



Human Resources Committee

Agenda

**Thursday, 14 September 2023 at 6.30 p.m.
Committee Room - Tower Hamlets Town Hall,
160 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1BJ**

Members:

Chair: Councillor Bellal Uddin

Vice Chair: Councillor Maium Talukdar

Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Councillor Saied Ahmed, Councillor Ayas Miah, Councillor Abdal Ullah and Councillor Sabina Khan

Substitutes: Councillor Faroque Ahmed, Councillor Rachel Blake, Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury, Councillor Iqbal Hossain, Councillor Shahaveer Shubo Hussain and Councillor Abdul Wahid

[The quorum for this body is 3 voting Members]

Contact for further enquiries:

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<https://democracy.towerhamlets.gov.uk/>



Public Information

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The meeting will be broadcast live on the Council's website. A link to the website is detailed below. The press and public are encouraged to watch this meeting on line.

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A Guide to Human Resources Committee

The Committee is responsible non-executive human resources (HR) and personnel issues such as recruitment of chief officers and employee appeals against dismissal.

Public Engagement

Meetings of the committee are open to the public to attend, and a timetable for meeting dates and deadlines can be found on the council's website.

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Human Resources Committee

Thursday, 14 September 2023

6.30 p.m.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (PAGES 7 - 8)

Members are reminded to consider the categories of interest in the Code of Conduct for Members to determine whether they have an interest in any agenda item and any action they should take. For further details, please see the attached note from the Monitoring Officer.

Members are reminded to declare the nature of the interest and the agenda item it relates to. Please note that ultimately it's the Members' responsibility to declare any interests and to update their register of interest form as required by the Code.

If in doubt as to the nature of your interest, you are advised to seek advice prior to the meeting by contacting the Monitoring Officer or Democratic Services

2. MINUTES Of PREVIOUS MEETING (PAGES 9 - 12)

To agree the unrestricted minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 12th June 2023.

3. WORK PLAN

4. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 Employee Relations Casework and Policy Quarterly Review (Pages 19 - 24)

4.2 Update on Senior Recruitment

TO FOLLOW

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

6. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

In view of the contents of the remaining items on the agenda the Committee is recommended to adopt the following motion:



“That, under 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 for the consideration of the Section Two business on the grounds that it contains information defined as Exempt in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972.”

EXEMPT SECTION (Pink Papers)

The exempt committee papers in the agenda will contain information, which is commercially, legally or personally sensitive and should not be divulged to third parties. If you do not wish to retain these papers after the meeting, please hand them to the Committee Officer present.

7. EXEMPT MINUTES

To agree the exempt minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on

Next Meeting of the Human Resources Committee

Tuesday, 28 November 2023 at 6.30 p.m. to be held in Committee Room - Tower Hamlets Town Hall, 160 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1BJ



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Agenda Item 1

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AT MEETINGS– NOTE FROM THE MONITORING OFFICER

This note is for guidance only. For further details please consult the Code of Conduct for Members at Part C, Section 31 of the Council's Constitution

(i) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI)

You have a DPI in any item of business on the agenda where it relates to the categories listed in **Appendix A** to this guidance. Please note that a DPI includes: (i) Your own relevant interests; (ii) Those of your spouse or civil partner; (iii) A person with whom the Member is living as husband/wife/civil partners. Other individuals, e.g. Children, siblings and flatmates do not need to be considered. Failure to disclose or register a DPI (within 28 days) is a criminal offence.

Members with a DPI, (unless granted a dispensation) must not seek to improperly influence the decision, must declare the nature of the interest and leave the meeting room (including the public gallery) during the consideration and decision on the item – unless exercising their right to address the Committee.

DPI Dispensations and Sensitive Interests. In certain circumstances, Members may make a request to the Monitoring Officer for a dispensation or for an interest to be treated as sensitive.

(ii) Non - DPI Interests that the Council has decided should be registered – (Non - DPIs)

You will have 'Non DPI Interest' in any item on the agenda, where it relates to (i) the offer of gifts or hospitality, (with an estimated value of at least £25) (ii) Council Appointments or nominations to bodies (iii) Membership of any body exercising a function of a public nature, a charitable purpose or aimed at influencing public opinion.

