

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held at Room 14, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 30 October 2018

PRESENT

Cllr Mrs J G Lawrence (Chairman)
Cllr G Perham (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs Mrs A L Dodwell
J G Jamieson
D J Lawrence
K C Matthews

Cllrs B J Spurr
S Watkins
A Zerny

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs N Warren
R D Wenham

Substitutes: Cllrs Mrs C F Chapman MBE (In place of R D Wenham)

Members in Attendance: Cllrs K Ferguson
F Firth

Officers in Attendance: Mrs C Jagusz – Committee Services Officer
Mr J Partridge – Head of Governance
Mr S Rix – Interim Monitoring Officer

GPC/18/20. **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 23 August 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

GPC/18/21. **Members' Interests**

None.

GPC/18/22. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

There were no announcements or communications from the Chairman.

GPC/18/23. **Petitions**

No petitions were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Part 4G of the Constitution.

GPC/18/24. **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

No questions, statements or deputations were received from members of the public in accordance with Public Participation Procedure as set out in Part 4G of the Constitution.

GPC/18/25. **Proposed Changes to the Constitution on the Monitoring Officer Function**

The Committee considered a report which set out the proposed changes to the Constitution in relation to the Monitoring Officer's functions.

The Committee was advised that the current Constitution did not reflect that the Monitoring Officer (MO) was an employee of an external contractor and not solely an employee of Central Bedfordshire Council. The proposed changes would protect the Council from the risks highlighted in the report.

Points and comments included:

- It was clarified that the MO was employed by LGSS Law Ltd and was appointed by the Council as an officer of the Council and designated by the Council as the Monitoring Officer. The Appointments Sub-Committee's remit was to appoint the MO.
- Members of the Appointment Sub-Committee were appointed by the MO from members of the General Purposes committee. An additional recommendation was proposed to recommend to Council to amend Parts 3B and 4K of the Constitution to allow for the Chief Executive to appoint Members to the Appointments Sub-Committee if the appointment or dismissal was in respect of the MO to avoid any conflict of interest.
- In response to a question regarding how the MO functions would be carried out in the event that the MO was dismissed, it was advised that the Deputy MO would carry out all MO responsibilities until an Acting MO or a permanent MO was appointed.
- It was also noted that the MO must at all times have an appointed Deputy MO in place.

RESOLVED

that the proposed changes, as set out in Appendices A – D to the report, be approved and that:

Parts 3B and 4K of the Constitution be amended to permit the Chief Executive to appoint Members to the Appointments Sub-Committee in the event the appointment or dismissal was in respect of the Monitoring Officer.

RECOMMENDED to Council

that the proposed amendments, set out in Appendices A-D to the report and the additional amendments to Parts 3B and 4K above be approved.

GPC/18/26. **Report on the Arrangements for Ethical Standards (Standards Complaints)**

The Committee received the bi-annual update on the Council's ethical governance and arrangements since March 2018.

NOTED

how the Council had complied with its obligations in respect of ethical standards under the Localism Act 2011 for the period of 1 March – 30 September 2018.

GPC/18/27. **Review of Policy and Procedure under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000**

The Committee considered a report which provided the annual update of the Council's use of its powers and compliance under and with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA).

NOTED

the Summary of RIPA applications which detailed the Council's use of its powers and compliance with the RIPA since last reported to the Committee on 26 October 2017.

GPC/18/28. **Election of Parent Governor Co-opted representatives for the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Committee considered a report on the proposal to amend the Constitution to allow for the appointment of parent governor representatives from Central Bedfordshire academies to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committees from May 2019 onwards.

It was noted that the Council was required by law to appoint between 2-5 parent governors to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee. At the current time the committee had 3 parent governors elected to serve a four year term up to 2019. It was proposed that the Constitution be amended to permit the appointment of one additional parent governor representative from the academy schools in Central Bedfordshire.

Points and comments included:

- That, currently, for the committee to be quorate, there would need to be 4 councillors and 2 co-opted members (either parent governors or diocesan representatives) but it was noted that there were concerns with non-attendance from some co-opted members which risked the meeting becoming inquorate.
- It was noted that due to the importance of special education needs it would be preferable to include representatives with specialist expertise.
- The current membership size of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee was 10 elected Members whereby other Overview and Scrutiny Committees membership total was 9.

- The option of including a representative as a non-voting observer who could attend and provide the expertise needed was discussed.
- The cost implications of appointing additional co-optees.

RECOMMENDED to Council

1. **that the proposed amendments to Part 3C of the Constitution, as set out in Appendix A to the General Purposes Committee report, be approved; and**
2. **that, in addition to the proposed amendments outlined in the report, an additional parent governor representative be appointed to the Committee as a representative of Special Schools in Central Bedfordshire.**

GPC/18/29. **Review of Urgent and Minor Updates to the Constitution**

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Member for Corporate Resources which set out the changes made under the Monitoring Officer's delegated powers to the Council's Constitution between July to September 2018.

NOTED

the changes made under the Monitoring Officer's delegated powers to maintain the Council's Constitution, as set out in Appendix A to the report.

GPC/18/30. **Work Programme**

Members considered a report which set out the Committee's work programme.

RESOLVED

that the General Purposes Committee work programme be amended as follows for a future meeting:

- **Discuss the Protocol for Member/Officer Relations; and**
- **Proposal to update the constitution with regards to the Planning Call-in process.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 10.55 a.m.)

Chairman

Dated