

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.32 P.M. ON MONDAY, 29 OCTOBER 2018

COMMITTEE ROOM ONE - TOWN HALL MULBERRY PLACE

Members Present:

Councillor Helal Uddin (Chair)
Councillor Kevin Brady (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Faroque Ahmed
Councillor Mohammed Ahbab Hossain
Councillor Asma Islam
Councillor Tarik Khan
Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman

Apologies:

Councillor Asma Begum
Councillor Peter Golds

Officers Present:

Amanda Harcus	- Divisional Director of HR
Asmat Hussain	- (Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer)
Will Tuckley	- (Chief Executive)
Matthew Mannion	- (Committee Services Manager, Democratic Services, Governance)

AGENDA ORDER

During the meeting the Chair agreed to change the order of business to group reports for particular report author presentation. For ease of reference the minutes are presented in the order in which the items appear on the agenda.

At the meeting the order of items taken was:

- Agenda items 1 – 3
- 4.2 – Senior Recruitment
- 4.4 – Reward Strategy
- 4.1 – Local Authority School Governor Appointments
- 4.3 – Constitution Change Update

- Agenda items 5 – 8

1. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None were declared.

2. MINUTES

2.1 Minutes of the General Purposes Committee held on 25th June, 2018

RESOLVED

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on Monday 25 June 2018 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings.

2.2 Minutes of the General Purposes Committee held on 27th July, 2018

RESOLVED

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Extraordinary General Purposes Committee meeting held on Friday 27 July 2018 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings.

3. WORK PLAN

The work plan of future agenda items was received by the Committee.

RESOLVED

1. That the work plan be noted.

4. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 Local Authority School Governor Appointments

Runa Basit, Head of School Governance and Information, presented the report asking for agreement to nominate a number of candidates to school governors posts. She highlighted the exempt appendices listing more details about each applicant.

The Committee considered the report, and agreed to the reasons for restricting the appendices. The types of candidates approved for submission was discussed as well as the different ways that people can become governors.

Members asked that officers provide an information update to the next meeting on the demographic breakdown of appointments to school governor positions.

RESOLVED

1. To agree to nominate the candidates listed in the report to the positions that are available for local authority governors at maintained schools in Tower Hamlets.

4.2 Senior Recruitment

Will Tuckley, Chief Executive, and Amanda Harcus, Divisional Director, HR, introduced the update report on senior recruitment. He highlighted the information set out in the report around recent appointments and the processes underway for other senior positions with particular reference to arrangements to cover the Corporate Director, Resources position and planning around the review of the Place Directorate senior officer structures.

During discussion it was noted that:

- The Place directorate review was particularly focussing on capacity and spans of control at the Corporate Director and Divisional Director levels but the placement of specific functions within the corporate structure would be looked at if that was identified as useful in particular cases.
- Acting up arrangements for the Corporate Director, Resources were to be for a limited time as the new Corporate Director would be recruited as soon as possible.
- Any name change for the Children's Directorate would need to be handled carefully to avoid any perception of change of focus following recent OFSTED interventions.

RESOLVED

1. To note the current position on the recruitment to senior management vacancies in the Council structure.
2. To note the request to extend the acting and interim arrangements made.
3. To note the review of the senior recruitment process to improve efficiency.
4. To agree to change the name of the Children's Services Directorate to more fully reflect its service areas if, following further review, the Chief Executive considered this the appropriate course of action.

4.3 Constitutional Change Update

Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance and Matthew Mannion, Committee Services Manager, introduced the report providing the Committee with an information update on ongoing officer work to review the Council's Constitution.

The Committee heard that:

- The Constitution had been reviewed in 2016/17 for the first time in a number of years to bring it up to date 'factually'.
- Officers were now engaged in the next stage which was to review the Constitution for readability and effectiveness, encouraging transparent decision making.
- There was a particular focus on the Best Value requirements around removing 'bad bureaucracy' whilst encouraging 'good governance' as set out in the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Report.
- The aim was therefore to reduce the overall size of the Constitution document whilst retaining the important information held within. Related 'Supporting Documents' would also be prepared containing more detailed information where that was important but where it did not need to be in the constitution itself.
- In addition, officers were also reviewing specific parts of the constitution such as Key Decisions, the Scheme of Management and Council/Committee procedures.

During discussion, Members welcomed the review and the particular focus on making the constitution more readable.

Members moved on to discuss how the work in the review should be presented to Members. It was noted that:

- A constitution sub-group was unnecessary.
- That this Committee was the most appropriate cross-party meeting to discuss any potential constitutional changes.
- That this would work best if the work was presented to the Committee in stages.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.
2. That officers continue to work on the review of the Constitution and that a series of reports be presented to future General Purposes Committee meetings for discussion and agreement before forwarding to Council.

4.4 Reward Strategy

Will Tuckley, Chief Executive, and Amanda Harcus, Divisional Director, HR, introduced the report which provided an update to Members on the ongoing work looking at the reward strategy at the Council. It was explained that whilst the Council offered a number of rewards and benefits for staff members there was not an overarching reward strategy that could capture everything that was offered and how the Council ensured it was a good place to work where staff were treated fairly. It was also a useful way of comparing benefits offered to other London Boroughs and employers.

During discussion it was noted that:

- The Council aspired to be the best employer in terms of the overall wellbeing of its staff.
- This was an opportunity to harmonise and simplify pay scales and conditions.
- It was important to offer flexibility to the overall strategy when necessary, for example in areas where recruitment was difficult.
- The review could look at how social impact was measured as against financial impact of the strategy.
- Areas that officers were monitoring included the gender pay gap, ethnicity breakdowns and how staff progressed up the corporate structure.
- The Committee were interested in how the review progressed generally but in particular would always wish to be involved in relation to benefits offered to senior officers.

The Committee agreed to delegate to the Chief Executive to continue developing the strategy and asked that he present the completed work at the appropriate time.

RESOLVED

1. To agree the proposed Reward Strategy set out at paragraph 2.4 of the report.
2. To note the connection between the TOWER values and our reward strategy.
3. To agree that, in accordance with the councils' constitution, the Chief Executive has delegated authority to develop the total reward package for council employees in accordance with the Reward Strategy and the TOWER values.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

Nil items

6. 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.

7. FORTHCOMING RESTRUCTURES

Amanda Harcus, Divisional Director, HR, presented two reports that provided information to Members following the amendments to the Pay Policy Statement 2018/19 in respect of severance packages of over £100,000. These reports related to two employees who were to leave the Council on the grounds of redundancy and whose severance packages exceeded the threshold.

The Committee considered both reports. They agreed the reasons for excluding the press and public. They also agreed the reasons for urgency on one of the reports. Then in both cases the Committee agreed the recommendations.

RESOLVED

1. To approve the dismissal of those employees as detailed in the reports through voluntary redundancy (or with pay in lieu of notice); and
2. To note the severance packages that apply to the dismissals arise as a result of the individual's contractual terms and conditions of employment and that information regarding these payments will be reported to Council in the annual update of the Pay Policy Statement report.

8. LOCAL AUTHORITY GOVERNOR APPLICATIONS - EXEMPT APPENDICES

The appendices for Local Authority Governor Applications were considered during item 4.1 on the unrestricted part of the agenda.

The meeting ended at 7.36 p.m.

**Chair, Councillor Helal Uddin
General Purposes Committee**

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE,
29/10/2018

SECTION ONE (UNRESTRICTED)