

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held at Room 15, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 15 January 2015

### PRESENT

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

Cllrs A L Dodwell  
J G Jamieson  
D Jones  
M R Jones  
Mr D J Lawrence

Cllrs Mrs J G Lawrence  
K C Matthews  
J Murray  
R B Pepworth  
M A G Versallion

Members in Attendance: Cllr D J Hopkin

Officers in Attendance:	Mrs M Clay	– Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer
	Ms M Damigos	– Corporate Lawyer
	Mrs C Jones	– Acting Chief People Officer
	Mr L Manning	– Committee Services Officer

GPC/14/36. **Minutes**

### RESOLVED

**that the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 20 November 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.**

GPC/14/37. **Members' Interests**

None.

GPC/14/38. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman referred to the update on the recruitment of children's social workers given at the last meeting of the Committee (minute GPC/14/32 refers) and advised Members that a recent article in a local government magazine had recognised the efforts made by the Council in promoting the role and in the recruitment and training of staff.

**GPC/14/39. 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/14/40. 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/14/41. Pay Policy Statement 2015/16**

The Committee considered a report which set out the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2015/16. Members were reminded that the Localism Act 2011 required local authorities to adopt a comprehensive Pay Policy Statement by 31 March every year and publish it on the council's website with effect from 1 April.

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

The Committee was aware that the draft Pay Policy Statement before Members had been updated to reflect the impact of the pay award recently given to all employees on Local Government terms and conditions of employment. The meeting was advised that a national pay award had not been approved for the Chief Executive or Directors and that they were covered by separate negotiating bodies.

Members were also aware 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. However, for the period 2015/16, the ratio of pay of the Chief Executive to that of the median earner and the ratio of pay of the Chief Executive to that of the mean average salary could not be updated until after the January 2015 payroll had been run. This information would be made available in time for consideration by full Council.

Full discussion took place on the process set out within the draft Pay Policy Statement for the determination of salary levels for Directors. The Committee noted that all newly appointed Directors were paid 'spot salaries' and that the salary range in which the spot salary was determined was decided by the Appointments Sub-Committee taking into account guidance from the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) National Framework and market forces. Members felt that the draft Statement should be amended to clearly reflect this process.

## **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

- 1 that the draft Pay Policy Statement 2015/16, as set out at Appendix A to these minutes, be approved and adopted;**
- 2 that, following approval and adoption, the Pay Policy Statement 2015/16 be published on the Council's website.**

### **GPC/14/42. Councillor Code of Conduct Complaints**

The Committee considered a report, originally submitted to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 December 2014, on proposed changes to the councillor Code of Conduct complaints processes and procedures. Members also had before them a copy of the slide pack for the accompanying presentation on this matter originally given to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In addition, the Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer and Monitoring Officer took the opportunity to verbally update the summary of Councillor Code of Conduct complaints, which had been included as an appendix to the report, to include the figures for December 2014.

The Committee noted that the report presented to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee had arisen as a consequence of concerns over the time and cost resource implications to the Council with regard to the processing of town and parish councillor Code of Conduct complaints. The report explained the current arrangements and the range of issues which had generated the resource challenges. It was in response to this situation that the Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer and Monitoring Officer sought changes to Part F2 of the Constitution ('Arrangements for dealing with Standards Allegations Under the Localism Act 2011') with the aim of improving the management of the complaints process and the turnaround times in respect of complaints and generally streamlining the process in the light of experience whilst ensuring that the relevant checks and balances remained. An emphasis on securing the local resolution of complaints, if at all possible, was made by the Chief Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer.

The views of the General Purposes Committee on the proposed changes to the Constitution were sought. During the debate the Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer and Monitoring Officer stated that she would welcome the clear endorsement and ownership by all members of the Council of the proposed, wider, changes to the Constitution. Following full consideration the General Purposes Committee concurred with the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee's proposed changes. In addition, Members approved the related Councillor Code of Conduct Complaint Procedure Flowchart, which provided a guide in pictorial form, subject to a revision to embolden the typeface of the timescales. Following further comment the Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer and Monitoring Officer undertook to further examine the content of the Flowchart to ensure greater clarity and achieve conformity with any changes to the Constitution that were subsequently approved by Council.

The Committee considered the need to improve awareness of Code of Conduct complaints issues among town and parish councils having regard to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendation that a dedicated seminar be held for this purpose. The General Purposes Committee noted that a development seminar was now scheduled to be held on 19 March 2015 for town and parish council clerks with the aim of embedding awareness on this issue within the councils. It was further noted that a second development seminar would be held for town and parish councillors following the elections on 7 May. Members indicated their full support for these arrangements.

#### **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

**that the proposed amendments to Part F2 of the Constitution, as set out at Appendix B to these minutes, and to the Councillor Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure Flowchart, as set out at Appendix C to these minutes, be approved and adopted.**

#### **GPC/14/43. Work Programme**

Members considered a report which set out the Committee's proposed work programme for the remainder of the 2014/15 municipal year and the whole of the 2015/16 municipal year.

The Chairman drew Members' attention to the absence of any reports for the meeting scheduled for 5 March except that for the work programme. He asked Members to inform him of any issues that they might have which would generate report items. He stated that if none were forthcoming the meeting would be cancelled.

#### **RESOLVED**

**that the proposed General Purposes Committee work programme, as attached at Appendix A to the report of the Committee Services Manager and Committee Services Officer, be approved.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 11.02 a.m.)

Chairman .....

Dated .....