

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held at Room 15, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 25 June 2015

### PRESENT

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

Cllrs L Birt  
P Hollick  
K C Matthews

Cllrs M A G Versallion  
N Warren  
A Zerny

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs Mrs C F Chapman MBE  
J G Jamieson  
M R Jones  
B Wells

Substitutes: Cllrs N B Costin  
D J Lawrence

Officers in Attendance: Mr I Ali – Corporate Lawyer  
Mrs D Broadbent-Clarke – Director of Improvement and Corporate Services  
Mr R Gould – Head of Financial Control  
Mrs S Hobbs – Committee Services Officer  
Mrs C Jones – Chief People Officer

GPC/15/2. **Minutes**

### RESOLVED

**that the minutes of the meetings of the General Purposes Committee held on 15 January 2015 and 21 May 2015 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as correct records.**

GPC/15/3. **Members' Interests**

None were declared.

GPC/15/4. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman provided an update on the recruitment of Social Workers within Children's Services following the change of provider. The Chairman was pleased to announce that the Council had retained all the Social Workers and no one had left the organisation. An update had been scheduled to be considered by the General Purposes Committee on 17 December 2015 and the Chairman advised that this item would now be removed from the Committee's work programme. If there was a need to discuss this issue further a report would be considered by the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

GPC/15/5. **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/15/6. **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/15/7. **The Local Authorities (Standing Orders)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2015**

The Committee considered a report that provided advice on the legislative changes to the Standing Orders relating to the dismissal of statutory officers. The Orders had come into effect on 11 May 2015 and changes to the Council's Constitution was necessary to effect their implementation as far as was currently feasible.

The Regulations removed the requirement for a Designated Independent Person and provided that any decision to dismiss the relevant Statutory Officer must be taken by full Council. The terms of reference for the General Purposes Committee already contained arrangements for the dismissal of the Head of Paid Services via the Appointments Sub-Committee. It was proposed that the terms of reference be extended to include the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer and to provide for the inclusion of independent persons. The independent person would be drawn from the list of independent persons that had previously been drawn up by the Council.

The Committee were advised that the new regulations still needed further clarification with regards to the Statutory Officers existing contractual position and discussions were taking place with the Local Government Association.

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

- 1. that the Independent Panel designated to deal with the dismissal of Statutory Officers will be the Appointments Sub-Committee;**
- 2. that the Officer Employment Procedure Rules contained at H4 of the Constitution and the General Purposes Committee terms of reference be amended, as set out in Appendices A and B to the report, respectively to reflect the requirements set out in the Local Authorities (Standing Orders)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2015;**
- 3. that the current relevant Independent Persons appointed to the Council be invited to join the Appointments Sub-Committee when dealing with the dismissal of the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service), Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) and Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer (Monitoring Officer); and**
- 4. that the composition and remit of the Appointments Sub-Committee remain as currently constituted save that in the case of dismissal of the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service), Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) and Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer (Monitoring Officer) the Sub-Committee may only make a recommendation to Council.**

GPC/15/8. **Constitution Update**

The Committee considered a report that provided Members with the amendments made by the Monitoring Officer under her delegated powers to maintain the Constitution.

The report also set out a proposal to amend Part K, Members' Allowances Scheme in line with a decision approved by the Executive in 2011. The Executive were seeking to change a provision which had enabled Members to make financial claims for ICT equipment under various provisions effective in the legacy authorities prior to the creation of Central Bedfordshire Council in 2009. Following the Executive's consideration and implementation of the new approach, such claims stopped. Unfortunately a recommendation had never been made to full Council to amend the Constitution with the provisions approved by the Executive.

**RESOLVED**

- 1. that the amendments made by the Monitoring Officer under her delegated powers to maintain the Constitution, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be noted.**

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

- 1. that the provision for Members' ICT allowances be included in Part K of the Constitution, Members' Allowances Scheme, as set out in Appendix C to the report.**

GPC/15/9. **Local Government Pension Scheme Update**

The committee considered a report that provided an update on the governance of the Local Government Pension Scheme. The Bedfordshire Pension Fund was administered by Bedford Borough Council, which was responsible for the pensions of Local Government employees across Bedfordshire.

A Pension Board had been established to assist the Pension Committee to secure compliance with regulations and to ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the Local Government Pension Scheme. The Leader of the Council had been appointed as Central Bedfordshire Council's representative on the Board. Central Bedfordshire Council also had Councillor Wenham and Councillor Collins as respectively the voting member and substitute voting member on the Bedford Borough Council Pension Committee.

Members discussed the financial performance and risk and noted that this was scrutinised by the Audit Committee as it was within their remit.

**NOTED the report.**

GPC/15/10. **Market Rate Supplement Payments - Annual Update**

The Committee considered a report that provided Members with an annual update on the current application of market rate supplements (MRS) to posts across Central Bedfordshire Council.

Members were advised that salaries were benchmarked regionally and nationally to carry out salary checks. MRS was only appointed to posts where there was difficulty in recruiting and this was closely scrutinised by the Corporate Management Team. There was still a national challenge to recruit and retain experienced social workers for Children's Services and there was also signs of pressure in areas of Adult Social Care. Other areas of pressure were in Planning and Building Control, IT and Finance. MRS payments were mainly paid to staff in the middle salary bands and not senior managers. However, evidence had shown that over the last two years the value of individual MRS had to be increased so a greater number of supplements were now paid in the higher pay bands.

**NOTED**

**the annual update about the current application of market rate supplements to posts across Central Bedfordshire Council.**

GPC/15/11. **Work Programme**

The Committee considered a report that set out the Committee's work programme for 2015/16. The Committee noted that the item on 'Children's Social Worker Recruitment Update' had been removed (see minute GPC/15/04 for details).

It was proposed to move the 'Standards Complaints – Annual Report' scheduled for 27 August 2015 to the 5 November 2015 and if no other business was scheduled then the meeting on 27 August 2015 would be cancelled.

It was noted that the item schedule for 24 March 2016, Standards Complaints – Six Month Update would only be submitted if exceptional circumstances arose. The Committee requested that this item be considered in March and to remove the wording 'submitted only if exceptional circumstances arise'.

**RESOLVED**

**to amend the work programme as set out above.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 11.10 a.m.)

Chairman .....

Dated .....