Members must declare the nature of the interest, but may stay in the meeting room and participate in the consideration of the matter and vote on it **unless:**

- A reasonable person would think that your interest is so significant that it would be likely to impair your judgement of the public interest. **If so, you must withdraw and take no part in the consideration or discussion of the matter.**

(iii) Declarations of Interests not included in the Register of Members' Interest.

Occasions may arise where a matter under consideration would, or would be likely to, **affect the wellbeing of you, your family, or close associate(s) more than it would anyone else living in the local area** but which is not required to be included in the Register of Members' Interests. In such matters, Members must consider the information set out in paragraph (ii) above regarding Non DPI - interests and apply the test, set out in this paragraph.

Guidance on Predetermination and Bias

Member's attention is drawn to the guidance on predetermination and bias, particularly the need to consider the merits of the case with an open mind, as set out in the Planning and Licensing Codes of Conduct, (Part C, Section 34 and 35 of the Constitution). For further advice on the possibility of bias or predetermination, you are advised to seek advice prior to the meeting.

Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992 - Declarations which restrict Members in Council Tax arrears, for at least a two months from voting

In such circumstances the member may not vote on any reports and motions with respect to the matter.

Further Advice contact: Janet Fasan, Monitoring Officer, Tel: 0207 364 4800.

APPENDIX A: Definition of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

(Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, Reg 2 and Schedule)

Subject	Prescribed description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vacation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by the Member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of the Member. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority— (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the Member's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and (b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where— (a) that body (to the Member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.30 P.M. ON MONDAY, 12 JUNE 2023

**COMMITTEE ROOM - TOWER HAMLETS TOWN HALL, 160 WHITECHAPEL
ROAD, LONDON E1 1BJ**

Members Present in Person:

Councillor Bellal Uddin (Chair)
Councillor Kabir Ahmed
Councillor Saied Ahmed
Councillor Sabina Khan
Councillor Maium Talukdar
Councillor Abdal Ullah

Members In Attendance Virtually:

Councillor Ayas Miah

Officers Present in Person:

Agnes Adrien (Head of Litigation, Legal Services)
Joel West (Democratic Services Team Leader (Committee))
Musrat Zaman (Director of HR, OD & Business Support Services)

Officers In Attendance Virtually:

Carole S Bowes (Employment Lawyer, Legal Services, Directorate
Law, Probity and Governance)
Pat Chen (Head of HR)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None were declared.

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED that Councillor Maium Talukdar is elected Vice Chair of the Human Resources Committee for 2023-24.

3. WORK PLAN

Further to questions from Committee members, Musrat Zaman, Director of Workforce, OD and Business Support, advised that discussions on future officer structure, restructures etc would be channelled via the proposed new internal boards and were not planned to be reported to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

1. That the work plan be noted.

4. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 Human Resources Committee Terms of Reference, Membership and Dates of Meetings 23-24

Joel West, Democratic Services Team Leader (Committee) introduced the report that asked the Committee to note its terms of reference and delegated powers, membership and dates of meetings for 2023-24.

Members of the Committee asked that the wording of the terms of reference be tightened to clarify limits of officer delegated authority, explicitly reference the role of political groups in determining nominations to sub-committee memberships and reflect any powers reserved to the Head of Paid Service and/or Mayor for determining criteria for appointment of chief officers. Members also felt the terms of reference should clarify how the delegations to the Monitoring Officer would be treated if that officer were the subject of proceedings (for example, disciplinary hearings). Officers advised that, whilst the terms of reference had been approved by full Council, they would initiate proceedings to progress the requested changes.

Councillor Kabir Ahmed wished to record his objection to the resolution to note the terms of reference.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

1. Note its terms of reference, quorum, membership and dates of future meetings as set out in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 to the report.

4.2 Establishment of Appointment Sub Committee

Joel West, Democratic Services Team Leader (Committee) introduced the report that recommended the establishment of an Appointments Sub-Committee for the current municipal year and the process for Chief Officer/Deputy Chief Officer appointments and proposed criteria for membership of the Sub-Committee in accordance with the Constitution and agreed procedures. Joel explained that the Committee were also asked to agree to the establishment of an Employee Appeal Sub Committee, with terms of reference and procedure rules as tabled in a separate document.

