

Human Resources Committee

Agenda

**Thursday, 26 September 2024 at 6.30 p.m.
Committee Room - Tower Hamlets Town Hall,
160 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1BJ**

Members:

Chair: Councillor Abdul Malik

Vice Chair: Councillor Kabir Ahmed

Councillor Shafi Ahmed, Councillor Abu Chowdhury, Councillor Asma Islam, Councillor Sirajul Islam and Councillor Abdal Ullah

Substitutes:

[The quorum for this body is 3 voting Members]

Contact for further enquiries:

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

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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, 26 September 2024

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

Further Advice contact: Linda Walker, Interim Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer,
Tel: 0207 364 4348

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (PAGES 9 - 16)

To agree the unrestricted minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 16 May 2024.

3. WORK PLAN (PAGES 17 - 24)

To review the Committee's work plan for the current municipal year.

4. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 Corporate Directors Update

TO FOLLOW

4.2 Employee Relations Casework and Policy Quarterly Review (Pages 25 - 34)



4.3 Update on Senior Recruitment

TO FOLLOW

4.4 Update on Savings from ER/VR

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

Thursday, 12 December 2024 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 6.37 P.M. ON THURSDAY, 16 MAY 2024

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

Members Present in Person:

Councillor Abdul Malik (Chair)
Councillor Kabir Ahmed
Councillor Shafi Ahmed
Councillor Abu Chowdhury
Councillor Asma Islam
Councillor Sirajul Islam
Councillor Abdal Ullah

Officers Present in Person:

Julie Lorraine	(Corporate Director Resources)
Pat Chen	(Head of HR)
Dr Somen Banerjee	(Director of Public Health)
Simon Baxter	(Corporate Director Communities)
Stephen Halsey	(Chief Executive)
Paul Patterson	(Interim Corporate Director Housing And Regeneration)
Steve Reddy	(Corporate Director, Children's Services)
Justina Bridgeman	Democratic Services Officer (Committee)
Matthew Mannion	(Head of Democratic Services)

Officers In Attendance Virtually:

Carole S Bowes	(Employment Lawyer, Legal Services, Directorate Law, Probity and Governance)
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1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

The Chair requested nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Human Resources Committee for the municipal year 2024/25. Councillor Abu Chowdhury proposed Councillor Kabir Ahmed for the position. This was seconded by Councillor Shafi Ahmed.

There were no further nominations received.

The Human Resources Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. Elect Councillor Kabir Ahmed the Vice-Chair of the Human Resources Committee for the municipal year 2024/25.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 7 March 2024 were approved and signed as a correct record of proceedings.

4. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 Human Resources Committee Terms of Reference, Quorum, Membership & Dates of 2024/25 Meetings

Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services, requested Members note the Human Resources Committee's terms of reference, membership, quorum and meeting dates for the municipal year 2024/25. The scheduled date of 05 May 2025 will be changed to 06 May 2025 due to the Bank Holiday.

The AGM was held on 15 May 2024 where the Human Resources Committee membership was agreed and the details were tabled for the Committee to note.

Aspire Group	Labour Group
Councillor Abdul Malik - <i>Chair</i>	Councillor Abdal Ullah
Councillor Kabir Ahmed	Councillor Asma Islam
Councillor Shafi Ahmed	Councillor Sirajul Islam
Councillor Abu Chowdhury	
Substitutes	Substitutes
Councillor Musthak Ahmed	Councillor Sabina Akhtar
Councillor Kamrul Hussain	Councillor Marc Francis
Councillor Abdul Wahid	Councillor Rebaka Sultana

The Human Resources Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note it's terms of reference, quorum, membership and meeting dates as set out in appendices 1,2 and 3 of the report.
2. **Agreed** to hold all Human Resources Committee meetings at 6.30pm in the Committee Room 1 for the municipal year 2024/25 and to amend the date of the meeting on 05 May to 06 May 2024..

4.2 Establishment of Appeals Sub-Committees 2024/25

Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services, requested Committee Members establish the Appeals Sub-Committees for municipal year 2024/25.

