

Decisions of the Constitution and General Purposes Committee

4 October 2021

Members Present:-

Councillor Laithe Jajeh (Vice-Chairman in the Chair)

Councillor Helene Richman	Councillor Sachin Rajput
Councillor Geof Cooke	(In place of Councillor Richard Cornelius)
Councillor Peter Zinkin	Councillor Alan Schneiderman
(In place of Councillor Melvin Cohen)	(In place of Councillor Barry Rawlings)
	Councillor Claire Farrier
	(In place of Councillor Alison Moore)

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Melvin Cohen	Councillor Barry Rawlings
Councillor Richard Cornelius	Councillor Alison Moore

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2021 be approved as a correct record.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

The Committee noted the following changes of membership:

- Councillor Melvin Cohen (Chairman) was being substituted for by Councillor Zinkin
- Councillor Richard Cornelius was being substituted for by Councillor Rajput
- Councillor Rawlings was being substituted for by Councillor Schneiderman
- Councillor Moore being was being substituted for by Councillor Farrier

3. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None.

4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION AND COMMENTS (IF ANY)

None.

6. MEMBERS ITEM (IF ANY)

None.

7. ELECTORAL SERVICES OVERVIEW REPORT

The Chief Executive and Returning Officer, John Hooton, and the Head of Electoral Services, John Bailey, introduced the report which provided an update on the activities of Barnet's Electoral Services Team throughout 2020 and 2021 (to date) and reports on Barnet's delivery of the Mayor of London and London Assembly elections (and two local by-elections) on 6 May 2021.

A Member questioned whether Electoral Services would do anything addition to circulating poll cards in the lead up to the 2022 local election to inform electors of the new polling places. The Head of Electoral Services advised the Committee that evidence from the election which took place in May 2021 was that the poll card was very effective and the additional effort for bespoke communications had not been justified. Electoral Services would put resources into make sure that the borough-wide publicity about the polling place changes was as effective as possible because so many electors are likely to be affected.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the Electoral Services Overview Report attached at Appendix A.

8. DRAFT PROPOSALS FOR NEW POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

The Chief Executive and Returning Officer, John Hooton, the Head of Electoral Services, John Bailey, and the Head of Assurance and Business Development, Emily Bowler, presented a report which set out draft proposals for new polling districts and polling places which would come into effect in May 2022 when the new ward boundaries come into effect.

The Committee noted that the proposals had already been subject to initial scrutiny by a cross party Member Reference Group. It was noted that the overall proposals were considered to have merit and any further representations from the Groups could be made as part of the consultation process.

Officers were requested to consider road safety issues as part of their post-consultation review of proposed polling place venues.

Responding to a question from the Committee, the Head of Electoral Services reported that officers were seeking to have an even distribution of polling places across wards.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the Returning Officer's proposals, as detailed within Appendices 1 to 26, ahead of the six-week statutory public consultation that will take place between mid-October and December 2021.

9. IMPLEMENTING THE NEW WARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET - PROJECT UPDATE (JUNE - SEPTEMBER 2021)

The Chief Executive and Returning Officer, John Hooton, and the Head of Assurance and Business Development, Emily Bowler, presented a report which provided an update on the project to implement new ward boundaries which come in effect at the Local Government elections on 5 May 2022.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the progress, since last reported to the Committee in June 2021, of the project to implement the new warding arrangements in Barnet including the work of the Cross-Party Reference Group which has enabled collaboration between Members and officers throughout the process.

10. AMENDMENTS TO THE PAY POLICY STATEMENT AND ASSOCIATED POLICIES

The Assistant Director Human Resources and Organisational Development, Jon Bell, presented a report which proposed an amendment to the Council's current Pay Policy Statement and the introduction of a Policy for Payments for Additional Responsibilities and Outstanding Contributions.

The Committee sought reassurance that the Policy would be applied consistently across the Council's directorates and services. Members were advised that managers would need to make a recommendation to a Chief Officer and the Assistant Director Human Resources and Organisational Development which would ensure some consistency in the approach. It was agreed that a report should be presented to a future meeting of the Committee on the application of the Policy.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

- 1. Approve the Policy for Additional Payments and Outstanding Contributions attached at Appendix A.**
- 2. Approve the proposal to abolish the limits to Reward and Recognition payments.**
- 3. Agree amendments to the Council's 2021/22 Pay Policy Statement which reflect the changes in 1 and 2 above (as set out in Appendix B) and refer the Statement to Full Council for approval.**
- 4. Request that a report on the application of the Policy for Additional Payments and Outstanding Contributions be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.**

