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REGULATORY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 1 February 2023

Present:

Councillor A Hodson (Chair)

Councillors	C O'Hagan	M Collins
	S Bennett	L Fraser
	C Davies	S Williams
	J Hoey	C Cooke
	C Jones	D Mitchell
	D Kenny	K Greaney
	M Booth	A Wright (In place of D Burgess- Joyce)

19 **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the webcast.

20 **APOLOGIES**

The Chair confirmed that apologies had been received from Councillor D Burgess-Joyce with Councillor A Wright deputising.

21 **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members of the Committee were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in connection with any item on the agenda and state the nature of the interest.

No such declarations were made.

22 **PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS**

The Chair reported that no questions, statements or petitions had been received from members of the public or from any Members.

23 **MINUTES**

Resolved – That the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2022 be approved.

24 **MINUTES OF THE REGULATORY PANEL**

Resolved – That the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings of the Regulatory Panel held on 11 and 25 November 2022 and 2, 9 and 16 December 2022 be approved.

25 **BOROUGH ELECTION FEES & CHARGES**

The Director of Law and Governance submitted a report detailing the proposed fees to be paid to the Returning Officer and his staff employed to undertake duties at the local elections held within the Borough.

The Electoral Services Manager reported that the next scheduled local elections would take place on Thursday 4 May 2023 and the local election fees for 2023 were set in in Appendix 1 to the report. The fees and charges had been considered and endorsed by the Returning Officer.

Members were advised that consideration had been given to a range of fees which could be paid to the Returning Officer and that the recommendation put forward had been informed by both national guidance and information gathered from other Merseyside Local Authorities. Annual fees were uprated using the retail price index percentage increase. It was reported that in accordance with the Representation of the People's Act 1983, the cost of a local government election would be met from the local authority budget.

Discussions took place in respect of staff receiving their salary and a fee when undertaking election duties and it was suggested that this be investigated over the next four years.

Resolved (by assent) – That the fees to be paid to the Returning Officer and his staff employed to undertake duties at the local elections held within the Borough as set out within Appendix 1 to the report be endorsed.

26 **POLLING PLACES REVIEW**

The Head of Democratic and Member Services submitted a report which set out the findings following a review undertaken in respect of the use of polling station venues in two wards which were currently used as polling places for the purposes of Local Authority, Parliamentary and other elections.

The Electoral Services Manager informed Members that the report provided guidance on selecting polling places and an outline of alternative polling places which had been identified by the Returning Officer. It was reported that local Ward Members had been consulted in respect of options and costs associated with the hire of alternative venues were detailed within Appendix 2 to the report.

It was reported that a review of two venues which had been used as polling places in May 2022 was commissioned by the Returning Officer as a result of the Elections Office being informed that the venues in question would not be available for the delivery of the May 2023 Local Authority Election and that associated costs and Member views were detailed within Appendix 1 to the report.

The Electoral Services Manager referred to the objective criteria that are used when considering the overall suitability of a polling place or polling station.

Members were advised that it was recommended that the polling station for polling district HE be moved from Bromborough Civic Centre to The Village Hall, St Barnabas Church due to the Civic Centre having been closed since March 2020 with no plans to reopen and that the polling station for polling district VF be moved from Wallasey Village Library to St Hilary's Church due to the library having to undergo some building work prior to reopening, the dates for which had not been confirmed.

Resolved (by assent) –

- (1) That the report be noted.**
- (2) That the relocation of the two polling places as detailed within the report be agreed in readiness for the May 2023 Local Authority Elections in that the polling station for polling district HE be moved to The Village Hall, St Barnabas Church; and the polling station for polling district VF be moved to St Hilary's Church.**

27 **WIRRAL AWARDS 2022**

The Director of Law and Governance submitted a report requesting agreement from the Committee that the Wirral Award be conferred on the nominees as recommended by the Wirral Award Working Party held on 12 January 2023. The Wirral Award is intended to confer civic recognition upon individuals or organisations resident or located in Wirral for an outstanding achievement within the previous twelve months, or for distinguished service to the Borough over a period of twenty years or more.

It was reported that once nominations were agreed, certificates would be awarded to the successful nominees at a special ceremony to be held at a suitable venue.

Members considered the recommendations of the Wirral Award Working Party and the nominations which were attached to the report as an exempt appendix.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Wirral Award 2022 be conferred upon those recipients recommended by the Wirral Award Working Party.
- (2) That appropriate arrangements be made for the recipients of the Award to be invited to a special ceremony.

28 **EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved - That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest Test had been applied and favoured exclusion.

29 **WIRRAL AWARD 2022 - EXEMPT APPENDIX - RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WIRRAL AWARD WORKING PARTY**

Resolved – That the appendix attached to the report containing the nomination forms for the Wirral Award 2022 is exempt under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information. Consideration had been given to the Public Interest Test.