The Human Resources Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. Agree the terms of reference for Appeals Sub-Committees for the remainder of the municipal year 2024/25 as set out at paragraph 4.1 of this 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 this 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 the opposition group leader and the Mayor; and
3. Note the process for appointment to Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer Page 19 Agenda Item 2.2 posts as set out at section 5 below.

4.3 Establishment of Appointments Sub-Committee 2024/25

Mr Mannion's final report requested Committee Members establish the Appointment Sub-Committees for municipal term 2024/25. He also set out a number of options for potentially amend the Sub-Committee's procedures.

Members discussed the proposal for amending paragraph 4.2 of the report in regard to Membership, and 5.3 regarding Advertisement and 5.8 on the attendance in exceptional circumstances rule. Upon a proposal by Councillor Shafi Ahmed, which was seconded by Councillor Abu Chowdhury agreed that the wording for paragraph 5.8 will be amended to state the ability to substitute a councillor halfway through the process will be removed:

'In such exceptional circumstances where a Member is not able to attend either the Shortlisting and/or Longlisting meeting the Director, Workforce, OD & Business Support may waive the requirement at 5.7 and allow that Member to attend the meeting virtually or to submit written comments for consideration by the Sub-Committee. All Members must attend the Interview stage in person. above in order to ensure a sufficiently diverse membership of the Sub-Committee, provided that consistency is maintained within each distinct stage of the appointment process (but see paragraph below).'

The Committee unanimously voted for political groups to only select who they wish to represent at the panel from within their group. (Paragraph 4.2) and clarification on who was responsible for advertising positions (Paragraph 5.3). Members also requested lead times on interviews once advertisements are placed to ensure all panel representatives are available to attend.

The Human Resources Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. Agree the terms of reference for Appointments Sub-Committees for the remainder of the municipal year 2024/25 as set out at paragraph 4.1 of this 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 this report as amended by paragraph 6.2 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 the opposition group leader and the Mayor; and
3. To agree the changes set out above to paragraph 5.8 of the procedures.

4.4 Update on Senior Recruitment

Reasons for urgency on the late report were agreed by the committee.

Pat Chen, Interim Director, Workforce, OD and Business Support Services, introduced the report which provided the current senior recruitment positions to senior management vacancies and the interim arrangements in place.

Steve Halsey, Chief Executive Officer, informed the Committee of a delay with interview dates for the permanent post of Corporate Director of Housing and Regeneration. The long listing will now take place before the May end, with the shortlisting and final panel being in July. Members were informed that since the drafting of the report, recruitment checks have been completed and Steve Reddy is now confirmed as permanent Corporate Director for Children's Services.

Further to questions from the Committee, Pat Chen and Steve Halsey;

- Confirmed that an extension has been requested for the Director of Strategy and Improvement Transformation, as the post and structure are being reviewed.
- Confirmed that an extension has been requested for the Corporate Director of Housing and Regeneration, as, final interviews will be progressed in June 2024.
- Explained that due to ongoing confidentiality, the name of the new Director of Adult and Social Care cannot be disclosed. Members will be informed shortly.

- Noted that the post for the Director of Public Realm will be re-advertised shortly.

The Human Resources Committee **RESOLVED** that;

1. The approval request to extend interim arrangements for Corporate Director Housing and Regeneration was **AGREED**.
2. The approval request to extend interim arrangements for Director of Strategy Improvement and Transformation was **AGREED**.
3. The report on the current position on the recruitment to senior management vacancies be noted.

4.5 Employee Relations Casework and Policy Quarterly Review

Julie Lorraine, Corporate Director, Resources, provided the Committee an overview of the employee relations casework for Quarter 4 (January – March 2024) and for the annual period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. Pat Chen then informed members that the details include the protected characteristics of the deciding managers and individual staff disciplinary or grievance cases.

The Human Resources Committee **RESOLVED** that;

1. The report on the current position on the Employee Relations Casework and policy quarterly review be noted.

4.6 CEO Update on Council Transformation

The order of business on the agenda was changed at the meeting due to exempt items on this item. This discussion occurred after item 5.

