

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