11. CONSTITUTION REVIEW

RESOLVED that the Committee:

- 1. Note the following amendments the Constitution Review report to be presented to Council:**

Section 1.2, Item 2	Add 'A, B and C' after Planning Committees.
Section 1.2, Item 3	Delete 'chairman or' from the issue identified column. Amend the changes proposed column to delete 'Chairman' and replace with 'Monitoring Officer'
Section 1.2, Item 4	Add 'request' to the issue identified column. Add 'request to' to the changes proposed column.
Section 1.2, Item 8	Delete 'agreed' with 'indicated' in the issue identified column. Delete 'theme' in the issue identified column.
Section 1.2, Items 15 and 16, Issue Identified	Delete 'Capital Strategy Board (CSB)' and replace with 'senior officers'
Section 1.2, Item 22, Issue Identified	Delete existing wording and replace with: "In paragraph 8.4, it currently says CSG Procurement will undertake financial assessments for Procurements valued under the Find a Tender thresholds of £189,330 for goods and services and £4,733,252 for works. Under the Public Contract Regulations 2015 there is no requirement for financial assessments at these lower values with the aim being to encourage small and medium size enterprises to bid for public contracts."

2. Recommend to Council that the Constitution be amended to incorporate the changes set out in the report and the amended versions attached at Appendices A to P subject to the following changes:

Appendices A and B Article 2 (Members of the Council (Councillors)) Members Rights to Speak at Licensing Committees	Delete proposed new section which set out Members rights to make representations on licensing applications and speak at committees. A comprehensive review of the Members Licensing Code will be undertaken in consultation with the Licensing Committee and will be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.
Appendices A and B Article 2 (Members of the Council (Councillors)) Members Rights to Refer Matters to Parent Body	Amend section 2.3 (e) to: Refer to Planning Committees 'A, B and C' and the 'Strategic' Planning Committee.

	Delete 'If there is a proposal to refer any matter to the Planning Committee the referral must take place before voting on the officers' recommendations commences' as it is repetitious.
Appendices A and B Article 2 (Members of the Council (Councillors)) Members Rights to Refer Matters to Parent Body	Amend section 2.3 (f) to: Replace 'Chairman' with 'Monitoring Officer' and add 'as soon as possible' Replace 'area planning committees' with 'planning committees'
Appendices A and B (Members of the Council) – Members Rights to Refer Matters to Parent Body	Amend section 2.3 (g) to: Add 'request'
Appendices K and L (Financial Regulations) Section 2.4 Budget Management & Monitoring	Amend section 2.4.4 to say: Article 9 (Table of Chief Officers) details which posts within the council are designated as Chief Officer.
Appendices K and L (Financial Regulations) Section 2.4 Budget Management & Monitoring	Amend section 2.4.6 to: Delete 'at Capital Strategy Board' and replace with 'by senior officers'
Appendices K and L (Financial Regulations) Section 3.3 Assets	Amend section 2.4.6 to: Delete 'Capital Strategy Board'
Appendices M and O Contract Procedure Rules Section 4 Authorisation	Section 4.3: Add 'Annual Procurement Forward'
Appendices M and O Contract Procedure Rules Section 8 Acceptance	Section 8.4: Delete 'by' and add 'by the following:' Delete 'shall identify the relevant council officer(s)' Delete the specific goods and works financial values and replace with 'Find a Tender' threshold for services/goods and works Delete the 'Director of Finance' and replace with 'Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer)'
Appendices O and P Members Allowances Scheme	Withdrawn from the agenda with a request that officers complete benchmarking and report back to a future meeting of the Committee.

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3. **Agree that a report be presented to the next meeting of the Committee on the implementation of changes to Article 2 (Members of the Council (Councillors)) section (f) in relation to Members Items.**

12. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2018 - 2022 UPDATE AND DRAFT MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2022-2026

RESOLVED that the Committee:

1. **Note the sessions delivered since April 2021 as set out in Appendix A and provide feedback on sessions delivered to date.**
2. **Agree the forward plan of Member Development sessions as set out in Appendix B.**
3. **Approve the Draft Member Development and Induction Programme for 2022 to 2026 as set out in Appendix C.**
4. **Note that following the agreement of the Member Development and Induction Programme 2022 to 2026 that officers will commence work on assessment for Charter+ (Plus) status in Q2 2022/23.**

The meeting finished at 9.07pm