer to the Legal Services Manager instead of to the Corporate Standards Manager, as the qualifications of the Legal Services Manager were considered to fit better with the Monitoring Officer role.

3. A further consultation with staff would take place on the revised restructure and if feedback from this consultation impacted the proposal for either the S.151 Officer or Monitoring Officer posts, this would be reported to the General Purposes Committee in the first instance.
4. The Committee is being asked to consider supporting the proposals "in principle", and putting them forward as a recommendation for final decision with full Council.

A discussion then took place, during which the Chief Executive and Juli Oliver Smith, Head of EK Human Resources, provided the following information:

- a) The new Director of Corporate Resources would be required to be CCAB (*Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies*) qualified.
- b) The first stage of staff consultation, which had taken place over a period of 45 days, had been preceded by significant informal consultation through last Summer and early Autumn. The General Purposes Committee was now being consulted on the proposals affecting the S.151 and Monitoring Officer posts as part of the overall consultation.
- c) Once the revised restructure had been agreed, redeployment opportunities would be offered to individuals at risk, with internal recruitment, where possible, taking precedence over external recruitment. However, in view of the new Director of Corporate Resources requiring to be CCAB qualified, that post would have to be recruited to externally.
- d) Through the restructure process individuals at risk are identified and where there are "suitable alternatives", i.e., posts of similar scope and salary range to their current posts, they would either be slotted into those posts or put into a "pool" of others who have the same claim on a single post for interview. If an individual accepts a suitable alternative with a lower salary, their current salary would be protected for a year. If an individual refuses a suitable alternative, they could be treated as if they had resigned from their current post. Individuals can also apply for posts that are not "suitable alternatives" and if successful are not entitled to protection should the salary be lower than their current role.
- e) The interests of individuals affected by the restructure needed to be balanced against the interests of the organisation as a whole.
- f) It was hoped that agency fees arising from any temporary cover for vacant posts that would be necessary would be contained within the budget.
- g) The current Chief Executive/ S.151 Officer's salary was based on a "Hay" evaluation of the Chief Executive role on its own.
- h) It was felt that there would be more capacity for the Monitoring Officer role, when designated to the Legal Services Manager post, than existed under the current structure.
- i) It was considered appropriate to hold this meeting in open session in view of the public interest in disclosing the information, which concerned posts, not individuals.

Upon the motion, as set out above, being put to the vote, it was ADOPTED IN PRINCIPLE.

Meeting concluded : 6.25 pm