

## Decisions of the General Functions Committee

9 June 2016

Members Present:-

Councillor Joan Scannell (Chairman)  
Councillor Wendy Prentice (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Richard Cornelius  
Councillor Alison Moore  
Councillor Tom Davey

Councillor Ammar Naqvi  
Councillor Barry Rawlings

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Daniel Thomas

### 1. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Daniel Thomas. Councillor Tom Davey attended in his capacity as a substitute member.

### 2. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None

### 3. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None

The Chairman varied the order of business to receive an introduction (without debate) on agenda item 6 (Independent Investigation into Election Problems in Barnet on 5 May and the Council's Response) prior to item 5 (Public Questions and Comments). Debate and consideration in respect of item 6 then followed.

### 4. PUBLIC QUESTION AND COMMENTS (IF ANY)

Details of the public questions asked, together with the published answers, were provided with the agenda papers and circulated at the meeting. Verbal responses were given to supplementary questions at the meeting.

There were no public comments.

### 5. MEMBERS ITEM (IF ANY)

None

## **6. INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION INTO ELECTION PROBLEMS IN BARNET ON 5 MAY AND THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE**

The interim Chief Executive, John Hooton, presented the cover report to the committee and apologised to voters that experienced problems on the 5 May.

Mr Mark Heath introduced the independent external investigation report, explained his findings and outlined his recommendations.

Committee members asked questions regarding the reports which were responded to by Mr Heath and Mr Hooton, together with the Director of Assurance and Monitoring Officer, Davina Fiore.

Andrew Scallan CBE, Director of Electoral Administration and Ben Brook, Head of Performance and English Regions, were also in attendance on behalf of the Electoral Commission.

Councillor Naqvi moved the following motion in his name:

“In light of the fact that one of the several responsibilities of this committee is to oversee electoral services and the electoral process and given that there is significant and substantial evidence that this responsibility has been abdicated for a number of years I would like to move a vote of no confidence in the Chairman.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Rawlings. Following debate, the motion was put to the vote and votes were recorded as follows:

In favour: 3

Against: 4

The motion was declared to be lost.

The Chairman moved a motion to agree recommendations 1 to 3 inclusive in the committee report which was seconded by Councillor Davey. The motion was put to the vote and votes were recorded as follows:

In favour: 4

Against: 3

The motion was declared to be carried.

### **RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the committee notes Mr Heath's report and the recommendations put forward for implementation ahead of the EU referendum on 23 June.**
- 2. That the committee notes that the interim Chief Executive and Returning Officer has accepted all of the recommendations in Mr Heath's report, and the status of the council's implementation of these recommendations.**
- 3. That, in line with Mr Heath's recommendation, the committee notes the intention of the interim Chief Executive and Returning Officer to initiate a review of the way in which elections in Barnet are delivered and how the**

**electoral services function operates. Terms of reference will be brought back to this committee on 29 June and will include the points set out in the motion at Annual Council. The final report and recommendations will be brought to this committee before the end of the year.**

**7. ANY ITEM(S) THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES TO BE URGENT**

None

The meeting finished at 8.27 pm