

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held at Room 15, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Monday, 20 January 2014

PRESENT

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

Cllrs P N Aldis
Mrs C F Chapman MBE
J G Jamieson
M R Jones
D J Lawrence

Cllrs Mrs J G Lawrence
J Murray
B Saunders
N Warren

Apologies for Absence: Cllr A L Dodwell

Substitutes: Cllr K Janes (In place of A L Dodwell)

Members in Attendance: Cllrs R D Berry
A L Dodwell*
K C Matthews
A Shadbolt

*Having submitted her apologies for absence Councillor A L Dodwell was subsequently able to attend the meeting shortly after it had started. However, due to the presence of her substitute, she ceased to be a member of the Committee throughout the duration of the meeting (paragraph 6.3 of Part E3 of the Constitution refers).

Officers in Attendance:	Ms D Clarke	– Director of Improvement and Corporate Services
	Mrs M Clay	– Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer
	Mrs C Jones	– Head of HR Policy and Development
	Mr L Manning	– Committee Services Officer
	Ms M Peaston	– Committee Services Manager

GPC/13/30 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 3 December 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

Minute GPC/13/28 (Constitution – Proposed Amendments/Appendix B/Part I3 Code of Procurement Governance/Paragraph 5.1/Table 1/Footnote)

Delete the threshold figure of '£4,342,012' and insert '£4,332,012' in its place.

GPC/13/31 Members' Interests

None.

GPC/13/32 Chairman's Announcements and Communications

None.

GPC/13/33 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/13/34 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/13/35 Pay Policy Statement 2014/15

The General Purposes Committee considered a report by the Director of Improvement and Corporate Services which set out the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2014/15. Members were advised that sections 38-43 of the Localism Act 2011 required all local authorities to publish a comprehensive Pay Policy Statement before 31 March every year.

The Committee noted that the Localism Act had further extended the existing requirements under the Code of Transparency to publish Chief Officer remuneration on the Council website and ensure that full Council had the opportunity to approve senior appointments or severance arrangements outside of existing approved policies and pay arrangements.

Members also noted that the Localism Act had introduced requirements to ensure a comparison was possible between the policies adopted on the remuneration of Chief Officers and other employees and, in addition, set out a policy on the lowest paid.

The Head of HR Policy and Development stated that the draft Pay Policy Statement before Members reflected existing policies and terms and conditions previously agreed and also met the requirements set out in the Department for Communities and Local Government's supplementary guidance on Pay Policy Statements issued in February 2013. As such it represented an updated version of the Pay Policy Statement adopted for 2013/14 and fully complied with all statutory requirements.

Discussion then took place on various matters including the introduction of 'spot salaries', the process for determining how the Chief Executive could reach the top of his salary range and the level of severance payments paid to staff. In response to the query regarding the Chief Executive's salary range the Director for Improvement and Corporate Services undertook to examine the Committee's previous minutes to ensure that the proposed changes to the Policy were consistent with the Committee's original decision.

Members were reminded that the Localism Act required that the Policy be approved by full Council.

NOTED

the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2014/15.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- 1 that the draft Pay Policy Statement 2014/15, as set out at Appendix A to these minutes, be approved and adopted;**
- 2 that, following approval and adoption, the Pay Policy Statement 2014/15 be published on the Council's website.**

GPC/13/36 Proposed Amendments to the Constitution - Planning Matters

The General Purposes Committee considered a report of the Chairman of the Development Management Committee which set out a number of proposed amendments to the latter's current composition, procedures and approach to reaching decisions. Members noted that the purpose of the amendments was to increase the focus and business-like approach of the Development Management Committee.

The Chairman of the Development Management Committee introduced his report and explained the reasons behind the proposed amendments. Full discussion then took place, during which the Chairman of the Development Management Committee responded to various queries and comments. Consideration was also given to any additional changes that were suggested. In particular Members discussed the call-in of planning applications and issues related to this.

