

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.30 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 2 JULY 2013

**ROOM MP702, 7TH FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE
CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Councillor Carlo Gibbs (Chair)
Councillor John Pierce
Councillor Alibor Choudhury (Cabinet Member for Resources)
Councillor Gloria Thienel
Councillor David Edgar

Other Councillors Present:

Officers Present:

Stephen Halsey – (Head of Paid Service and Corporate Director
Communities, Localities & Culture)
Simon Kilbey – (Service Head, Human Resources and Workforce
Development)
Mark Norman – (Monitoring Officer)
Evelyn Akoto – (Committee Officer)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

The Chair raised concerns that some members did not receive Committee agendas and requested that this be investigated.

Action: Evelyn Akoto, Committee Services

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the unrestricted minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on 14 November 2012, and the Extraordinary meetings held on 10 January 2013, 26 February 2013 and 27 March 2013, be agreed as a correct record of the proceedings, and the Chair be authorised to sign them accordingly.

4. REPORTS OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES

4.1 Quarterly report - New Starters

At the request of the Chair, Simon Kilbey, Service Head HR and Workforce Development, introduced the report on new starters and other recruitment information which had been requested at the previous Committee meeting on 20th June 2013. Simon Kilbey summarised the key points contained in the report, highlighting that the information provided covered the period of January 2013 - March 2013, which was a period of low recruitment activity. As advised by members at a previous meeting, there would be targeted advertising as well as outreach work with the Youth Council, Somali groups and other hard to reach groups of the community, with the aim of getting a wider pool of candidates.

In response to questions, Simon Kilbey gave the following responses:

- The policy stated that internships should be paid the London Living Wage. Internships were not passed through the Peoples Board for approval or for payment, moreover as such placements were for short periods, detailed internship records or agreements were not recorded by the Council, but that this was something that would need to be updated.
- The Human Resources IT system was currently being updated and would in future be able to produce user friendly information.
- With regards to the advertisement of Council vacancies, there was a process that should be followed and therefore Partners should not be advertising vacancies before the Council. This would be investigated to ascertain whether this is occurring.
- The Human Resources Terms of References could be widened to incorporate a review of the Workforce to Community data to ensure that the strategy was working and that workforce to reflect the community targets were being met.
- Out of the 21 candidates that got a place on the graduate scheme, 18 had been placed in full time jobs, 1 candidate had decided not to remain in the Council, leaving 2 candidates currently at risk. The retention rate had however improved, and there was now a consideration to widen the scheme, with the potential of offering different types of apprenticeships.
- There is a push this year to focus on recruitment based on capabilities rather than knowledge in order to further improve the variety of candidates that are shortlisted and eventually employed.

Councillor Edgar commented that the council should create a stronger framework for internships and work experience candidates, setting out the level of support and experience that individuals should be receiving. He continued that this will eliminate the risk of ad hoc placements and individuals not benefiting from their appointments.

Councillor Edgar requested that future reports include a column which calculated the emerging trends in percentages.

Councillor Pierce requested that future reports include more information on demography, and also on the roles and departments of candidates.

RESOLVED

That the Committee note the report.

5. SENIOR MANAGEMENT VACANCIES

At the request of the Chair, Steve Halsey, Head of Paid Service introduced and highlighted key points in the report, that provided an update on appointing to the two vacant Corporate Director posts and also on the vacant Service Head posts in the Council. The Head of Paid Service listed the Senior posts that had been successfully recruited to, and updated the Committee on the interim arrangements and progress on appointing to current vacant posts.

A discussion followed which focused on clarification being sought on the role and position of the Director of Public Health post, with particular focus on the potential timetable of recruiting to the vacant posts. In response to question, Steve Halsey gave the following answers.

- A Consultant was covering the posts of Service Head Children's Social Care. However, the council would like to move away from using Consultants, and therefore a more permanent solution was being sought. Following an internal process the post of Service Head Culture, Leisure and Learning was being covered by Shazia Hussain. It was unlikely that this position would be deleted and therefore it was imperative that it was filled.
- Shazia Hussain retains some responsibilities, but her substantive post was being shared between other Service Heads. The arrangements were working, as service delivery had not been affected.
- The process to recruit to the vacant positions could take at least 6 months, so there was the need for interim arrangements. The Head of Paid Services suggested that a temporary arrangement should be put in place when existing consultants leave. The post of Service Head Children's Social Care is a statutory role and therefore must be filled.
- The appointment to the post of Director of Public Health would be made by the Council and then referred to the Secretary of State for endorsement. It was rare for the Secretary of State to reject such appointments, but it was within his/her power to refer the matter back to the Council for reconsideration if so wished.

With regards to the post of Service Head Culture, Leisure and Learning, Councillor Pierce recommended continuing with the existing post holder until a permanent arrangement was made.

The Head of Paid Service requested the views of the committee with regards to the way forward in recruiting to the vacant posts. He expressed a preference for the Council to begin an internal process to fill the vacant posts, with the option of undertaking an external recruitment drive if the former process was not successful. The Head of Paid Service stated that the Council had high calibre staff that should be supported to take up such significant vacant posts within the Council.

Councillor Thienel supported this view and continued that it was important for the Council to encourage and aim to advance its staff to take up such substantive roles in the organisation.

Councillor Edgar however disagreed with this view stating that it was imperative to recruit to these posts quickly and to recruit the best possible candidates. He highlighted that this process would not preclude internal applicants from applying. He recommended that an external recruitment process should be the option.

The Chair put this to a vote with 4 members in favour to 1 against; accordingly it was:-

RESOLVED

1. That the Head of Paid Service be given delegated authority to begin the recruitment process for the various vacant posts
2. That an internal process be set up to recruit to the vacant posts.

6. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

A motion to exclude the public and press was passed in the unrestricted party of the proceedings.

7. RESTRICTED MINUTES

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

The meeting ended at 7.50 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Carlo Gibbs
Human Resources Committee