Reasons for urgency on the late report were agreed by the committee.

Steve Halsey, Chief Executive Officer, provided an overview on the next phase of the corporate restructure. This included enhancing the HR, procurement, IT and scrutiny functions, the introduction of a more collaborative and performance-driven culture, the People First transformation journey and a more resident-focused council.

Members were informed that Mr Halsey will attend the first Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) of the municipal year on 21 May 2024 to discuss key areas of improvement to the function and provide recommendations. It was emphasised that the OSC decides its scrutiny work program and if recommendations are implemented.

The report set out a number of areas that need addressing, for example, the Strategy Improvement and transformation team, the Housing and Regeneration Directorate, and Resources Directorate all require restructure.

The Mayor's Executive Office structure was also no longer suitable. Recommendations also include establishing assistant director roles on a pilot basis, to ensure accountability for a wider range of services. Mr Halsey stated that a chief executive department with 13 direct reports is also no longer practical.

Mr Halsey then stated his view that Executive Assistant support for Corporate Directors requires a change in line management arrangements, which were being progressed. Finally he reported on the voluntary redundancy and early retirement (ER/VR) scheme had approved 58 staff to exit the Council.

Paul Patterson, Corporate Director, Housing & Regeneration, presented an overview of the next phase which will impact the directorate, particularly with the housing supply and property and major programs. The new structure will create an Assistant Director of Housing Management, merging the current Director of Neighbourhoods and Director of Housing Asset Management roles.

Proposals will also move the current housing management function to a new Assistant Director of Regeneration and Housing Supply and Assets, which will enhance the integration of Tower Hamlet Homes (THH). This will ensure the service is more customer focused. There will also be a new Assistant Director for Housing Options and Homelessness and one for Housing Policy and Strategy.

Julie Lorraine, Corporate Director, Resources noted that on 16 May, the Cabinet approved recommendations to enhance the resources for the housing options service. This budget was agreed in principle. Ms Lorraine emphasised that significant expenditure has gone into the homelessness service but was primarily used for temporary accommodation costs. A new position of Housing Options and Homelessness was required; thus a new Assistant Director is proposed in the report. The main objective is to improve the service including longer operating hours to meet resident needs.

Further to questions from the Committee, Steve Halsey, Paul Patterson;

- Confirmed that the responsibility for restructuring within the Mayor's Office and the Housing Options and Homelessness service had been transferred to the Deputy Chief Executive, Julie Lorraine on a temporary basis.
- Explained that a report will be submitted to the Human Resources Committee and the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-committee regarding the progress of the Housing Options service.
- Acknowledged that more engagement with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is required in relation to the scrutiny proposals.
- This report and the transformation of scrutiny report are aligned.

- Further details will be discussed at a future OSC meeting.

The report contained a number of Exempt/Confidential Appendices. So the Chair Proposed, and it was unanimously agreed that the meeting now agree to exclude the press and public from the remainder of the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that;

1. 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.”

During the Exempt/Confidential part of the meeting the Committee discussed matters relating to the HR Business Support restructure. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Committee voted to agree the recommendations as set out below:

It was **RESOLVED** that;

1. A report be submitted to the Committee on the progress of the Housing Options service.
2. The report on the CEO update on the next phase of the corporate restructure be noted.

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.

6. HUMAN RESOURCES WORK PLAN 2024/25

The order of business on the agenda was changed at the meeting, due to exempt items included in the CEO Council transformation paper. This discussion occurred before item 4.6.

The draft work program for the remaining meetings for the 2024/25 municipal year was officially agreed. Steve Halsey requested that he as CEO inform the HR committee twice a year of the overall structure of the Council. Additionally proposed that a Corporate Director attend each meeting to discuss any issues around their Directorate structure, and that all Corporate Directors make themselves available to attend when requested. The Committee agreed.

It was **RESOLVED** that;

1. The Chief Executive to attend the Human Resources Committee twice yearly to discuss the Council structure.
2. A Corporate Director attend each Human Resource Committee meeting to discuss their Directorate structure.
3. All Corporate Directors be available to attend Human Resources Committee meetings when requested.
4. The Human Resources Committee work programme be **AMENDED** and **AGREED**.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

Nil items.

The meeting ended at 8.44 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Abdul Malik

Human Resources Committee



HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN and ACTION LIST 2024/25

Contact Officer:	Justina Bridgeman Democratic Services
Email:	Justina.Bridgeman@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Telephone:	020 7364 4854
Website:	www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2024/25

ACTIONS LIST

Action number	Title	Action Owner	Originating Meeting/Item	Due Date / Comment
1.	Update on Senior Recruitment	Pat Chen, Interim Director of Workforce, OD and Business Support	07 March 2024	Action: Timelines on when senior management posts will be filled be submitted to the Committee for review. Due: 16 May 2024 meeting
2.				
3.				
4.				

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

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2024/25

16 MAY 2024

REPORT TITLE	BRIEF SUMMARY	LEAD OFFICER	OTHER CTTEE MEETINGS
1. Update on senior recruitment	To note recruitment activity for senior officer posts.	Pat Chen, Interim 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.	Pat Chen, Interim Director of Workforce, OD and Business Support	
3. CEO update on Council Transformation	An update on the Council Transformation.	Robin Beattie Director of Strategy, Transformation & Improvement	
4. Human Resources Terms of Reference	To note the Committee terms of reference	Justina Bridgeman Democratic Services Officer Matthew Mannion Head of Democratic Services	
5. Establishment of Appointment and Appeals Sub-Committees	To establish the Appointment and Appeals Sub-Committees for municipal year 2024/25	Justina Bridgeman Democratic Services Officer Matthew Mannion Head of Democratic Services	

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HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2024/25

26 SEPTEMBER 2024

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	Liz Haynes Interim Head of Corporate Human Resources and Governance	
2. Update on Senior Recruitment	An update on Tower Hamlet Senior Recruitment	Liz Haynes Interim Head of Corporate Human Resources and Governance	
3. Update on Savings from ER/VR	An update on expected Council savings from ER/VR	John Harrison Director of Corporate Efficiency	
4. Corporate Directors Update	A Corporate Director attend each Human Resource Committee meeting to discuss their Directorate structure and give any updates.	tbc	

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2024/25

12 DECEMBER 2024			
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	Liz Haynes Interim Head of Corporate Human Resources and Governance	
2. Update on senior recruitment	To note recruitment activity for senior officer posts.	Liz Haynes Interim Head of Corporate Human Resources and Governance	
3. Corporate Director Update	A Corporate Director attend each Human Resource Committee meeting to discuss their Directorate structure and give any updates.	tbc	

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HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2024/25


05 FEBRUARY 2025			
REPORT TITLE	BRIEF SUMMARY	LEAD OFFICER	OTHER CTTEE MEETINGS
1. Update on senior recruitment	To note recruitment activity for senior officer posts.	Liz Haynes Interim Head of Corporate Human Resources and Governance	
2. Employee Relations Casework and Policy Quarterly Review	An update on the Employee Relations Casework Policy Quarterly Report	Liz Haynes Interim Head of Corporate Human Resources and Governance	
3. Update on Savings from ER/VR	An update on expected Council savings from ER/VR	John Harrison Director of Corporate Efficiency	
4. Corporate Director Update	A Corporate Director attend each Human Resource Committee meeting to discuss their Directorate structure and give any updates.	tbc	

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2024/25

05 MAY 2025			
REPORT TITLE	BRIEF SUMMARY	LEAD OFFICER	OTHER CTTEE MEETINGS
1. Update on senior recruitment	To note recruitment activity for senior officer posts.	Liz Haynes Interim Head of Corporate Human Resources and Governance	
2. Employee Relations Casework and Policy Quarterly Review	An update on the Employee Relations Casework Policy Quarterly Report	Liz Haynes Interim Head of Corporate Human Resources and Governance	
3. Corporate Director Update	A Corporate Director attend each Human Resource Committee meeting to discuss their Directorate structure and give any updates.	tbc	

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Non-Executive Report of the: Human Resources Committee 18/09/2024	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Liz Haynes, Interim Director of Workforce, OD and Business Support Services	Classification: Unrestricted
Employee Relations Casework and Policy Quarterly Review	

Originating Officer(s)	Gail Simpson, Acting Head of HR
Wards affected	None

Summary:

Add details

Recommendations:

The Human Resources Committee is recommended to:

1. The attached report is to update the HR Committee on the level and management of employee relations casework and policy within the Council, highlighting progress made. This report is for Quarter 1 (April – June 2024).
2. RECOMMENDATIONS:
 - 2.1. The HR Committee is recommended to:

 Note the report.

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Employee Relations Quarterly Report on Casework and Policy Development

Quarter 1 2024/25 (1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024)

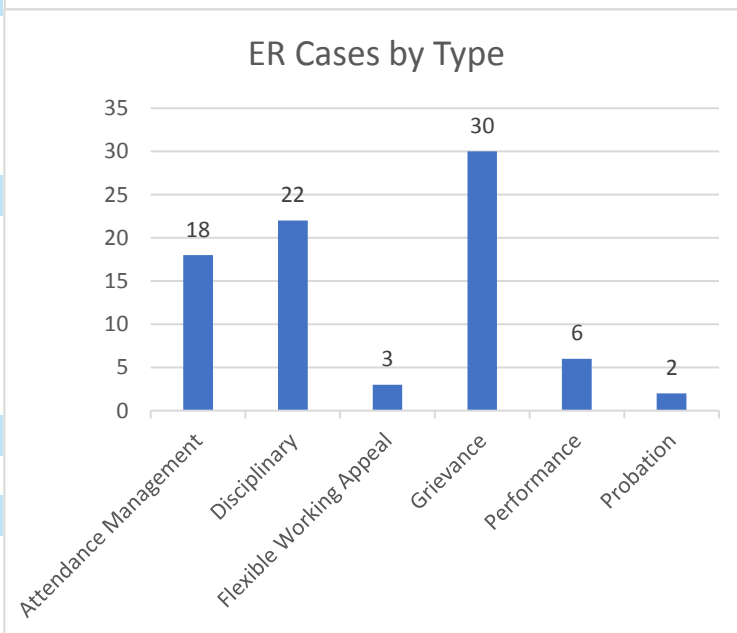
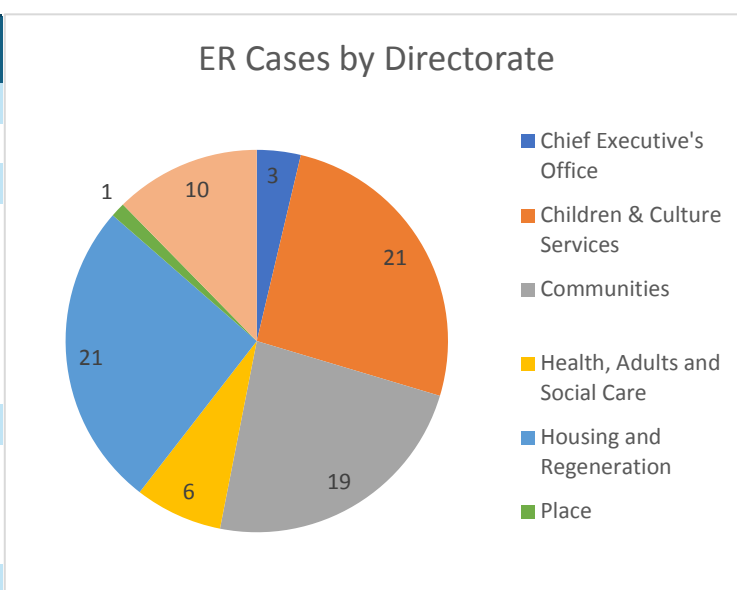
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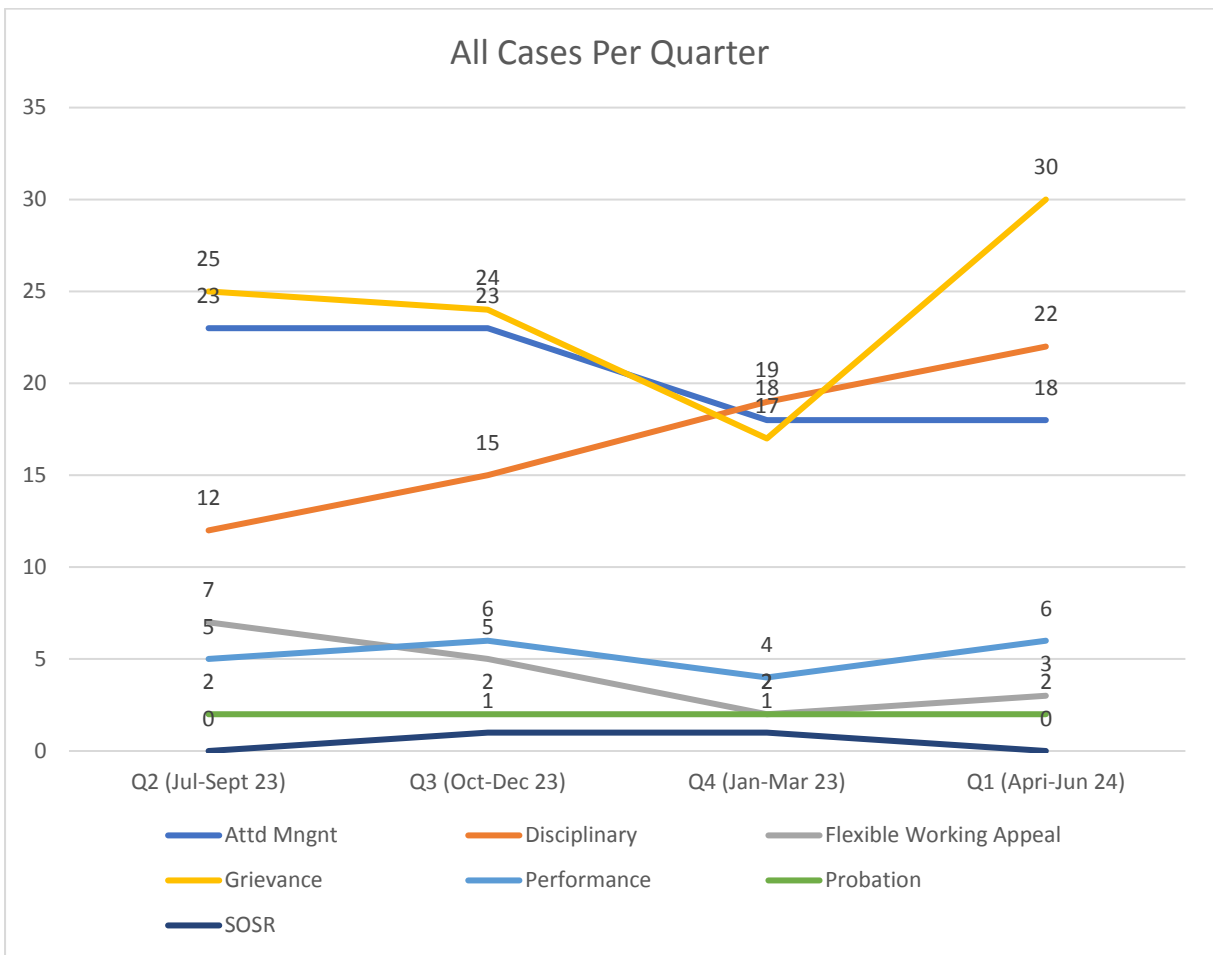
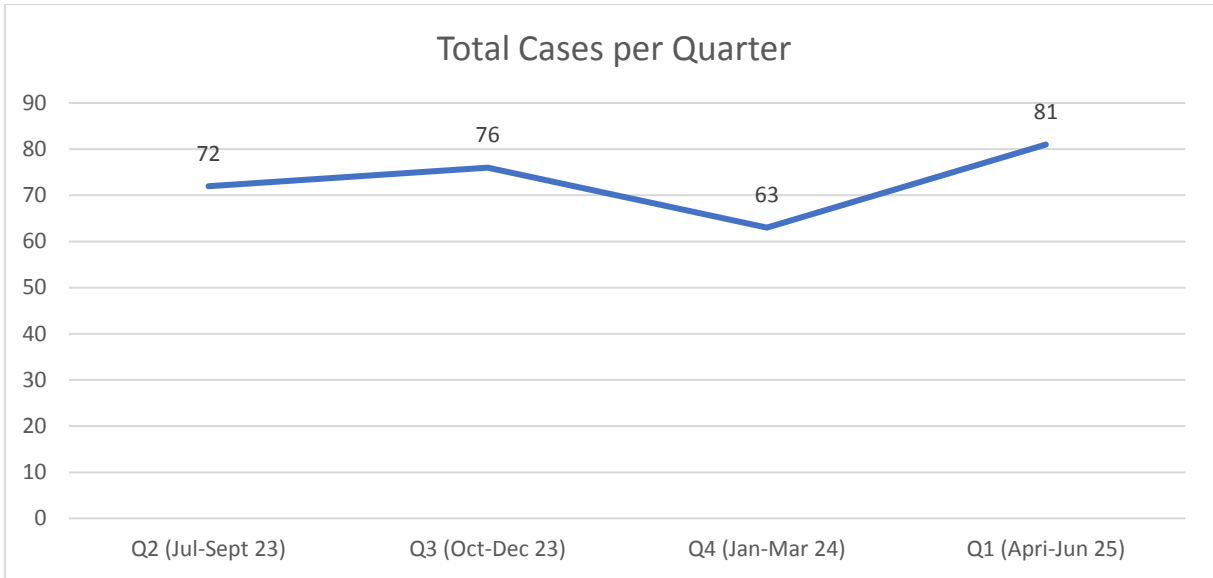
Employee Relations

1. Dashboard

Cases by Directorate	No of Cases
Chief Executive's Office	3
Grievance	3
Children & Culture Services	21
Attendance Management	8
Disciplinary	4
Flexible Working Appeal	3
Grievance	4
Performance	2
Communities	19
Attendance Management	4
Disciplinary	9
Grievance	6
Health, Adults and Social Care	6
Attendance Management	1
Disciplinary	1
Grievance	2
Performance	2
Housing and Regeneration	21
Attendance Management	5
Disciplinary	6
Grievance	7
Performance	2
Probation	1
Place	1
Grievance	1
Resources	10
Disciplinary	2
Grievance	7
Probation	1
Grand Total	81



Case Status	No Cases
Closed	24
Open	57
Grand Total	81



2. Summary

- 2.1 This report summarises the data relating to formal casework for the period of the first quarter of this financial year (1 April 2024 and 30 June 2024) and provides a regular policy development update. Of significance, numbers of formal cases are increasing, and the trade unions as well as senior management are concerned about the length of time taken to resolve cases, to this end CMT are asked to consider the recommendations in section 3.

3. Recommendations approved by CMT

- 3.1 Given the increase in the number of formal cases and the analysis of time taken to resolve formal cases, which is marred by the time taken to get commitment from investigators and their managers to undertake these, CMT were asked to support the release of staff they have trained to be investigators to commit to, prioritise and investigate cases swiftly. As this work is an organisational priority and there is considerable risk attached to a failure to address matters in a timely fashion, as recommended by ACAS. More detail of this issue is provided in 4.5 below. Part of this recommendation was for investigators to sign an agreement committing one to two investigations a year and that any refusal had to be agreed by the Corporate Directors.
- 3.2 CMT resolved to further support the release of staff to undertake and to bolster this decided that as part of their development in managing staff matters and our commitment to attending to cases quickly that all Heads of Service and above be trained to undertake this corporate responsibility. At the time of submitting this report arrangements are being made to implement this decision.

4. Analysis of Quarter 1 Casework Data (1 Apr 2024 to 30 Jun 2024)

- 4.1. There were 81 cases handled in total in this period (18 more than the total for quarter 4), which is a significant increase. At the end of the period 57 cases were open and 24 had been closed by 30 June 2024. One of the helpful interventions currently taking place which was set up by Julie Lorraine, the Corporate Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive, is the workshops for managers in people management, delivered by LOCD. The emphasis has been for managers to intervene more effectively in people management issues and resolve these at the earliest possible stage to avoid issues escalating to formal grievances.
- 4.2. Looking overall at cases by type, attendance management and grievances were the highest (30 grievances and 22 disciplinaries). We also had 18 attendance management, 6 performance, 3 flexible working and 2 probation cases. The attendance management cases account for the greatest increase since the last quarter, having doubled in number.
- 4.3. Of the 30 grievances (30 individual), 15 relate to concerns about other colleagues, 9 grievances relate to concerns about line managers, 4 relate to terms and conditions and 2 relate to verbal abuse/inappropriate behaviour. Of

the 30 grievances, 12 were opened before Q1 (1 April 2024) At the end of Q1, 21 grievances are open, and 9 grievances are closed.

- 4.4. Of the 22 disciplinaries, 14 were alleged gross misconduct cases and 8 were gross misconduct cases. 9 cases were in Communities, and the rest spread across other Directorates. 15 disciplinaries were still open at the end of the reporting period. 7 disciplinaries cases were closed. Of those 7 closed there were 3 cases upheld, 2 dismissals, 1 case part upheld and 1 case were not upheld.
- 4.5. 45% of the cases were closed within the target benchmark of 120 days to close a case from its receipt to a final outcome. 24 cases were closed in this period, and the average length of time to resolve the cases was 170 calendar days. The benchmark of 120 days was set as a reasonable and realistic timeframe for a council, where complex cases are the norm and thorough investigations undertaken by independent in-house investigators can be time consuming, however of significance, 55% of cases do not meet this benchmark and the ideal is to reduce this benchmark further. One factor which impacts on the resolution times for cases is the increasing lack of availability of trained investigators to undertake this duty in addition to their substantive posts. This may be because many have undertaken lengthy and time-consuming cases in the past and or current workloads have had to take a priority. Whatever the reason the result is that there has been a considerable lag between cases coming into HR and the investigations commencing. To illustrate this analysis of a sample of grievances undertaken in 2023/24 showed that it took on average 160 days from HR receiving cases to them being closed. The average time from HR receiving cases to when the investigations commences was 58.8 days, which is a considerable time lag for what should be an organisational priority. To address this a new cohort of investigating officers are being trained in July, with an emphasis on there being an expectation that when asked to commit to an investigation it is understood that this is an organisational priority by them and their managers (in the recommendations in 3.1 CMT are asked to support and enforce this commitment). Added to this, to assist in time taken to resolve cases, for all cases, unless those that are very straightforward, investigators are to work in pairs to attend to cases more swiftly.
- 4.6. A further barrier to resolving cases quickly is the lack of a support in notetaking. Investigators are expected to take notes and type up interview statements as part of their remit because there is no administrative support. The trade unions do not consent to the recording of interviews which places a barrier to this option. CMT are therefore also recommended consider committing administrative resources to this task in 3.1. If agreed, identified note-takers will be trained to support this specialist form of note taking.
- 4.7. Of the 81 cases, 7 cases lead to the suspension of staff and 1 to revised temporary duties. All suspensions were related to disciplinaries for gross misconduct. Of the 7 suspensions, 3 were in Communities, 3 in Housing and Regeneration and 1 was in Resources.

4.8. 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.

4.9. Equalities data is reported annually at the end of Quarter 4.

5. Policy Development

5.1. Changes to Paternity Leave: The policy and application form have been updated to reflect the changes regarding the 2 weeks of paid paternity leave and its leave option, and it can be accessed on the Bridge.

5.2. There have been changes to redundancy protections for pregnant employees or those returning to work from maternity or adoption leave. The Organisational Change policy and application form have been updated to reflect these changes and can be accessed on the Bridge.

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