Further to questions from the Committee, Musrat Zaman, Director Workforce, OD and Business Support, explained that Employee Appeals Sub Committee would hear all appeals against dismissal arising from disciplinary matters performance and capability and sickness.

The Committee discussed the proposed terms of reference of the Employee Appeal Sub Committee as tabled. The Committee noted the membership did

not include a political proportionality requirement. Some members indicated the sub committee should reflect political proportionality. Other members noted that the requirement for ethnicity and gender balance at meetings of the sub committee could be compromised if political balance had to be secured.

Councillor Kabir Ahmed proposed and Councillor Maium Talukdar seconded a motion that the terms of reference of the Employee Appeal Sub Committee be amended to specify that its membership be politically balanced. This was put to the vote and agreed.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

1. Agree the terms of reference for Appointments Sub-Committees for the remainder of the municipal year 2023/24 as set out at paragraph 4.1 of the report;
2. Agree that the arrangements for nominating Councillors to serve on an Appointments Sub-Committee be as set out at paragraph 4.2 of the report and the Director, Workforce, OD & Business Support (or their respective nominee) 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 group leaders;
3. Note the process for appointment to Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer posts as set out at section 5 of the report; and
4. Agree the terms of reference and procedure rules for the Employee Appeal Sub Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2023/24 as set out in the tabled papers, subject to an additional clause to specify that the membership be politically balanced.

4.3 Annual report on employee relations casework and policies

Reasons for urgency were noted and agreed.

Pat Chen, (Head of HR) introduced the report that updated the Committee on the level and management of employee relations casework and policy within the Council, highlighting progress made for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Further to questions from the Committee, Pat provided more details on:

- Possible explanations for some of the data trends
- Efforts to obtain and use benchmarking data. Pat noted this was challenging due to the absence of a standard recording approach between local authorities.
- Employees' rights to be accompanied at, and the importance of ensuring balance amongst members on determining bodies, e.g. disciplinary panels.
- The role and independence of occupational health advisors.

- Efforts to empower younger employees to challenge and speak out about their workplace rights.

RESOLVED that:

1. The report be noted.

4.4 Pay Policy Statement 2023-23

Reasons for urgency were noted and agreed.

Pat Chen, Head of HR introduced the report that proposed a 2023/24 pay policy statement for the Council, prior to its submission to Full Council on 19 July 2023. Pat noted the statement would be published soon after agreement by Full Council.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

1. Notes the draft 2023/24 pay policy statement and recommends its adoption by Full Council on 19 July 2023.
2. Delegates to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Workforce, OD and Business Support, Chair of the HR Committee and Monitoring Officer, authority to make any minor changes to the 2023/24 pay policy statement.

4.5 Update on Senior Recruitment (including acting up and interim arrangements)

Reasons for urgency were noted and agreed.

Pat Chen, Head of HR introduced the report that updated Members on senior posts, recent recruitment activity and interim arrangements in senior officer posts.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

1. Notes the current position on the recruitment to senior management vacancies in the Council structure and the interim arrangements in place.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

None.

The meeting ended at 7.35 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Bellal Uddin
Human Resources Committee



HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN and ACTION LIST 2023/24

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Agenda Item 3

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HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2023/24

ACTIONS LIST

Action number	Title	Action Owner	Originating Meeting/Item	Due Date / Comment
1.	Interim and Acting Up Arrangements	Musrat Zaman, Dir Workforce, OD and Business Support	GPC February 2023	From General Purposes Committee 22-23 work plan. To report on all interim and acting up arrangements in senior officer roles.

N.B. once concluded - actions should remain on the list marked 'complete' for the remainder of the municipal year.

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2023/24

12 JUNE 2023

REPORT TITLE	BRIEF SUMMARY	LEAD OFFICER	OTHER CTTEE MEETINGS
1. Employee Relations Casework Policy Annual Report 22/23	An update on the Employee Relations Casework Policy Annual Report	Musrat Zaman Director of Workforce, OD and Business Support	
2. Annual Employee Relations Casework report Quarter 4	An update on the Employee Relations Casework Policy Annual Report	Musrat Zaman Director of Workforce, OD and Business Support	
3. Update on Senior Recruitment (including acting up and interim arrangements).	An update on Tower Hamlet Senior Recruitment	Musrat Zaman Director of Workforce, OD and Business Support	
4. Annual administrative reports	Including noting terms of reference, membership and establishment of appointments sub committee.	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services	

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HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2023/24

14 SEPTEMBER 2023			
REPORT TITLE	BRIEF SUMMARY	LEAD OFFICER	OTHER CTTEE MEETINGS
1. Employee Relations Casework and Policy Quarterly Review	An update on the Employee Relations Casework Policy Quarterly Report	Musrat Zaman, Director of Workforce, OD and Business Support	
2. Update on Senior Recruitment	An update on Tower Hamlet Senior Recruitment	Musrat Zaman, Director of Workforce, OD and Business Support	

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2023/24

28 NOVEMBER 2023			
REPORT TITLE	BRIEF SUMMARY	LEAD OFFICER	OTHER CTTEE MEETINGS
1. Employee Relations Casework and Policy Quarterly Review	An update on the Employee Relations Casework Policy Quarterly Report	Musrat Zaman, Director of Workforce, OD and Business Support	
2. Update on senior recruitment	To note recruitment activity for senior officer posts.	Musrat Zaman, Director of Workforce, OD and Business Support	

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2023/24

20 FEBRUARY 2024			
REPORT TITLE	BRIEF SUMMARY	LEAD OFFICER	OTHER CTTEE MEETINGS
1. Update on senior recruitment	To note recruitment activity for senior officer posts.	Musrat Zaman, Director of Workforce, OD and Business Support	
2. Employee Relations Casework and Policy Quarterly Review	An update on the Employee Relations Casework Policy Quarterly Report	Musrat Zaman, Director of Workforce, OD and Business Support	



Employee Relations Quarterly Report on Casework and Policy Development

Q1 2023/24 (1 April 2023 to 30 June 2023)



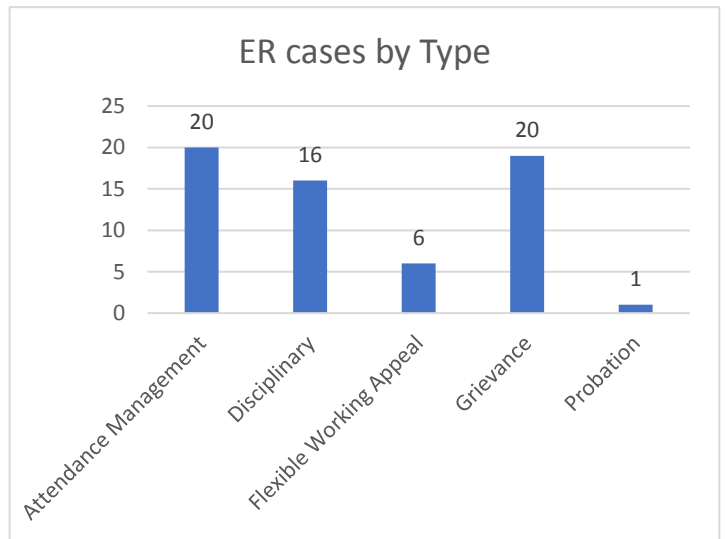
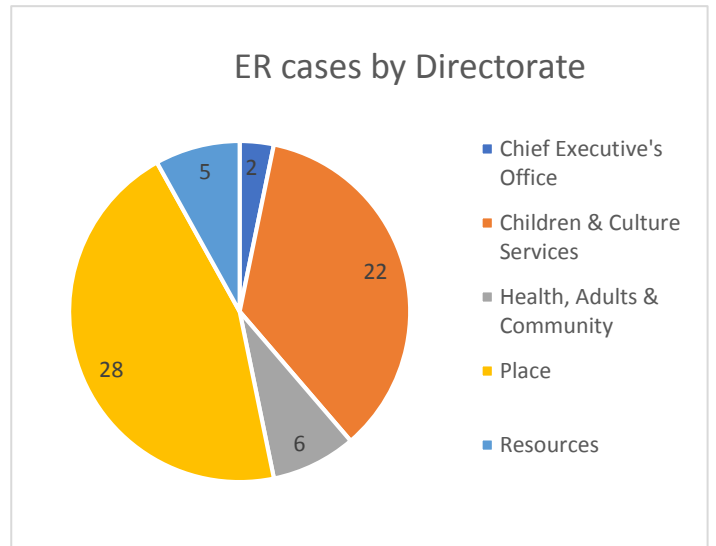
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Employee Relations

