
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Virtual Meeting held via Skype on Wednesday, 16 December 2020 from 5.00pm - 5.17pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Baldock (Vice-Chairman), Angela Harrison, Ken Ingleton, Denise Knights, Ben J Martin, David Simmons, Roger Truelove (Chairman), Mike Whiting and Corrie Woodford.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Martyn Cassell, Gina Clarke, David Clifford, Philippa Davies, Charlotte Knowles, Lucinda MacKenzie-Ingle, Patricia Narebor and Nick Vickers.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Steve Davey, Mike Dendor, Tim Gibson, Carole Jackson, Elliott Jayes, Richard Palmer, Ken Rowles and Tony Winckless.

341 INTRODUCTION

The Leader explained that the meeting would be conducted in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panel (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 No. 392.

In welcoming all Members and members of the public, the Leader explained which Swale Borough Council officers were in attendance.

342 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 October 2020 (Minute Nos. 204 – 206) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

343 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

Part A Minutes for recommendation to Council

344 AMENDMENTS TO CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS

The Leader introduced the report which sought approval of proposed amendments to Contract Standing Orders. He drew attention to paragraph 3.22 on page 7 of the report which set-out the amendments to financial thresholds and procedures.

A Member referred to paragraph 3.2 on page 3 of the report and asked for the reasoning behind the threshold changes which he considered to be a large jump. The Head of Commissioning, Environment & Leisure acknowledged that it was a large jump and explained that the Commissioning Working Group had looked at comparisons with other Kent authorities and there had been a massive discrepancy and this change would bring Swale Borough Council in-line with other local authorities. He said the rationale was to make the process quicker and easier. The

Leader agreed that this change would increase speed and efficiency. The Head of Policy, Communications and Customer Services drew attention to paragraph 3.29 on page 10 of the report which set-out the re-wording of paragraph 8.4 in the constitution. He explained that the wording of this paragraph needed to be amended, both in this report, and the next report on the agenda, to read '.....has been approved by the Head of Legal Partnership'.

In response to a question, the Head of Commissioning, Environment & Leisure referred to reference to the EU Rules/threshold in the Contract Standing Orders section of the constitution. He said the proposed new wording included reference to UK/Public Contract Regulations as well and this would mean that the proposed changes were future-proofed as far as possible.

Recommended:

(1) That the proposed amendments to Contract Standing Orders be approved, with the following further amendment to paragraph 8.4 of the Contract Standing Orders:

'Electronic signatures may be used by both the Council and the Supplier in accordance with the Electronic Signature Regulations 2002 provided the sufficiency of security arrangements has been approved by the Head of Legal Partnership. The Council shall use suitable, free software, such as Adobe, to create electronic signatures.'

345 ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES AND DOCUMENT SEALING

The Head of Mid Kent Legal Partnership introduced the report which sought approval to changes to the Council's Constitution to enable the use of mobile seals and electronic signatures. She drew attention to paragraph 3.1 on page 34 of the report and explained that for consistency the wording of paragraph 8.4 would need to be amended to reflect the change made in the first item on this agenda.

Recommended:

(1) That the minor amendments to the Constitution as set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report be approved, with the following further amendment to paragraph 8.4 of the Contract Standing Orders:

'Electronic signatures may be used by both the Council and the Supplier in accordance with the Electronic Signature Regulations 2002 provided the sufficiency of security arrangements has been approved by the Head of Legal Partnership. The Council shall use suitable, free software, such as Adobe, to create electronic signatures.'

Chairman

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All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel