

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 15 JUNE 2016

CR1, MULBERRY PLACE, 5, CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON E14 2BG

Members Present:

Councillor Danny Hassell (Chair)
Councillor Khaled Uddin Ahmed
Councillor Shah Alam
Councillor Craig Aston
Councillor Denise Jones
Councillor Aminur Khan
Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaqim
Councillor Helal Uddin
Councillor David Edgar

Other Councillors Present:

Mayor John Biggs

Officers Present:

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Melanie Clay | – (Corporate Director, Law Probity and Governance) |
| Simon Kilbey | – (Service Head, Human Resources and Workforce Development) |
| Will Tuckley | – (Chief Executive) |
| Louise Stamp | – (Electoral Services Manager, Chief Executive's) |
| Zena Cooke | – (Corporate Director, Resources) |
| Matthew Mannion | – (Committee Services Manager, Democratic Services, Law, Probity and Governance) |

1. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR

Councillor Khaled Uddin Ahmed **moved** and Councillor Danny Hassell **seconded** that Councillor Denise Jones be nominated as Vice-Chair of the General Purposes Committee for the 2016/17 municipal year. There were no other nominations and the Committee:

RESOLVED

1. That Councillor Denise Jones be elected as Vice-Chair of the General Purposes Committee for the 2016/17 municipal year.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None were declared.

3. MINUTES

Officers requested that the minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 13 April 2016 be withdrawn for revision.

The Committee agreed and therefore only considered the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 16 March 2016 and the minutes of the Appeals Committee meeting held on 29 July 2015.

RESOLVED

1. That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 16 March 2016 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the proceedings.
2. That the minutes of the Appeals Committee meeting held on 29 July 2015 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the proceedings.

4. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 General Purposes Committee, New Terms of Reference

Members considered the report setting out the new Terms of Reference for the Committee now that it had been amalgamated with the former Human Resources Committee and the Appeals Committee.

The Committee were content to note the new Terms of Reference.

RESOLVED

1. To note the Terms of Reference, Quorum, Membership and Dates of Future Meetings of the General Purposes Committee for 2016/17 as set out in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 to the report.

4.2 Establishment of Appointments Sub-Committee

The Committee reviewed the report setting out the proposed establishment of the Appointments Sub-Committee to consider from time to time the appointment of statutory and non-statutory Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer appointments.

There was a short discussion on the procedure for setting up Appointment Sub-Committee meetings, especially around whether a meeting was always required to conduct the shortlisting of candidates. Officers reported that they

would review this process and report back if necessary although it was noted that the General Purposes Committee could agree to alter the procedures to an extent if required. The Committee agreed the recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED

1. To agree the terms of reference for Appointments Sub-Committees for the remainder of the municipal year 2016/17 as set out at paragraph 4.1 of the report.
2. That the arrangements for nominating Councillors to serve on an Appointments Sub-Committee be agreed as set out at paragraph 4.2 below and the Service Head, Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to agree the dates of Appointments Sub-Committee meetings and the membership of the Sub-Committee for each appointment that is required in accordance with nominations from the Group Leaders and Mayor; and
3. That the Committee note the process for appointment to Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer posts as set out at paragraph 5 of the report.

4.3 Establishment of (Employee) Appeals Sub-Committee

The Committee considered the report setting out proposals to agree the establishment of the Employee Appeals Sub-Committee to consider appeals against dismissal by Council employees.

The Committee agreed the recommendations but asked that the Governance Review Working Group be asked to review the work of the Sub-Committee to determine whether a Member Sub-Committee was the most appropriate forum for considering employee appeals.

RESOLVED

1. That the General Purpose Committee establish an Employee Appeals Sub Committee for the municipal year 2016/17 with the attached terms of reference (Annex A to the report) and hearing structure.

4.4 Feedback from Electoral Services

Will Tuckley, Chief Executive, introduced the item providing an opportunity to give verbal feedback to Members on the recent work of Electoral Services with particular reference to recent elections held in the Borough. He highlighted that this was the first discussion since he had joined the Council and been appointed the Returning Officer by the Commissioners.

He was pleased to report that, thanks to the hard work of the Electoral Services team, the recent Greater London Authority elections had passed smoothly and that this was a tribute to all involved. The team were now

engaged in preparation for the European Union Referendum and, again, this was on schedule. Finally he noted that the electoral system was essentially still a Victorian era process with add-ons and that this presented a significant challenge to administer.

Louise Stamp, Head of Electoral Services, then provided Members with more details about a number of areas, starting with the work officers were undertaking on the electoral register. She reported that, after the change to bring in the Individual Electoral Registration process, there had been a significant reduction in registered voters and officers were now working hard to tackle this. Indeed, there had been a 10.53% rise in registrations over the past 6 months. The number of postal votes had also increased to over 34,000. There had also been a large number of online applications, many of which were duplicates that officers had to administer.

In response to questions, Louise Stamp reported that:

- Postal vote applications had to be accepted on their own merits but checks were made at elections, for example on matching signatures.
- Canvassers were not allowed to ask for ID, this had been checked with the Electoral Commission.
- Significant data matching exercises did take place, for example when voters changed address.
- Officers would provide information on the number of young voters.
- The last annual canvass went very well and the new target for this year was to achieve a 90% response.

It was noted that, with a high churn in population and with many not eligible to register, the number on the register would never match the population of the Borough.

Turning to the Greater London Authority elections, Louise Stamp reported that:

- The vote was delivered successfully.
- Many lessons had been learnt from the 2015 elections.
 - These lessons would also be applied to the upcoming European Union Referendum.
- The exclusion zones outside polling stations worked well.
- The postal vote rejection rate was down following efforts to collect new signatures.
- A linkup had been arranged with registrars to receive information when residents change their nationality.

Finally, turning to the European Union Referendum, it was noted that:

- There were complications as to voter eligibility with EU voters not being entitled to vote.
- Additional Poll Clerks were available for busy stations/times.
- Postal vote returns were high.
- A high level of communications activity was being undertaken.

- Polling places were reviewed from time to time. Notices should be in place at old locations with directions to new locations.

Following the discussion, Members thanked Louise Stamp and her team for their hard work and dedication in this most important service.

RESOLVED

1. To note the discussion.

4.5 Organisation Design Principles

Will Tuckley, Chief Executive, introduced the report on reviewing the Council's organisational structure making use of specific Organisational Design Principles. He highlighted the good progress the Council had made in recruiting permanent staff to senior roles which provided good stability for the organisation. It was now time to start reviewing the wider staffing structure and the report set out an overview of the benefits of the review and the principles to be followed.

Stuart Young, Interim HR Transformation Manager, would be driving the process.

Particular targets of the review were to:

- Focus the structure on service outcomes.
- Ensure appropriate managerial capacity.
- Improve the Council's culture.
- Encourage cross-council working.
- Improve efficiency.

A further report would be presented to the September meeting of the Committee setting out more details. If any specific decisions were required that were urgent, officers would discuss those with the Chair with a view to calling an extraordinary meeting.

Members proceeded to discuss the report, they requested more information on what implementation of the design principles would look like in reality. The Committee also noted a number of points including:

- The need to reduce any feelings of 'not my job' from officers; the Council must operate as one.
- Communications were vital, both internally and externally.
- The importance of the Council's structure matching up with the Executive's service priorities.

In response to questions raised, it was noted that:

- Will Tuckley was undertaking a series of Roadshow events to talk to staff.
- It was important to check with residents as to their expectations and experiences of Council services but that they shouldn't be expected to need to understand the Council's internal structures.
- Staff induction was an important way of embedding required behaviour and style.
- There was a need to ensure all staff felt included and that included those working with partners. It was also important to ensure that the Council structure was conducive to partnership working.
- The 'workforce to reflect the community' statistics were being monitored and progress was being shown.
- Developing the skills of existing staff was important and the Council's learning and development programme needed to be targeted in the right way to achieve the best outcomes.

RESOLVED

1. To note the report.
2. To note that a further report would be presented to the September meeting.

4.6 Appointment of School Governors

This item was deferred.

4.7 HR Committee Work Programme 2016/17

The Committee considered the proposed work programme of reports in relation to the Council's Human Resources Service. It asked to receive an update on the 'Workforce to Reflect the Community' monitoring.

RESOLVED

1. To note the report.

4.8 Senior Management Update / Recruitment to Vacancies

Simon Kilbey, Service Head, HR and Workforce Development, introduced the regular update report on Senior Management recruitment. He took Members through the report and in particular the progress on recruiting to a number of listed Service Head posts. In respect of the Service Head, Legal and Democratic Services, it was reported that no candidates had been shortlisted and so officers were considering how to follow this up.

In relation to the Service Head, Corporate Strategy and Equalities, the shortlisting panel would be meeting this evening.

He then moved on to talk about the Performance and Appraisal Arrangements for the Chief Executive. He reported that the appraisal process and targets were published in the agenda and these would be monitored. They could also be amended should that prove useful.

Turning to the process for dismissing Statutory Chief Officers, it was explained that a report would be presented to a future meeting following national work to amend the model disciplinary process set out in the JNC Handbook.

Members discussed the report, they welcomed the permanent appointment of senior staff and the transparent Chief Executive appraisal system.

Following questions, it was reported that:

- The report to the September meeting would provide more details on the timetable to recruit to the post of Service Head Commissioning and Health.
- The Chief Executive appraisal process included engagement with the Mayor and other Group Leaders.
- Consultants were not routinely used below Service Head level. Effectiveness of agencies was monitored and they could be changed if needed.

RESOLVED

1. To note the report.
2. To note the progress on recruitment to senior management vacancies.
3. To note the position in relation to continuation/termination of the current interim arrangements for covering Senior Management vacancies.
4. To note that the performance appraisal of the Chief Executive has taken place and the agreed objectives/targets set for 2016/17 as published in the appendices to the report.

5. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

1. That in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the remaining agenda item contained information defined as exempt or confidential in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

5.1 Review of Service Head post in Resources Directorate (consideration of an individual's employment position)

The Committee considered the report in relation to a Service Head post within the Resources Directorate. Members discussed the report and then agreed the recommendations as set out.

The meeting ended at 8.45 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Danny Hassell
General Purposes Committee