1. Dashboard

Row Labels	Count of Case Type
Chief Executive's Office	2
Disciplinary	1
Grievance	1
Children & Culture Services	22
Attendance Management	9
Disciplinary	3
Flexible Working Appeal	5
Grievance	5
Health, Adults & Community	6
Attendance Management	2
Disciplinary	1
Grievance	3
Place	28
Attendance Management	8
Disciplinary	8
Flexible Working Appeal	1
Grievance	10
Probation	1
Resources	5
Attendance Management	1
Disciplinary	3
Grievance	1
Grand Total	63



2. Summary of Key Quarter 1 Casework Data (1 Apr 2023 to 30 Jun 2023)

- 2.1. There were 63 cases handled in total in this period (20 more than the total for quarter 4), which is a significant increase. At the end of the period 59 cases were open and 10 had been closed by 30 June 2023.
- 2.2. Looking overall at cases by type, attendance management and grievances were the highest (20 attendance management and 20 grievances). We also had 16 disciplinaries, 6 flexible working appeals, and 1 probation case. The attendance management cases account for the greatest increase since the last quarter, having doubled in number.
- 2.3. Of the 20 grievances (1 collective and 19 individual), 5 grievances relate to concerns about line managers, 6 relate to complaints about other colleagues, 5 relate to terms and conditions, 3 relate to verbal abuse/inappropriate behaviour and 1 relates to sexual harassment. Of the 20 grievances, 15 were opened before Q1 (1 April 2023).
- 2.4. Of the 16 disciplinaries, 2 were alleged misconduct cases and 14 were gross misconduct cases. 8 cases were in Place and the rest spread across other Directorates. 13 disciplinaries were still open at the end of the reporting period. 3 disciplinaries cases were closed. Of those 3 closed there was 1 dismissal, and 2 cases were not upheld.
- 2.5. 50% of the cases were closed well within the target benchmark of 120 days to close a case from its receipt to a final outcome. The benchmark of 120 days is a reasonable and realistic timeframe for a council, where complex cases are the norm and thorough investigations undertaken by independent in-house investigators are time consuming. 10 cases were closed in this period, and the average length of time to resolve the cases was 347 calendar days. The excessive average length of time to resolve has been skewed by one case in particular which was linked to a Police enquiry, but which is now closed. One further matter which does have an impact on all cases resolution times is the availability of the investigators to undertake this duty in addition to their substantive posts. The onus is being placed upon deciding managers to seek management agreement to release staff to investigate.
- 2.6. In addition to support for formal cases the HR team also deal with informal queries that come through the corporate in boxes and many cases are handled informally with the guidance of HR.
- 2.7. A revised HR structure was implemented in February 2023, and this provides dedicated HR Business Partners and HR Advisors to each Directorate to better support casework and provide dedicated advice to the service on case matters, including attendance management. Place (the Directorate in the organisation structure in this period), which had the highest number of cases, and has been provided with added support, with 2 HR Business Partners and 2 HR Advisors supporting the service. With this change it was envisaged that this dedicated support to each Directorate will have a positive impact in helping managers manage casework.
- 2.8. Equalities data is reported annually.

3. Policy Development

- 3.1. The Job Evaluation Policy is now currently under review with the trade unions, with its revision reflecting the use of a new automated job evaluation system, called Compensate, which is approved by the GLPC. The new process involves a joint panel (a HRBP and a trade union representative) evaluating job descriptions with the assistance of the automated Job Evaluation form, which takes the panel through a series of questions about each factor to assess the level and produce a final grade based on the Tower Hamlets grading system. Managers submitting a post for evaluation will be expected to make themselves available to answer any questions the panel may have to enable the panel to give informed answers for each factor. Having a centralised system of job evaluation data will enable the Council to build a body of data that can be monitored, reported on and give oversight on the consistency of evaluations for each grade.
- 3.2. The Sexual Harassment Policy, a new Managers Guide and, to complement our published documentation, a short new e learning module on sexual harassment, are now available.
- 3.3. People and Reorganisation Board forms, FAQs and process maps have been developed and published.

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