

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held at Room 15, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 16 May 2013

### PRESENT

Cllr P Hollick (Chairman)  
Cllr R C Stay (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs	P N Aldis	Cllrs	Mrs J G Lawrence
	Mrs C F Chapman MBE		J Murray
	A L Dodwell		B Saunders
	M R Jones		N Warren
	D J Lawrence		

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs J G Jamieson

Members in Attendance: Cllrs D Bowater  
R D Berry

Officers in Attendance:	Mr J Atkinson	–	Head of Legal and Democratic Services
	Mr R Gould	–	Head of Financial Control
	Mrs C Jones	–	Head of HR Policy & Development
	Mr L Manning	–	Committee Services Officer

GPC/13/2 **Minutes**

### RESOLVED

**that the minutes of the meetings of the General Purposes Committee held on 14 March and 18 April 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following amendments:**

**18 April 2013 – Appendix A - General Purposes Committee Nominations**

**In the section referring to the Employee Partnership Committee include 'Vacancy (C)' at the end of the list of nominated members and again at the end of the list of nominated substitutes.**

GPC/13/3 **Members' Interests**

None.

GPC/13/4 **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

None.

**GPC/13/5 Petitions**

No petitions were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 2 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

**GPC/13/6 Questions, Statements or Deputations**

No questions, statements or deputations were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 1 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

**GPC/13/7 Capital Programme Management**

The Committee considered a report by the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources which sought Members' views on a number of proposed amendments to the Constitution with regard to the management of the Council's Capital Programme. The meeting noted that the aim of the amendments was to simplify the approval of capital schemes in order that the Capital Programme could operate more efficiently.

The Committee was reminded that on 28 January 2013 it had recommended to Council that the Constitution be amended to allow the inclusion of specific reserve list items, which had been previously agreed by Council, within the Capital Programme. That recommendation had subsequently been approved at Council on 21 February 2013. The further changes now proposed to the Constitution simplified the classification of capital schemes but, with the exception of schemes that were fully funded from external sources, maintained the existing approval requirements. If the revisions were approved, corporate project approval and management documentation would be revised to reflect the amendments.

The revisions proposed to the capital programme governance related to clauses in the Code of Financial Governance in Part I2, section 4.10 of the Constitution and in the Executive Functions in Part C3, section 3 of the Constitution as set out in Appendices A and B to the report.

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources spoke in favour of the proposed revisions. A Member then raised a query regarding the proposed delegation of authority to the relevant Executive Member who, subject to conditions, could include schemes within the Capital Programme that were fully externally funded and where the gross expenditure was less than £500,000. In response the Legal and Democratic Services Officer and the Head of Financial Control explained that any such decisions would be recorded and the approved schemes would be disclosed in public reports monitoring the delivery of the Capital Programme.

## **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

**that the Constitution be amended by including the proposed capital programme related revisions to the Code of Financial Governance in Part I2, section 4.10 of the Constitution and to the Executive Functions in Part C3, section 3 of the Constitution as set out in Appendices A and B respectively to these minutes.**

### **GPC/13/8 Review of Member/Officer Protocol**

The Committee was aware that, prior to the meeting taking place, the withdrawal of the item on the review of the Member/Officer Protocol had been authorised. In response to Members' queries the Head of Legal and Democratic Services explained the reason for this action.

### **GPC/13/9 General Purposes Committee - 2013/14 Work Programme**

Members considered a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services setting out the proposed Work Programme for the Committee for 2013/14.

Arising from the withdrawal of the item on the review of Member/Officer protocol it was suggested that this item be considered at the Committee's next meeting in July. It was also suggested that, given the current absence of business for the Committee's meetings in October, January and March, these be regarded as reserve meetings that could be cancelled if necessary.

Members referred to the proposed submission of an annual report on ethical standards complaints to the meeting of the Committee in July. They emphasised the need to regularly examine all aspects of the impact of the Localism Act 2011 on ethical standards issues and concern was expressed that the provision of an annual report was insufficient for this purpose. In response the Head of Legal and Democratic Services assured Members that the matters they had raised, including the frequency of reports to the Committee, would be considered in his forthcoming report to the next meeting.

## **RESOLVED**

**that the proposed General Purposes Committee Work Programme for 2013/14, as attached at Appendix A to the report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, be approved subject to the following amendments:**

**18 July 2013 – add Review of Member/Officer Protocol (JA)  
3 October 2013 – mark as 'Reserve Meeting'  
20 January 2014 - mark as 'Reserve Meeting'  
13 March 2014 - mark as 'Reserve Meeting'**

(Note: Minute GPC/13/11 below also refers).

GPC/13/10 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

**RESOLVED**

**that in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that consideration of the item is likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.**

GPC/13/11 **Market Rate Supplement Payments - Update**

The Committee considered a report by the Assistant Chief Executive People and Organisation which provided an update on the current application of market rate supplements (MRS) to posts across Central Bedfordshire Council.

The meeting noted that the purpose of applying an MRS was an attempt to bridge the gap between the Council's salary levels and the 'current' market rate of pay and had historically been applied in response to difficulties in recruiting and retaining certain staff groups, roles or skills.

Appendix A to the Assistant Chief Executive's report provided an overview summary of the payments made by Central Bedfordshire Council as at 1 April 2013.

Full discussion took place with Members identifying both the need for additional information and various aspects of MRS use which they felt required further examination.

**RESOLVED**

**that the Assistant Chief Executive People and Organisation submit a report to the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 18 July 2013 setting out the proportion of each Directorates' budget used to fund the payment of market rate supplements together with an illustration of whether these had changed from the previous financial year and, if so, by what extent.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 11.00 a.m.)

Chairman .....

Dated .....