Arising from discussion on the most suitable days on which the related site visits should take place Members indicated that they would wish to see the dates of the site visits included in the Members' Information Bulletin.

Following a query on the attendance of substitutes on site visits the Chairman of the Development Management Committee explained that only those named substitutes nominated to attend the Committee's meeting would be expected to attend the site visits and not all of the Development Management Committee's named substitutes. In response to a comment that some substitutes would only be nominated after the site visits had taken place the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee stated that all that could be done was to acknowledge that, unfortunately, the situation would arise. Nonetheless, a Member commented that all named substitutes on the Development Management Committee could be expected to be called on to attend a meeting of the Committee at short notice and so, therefore, all named substitutes should attend site visits whether nominated beforehand or not.

With regard to the proposed enforcement of the existing requirement for Members to complete a proforma document to include valid planning reasons in support of a proposed call-in it was suggested that the proforma document should include examples of valid planning reasons and examples of reasons that were not acceptable for this purpose.

The Committee acknowledged in full the benefits that would arise from amending the processes and membership of the Development Management Committee and indicated their support for the approach set out before them.

Members were aware that it was also necessary to recommend to Council that the Constitution be amended to give effect to the Committee's decisions.

RESOLVED

that the following amendments be approved:

- a) site visits should normally be held for all planning applications to be determined by the Development Management Committee, unless otherwise agreed by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman;**
- b) all members and nominated substitute members of the Development Management Committee should attend site visits;**
- c) the number of members on the Development Management Committee should be reduced from 18 to 13, with effect from the beginning of the 2014/15 municipal year;**
- d) to note that the Constitution required the call-in of planning applications for determination by the Committee through use of a proforma, stating a valid planning reason, and that this would be enforced from the beginning of the 2014/15 municipal year;**
- e) all Development Management Committee members and substitute members would be expected to undertake annual accredited training by an external trainer, starting in 2014/15;**

- f) **any planning applications submitted by senior officers of the Council (Heads of Service, Assistant Directors, Directors, and the Chief Executive) or officers in the Development Management Team would be routinely determined by the Development Management Committee, however minor, and not through an officer's delegated powers.**

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

that the proposed amendments to the Constitution at Parts E2, H3 and the Ethical Handbook, as set out at Appendices B, C and D to these minutes, be approved in order to give effect to the decision agreed by the General Purposes Committee.

GPC/13/37 General Purposes Committee - Work Programmes for 2013/14 and 2014/15

Members considered a report by the Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer setting out the proposed Work Programmes for the Committee for the remainder of 2013/14 and the whole of 2014/15.

The Committee noted that submission of the six monthly report updating Members on standards complaints to that day's meeting had been delayed. The Director of Improvement and Corporate Services reminded the meeting that a six monthly update was only due to be submitted if any issues had arisen to necessitate it. In view of these comments Members considered that a report, if required, should be submitted to a later meeting of the Committee to allow the Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer to prepare a report following due consideration. The possibility of submitting the report alongside the Annual Report was suggested by the Director of Improvement and Corporate Services.

A Member queried the proposed meeting date for the Committee of 22 May in the next Municipal Year given that this was the date of the European elections and Members would be engaged in the election process. The Committee Services Officer stated that, since the report had been published, this situation had been acknowledged and the proposed meeting date had been amended to 29 May. Members then raised an issue of whether the next scheduled meeting of the Committee (13 March), was viable given the lack of agenda items and whether a meeting should therefore be held between the end of April and beginning of May as an alternative to the proposed meeting on 29 May.

RESOLVED

that the proposed General Purposes Committee Work Programmes for the remainder of 2013/14 and the whole of 2014/15, as attached at Appendix A of the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer, be approved subject to the following:

- a) **rescheduling the six monthly update on standards complaints to a future date to allow the Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer time to prepare a fully considered report;**

- b) examination of the possible cancellation of the Committee's meetings scheduled for 13 March and, provisionally, 29 May, to be replaced by one meeting during the period at the end of April or beginning of May.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 10.50 a.m.)

Chairman

Dated