

## **NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, 21 January 2015**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Hibbert (Chair); Councillor Parekh (Deputy Chair); Councillors Beardsworth, King, Malpas (In place of Begum), Marriott, Oldham, Patel (In place of Aziz) and Stone.

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Aziz and Begum who had been substituted for this meeting by Councillors Patel and Malpas.

The Chair welcomed Councillors Marriott and Oldham as new members of the Committee.

#### **2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2014 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

#### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Beardsworth declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 8 – 2015/16 Pay Award as her son was employed by Northamptonshire Partnership Homes.

Councillor Stone declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 8 – 2015/16 Pay Award as a trade union member.

#### **4. DEPUTATIONS / PUBLIC ADDRESSES**

There were none.

#### **5. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHAIR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED**

There were none.

#### **6. COMBINED ELECTIONS 7 MAY 2015**

The Chief Executive gave a presentation on the arrangements for the verification and counting of votes for the General/Borough and Parish Elections in May 2015. The Chief Executive stated that this would be the largest ever elections in Northampton and would require significant staffing levels which might have an impact on service delivery. There would be two venues for verification and counting, at the Royal and Derngate (Parliamentary verification and count and Borough Council count held here) and Lings Forum (Borough Council and Parish Councils verification). A number of Borough Council wards and Parish Councils will be verified at Towcester due to them

falling in the South Northamptonshire constituency. Parish Council ballots will be counted at the Guildhall. A copy of the presentation is included in the updated agenda for the meeting.

In answer to members' questions the Chief Executive responded as summarised below:

- The Cabinet Office had recently issued helpful guidelines regarding verification of votes which would assist in the process.
- The Fees and Charges Order specifying rates of pay for those involved in running the election were awaited from the Secretary of State. There was liaison between the Council and the other Councils in the county to seek to avoid variation in the rates paid by each.
- There would be an extra member of staff available at the polling station where the door was accidentally locked for a few minutes at the last election.
- A different supplier is being used for the provision of mobile polling stations in 2015 and this would result in better quality polling stations. Surfaces around polling stations would be checked in advance to address any access issues.
- The government and the Council are promoting voter registration and the Council did not have a target for registration. Electors could confirm their details online and by telephone as well as by completing registration forms.
- For staff for the elections, approaches would be made to persons who had been involved in elections previously and after that requests would be made to staff at LGSS, NPH and NCC for additional support.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

#### **7. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

The Chair moved that the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that there was likely to be disclosure to them of such categories of exempt information as defined by Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 as listed against such items of business by reference to paragraphs 3 and 4 of Schedule 12A to such Act.

The Motion was Carried.

#### **8. 2015/16 PAY AWARD**

Councillors Beardsworth and Stone had declared personal, non-pecuniary interests in this item.

The Chief Executive and LGSS Head of People presented a report on the 2015/16 Pay Award.

The Committee agreed action as set out in the supplementary minutes for this meeting.

The meeting concluded at 7:23 pm.