

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.42 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2014

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

Members Present:

Councillor Clare Harrisson (Chair)
Councillor Dave Chesterton (Vice Chair)
Councillor Rachel Blake
Councillor Alibor Choudhury
Councillor Julia Dockerill
Councillor Rachael Saunders (Substitute for Councillor Khales Uddin Ahmed)

Officers Present:

Stephen Halsey	– (Interim Head of Paid Service / Corporate Director Communities, Localities and Culture)
Mark Keeble	– (Senior Business Partner)
Simon Kilbey	– (Service Head, Human Resources and Workforce Development)
Robert McCulloch-Graham	– (Corporate Director Education, Social Care and Wellbeing)
Jonathan Regal	– (Committee Officer)
Meic Sullivan-Gould	– (Interim Monitoring Officer)

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Khales Uddin Ahmed and Councillor Oliur Rahman.

NOTE – AGENDA ORDER

During the meeting the Committee agreed to vary the order of business. To aid clarity, the minutes are presented in the order that the items originally appeared on the agenda.

1. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

Councillor Clare Harrisson declared an interest as she was a member and worked for Unison. However, she had no involvement in any union matters affecting staff at the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

2. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

Councillor Harrison reported that she had contacted officers in relation to the unrestricted minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2014 as she had some concerns about their accuracy and in particular some misinterpretation of discussions. In response, officers responded that an earlier version of the minutes had been presented by mistake.

Councillor Alibor Choudhury requested that the minority views of some members on the recruitment of the Chief Executive (on page 9 of the agenda) were accurate and felt that this section should not change.

With the agreement of the Committee the published minutes were withdrawn to allow for a review and it was,

RESOLVED –

- (1) That an updated version of the unrestricted minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2014 be submitted to the next meeting for consideration.

3. QUARTERLY REPORT – NEW STARTERS

The report was introduced by Simon Kilbey who explained that there had been limited recruitment with only 87 new starters mostly working in front line positions. In some cases, to enable a continuation of service, agency staff were temporarily employed.

In response to Members questions, officers responded:

- The appointment of an Outdoor Education Manager was required to deal with the health and safety risks and ensure good practice in outdoor activities for young people provide by the Council's Youth Service and those provided by third sector organisations.
- The council was shortly commencing recruitment for the first phase of this year's intake of apprenticeship posts
- The information given in graphs (on page 26 and 27 of the agenda) would be available in colour or the excel spreadsheet would be emailed to Members in future.

4. PAY POLICY – RE-EMPLOYMENT FOLLOWING REDUNDANCY/EARLY RETIREMENT

The report was introduced by Simon Kilbey who explained the rationale for a future years explained that some benchmarking research had shown that different criteria were being used by councils (paragraph 6.6 on page 31 of the agenda).

In response to Members questions, officers responded:

- It was unlikely that any potential changes to the pay policy could take effect for the current redundancy round as further investigation was

required and a decision by full council also there would need to be consultation with the Trade Unions.

- There were no direct costs associated with a potential change in this aspect of the pay policy.
- The relative merits of changing the policy on returning to Council was discussed and a number of options are being considered, including how the restriction should apply in the case of compulsory redundancies.
- Provided assurance that processes were in place to monitor and enforce the policy through both the normal recruitment process and when engaging agency staff.

Members requested that a detailed report for a future meeting be produced on the proposed models for different qualifying periods available for dealing with those former employees wishing to return to work for the council. Members understood that the Trade Unions would need to be consulted and that any potential change would most probably happen following the current employment options programme and should not be retrospectively applied

The Committee, duly

RESOLVED –

- (1) That a detailed report be brought to a future meeting of the Committee on the proposed models for different qualifying periods available for dealing with those former employees wishing to return to work for the council.

5. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The report was introduced by Robert McCulloch-Graham who explained the reasons for the proposed restructure of the Education, Social Care and Wellbeing (ESCW) directorate. He explained that the structural review of ESCW was paramount in light of the implications to the council with regard to:

- (a) child safeguarding following the Jay Inquiry into Rotherham and any potential recommendations from the independent inquiry under Lord Mayor Fiona Woolf; and
- (b) any national policy directions that emerge from the Birmingham Schools Ofsted Report.

He added that a considerable amount of work reviewing the organisation of the directorate had been undertaken.

Stephen Halsey explained that there was an urgent operational need for:

- (a) the appointment of a Director of Public Health to undertake the statutory duties and the responsibilities for commissioning health visiting and children's public health functions (from April 2015);
- (b) the merger of the housing options and housing benefits service within Development and Renewal that would produce financial, operational and customer service improvements; and

- (c) the permanent appointment of a Corporate Director of Resources even though the current arrangements within the directorate were working well.

In response to Members questions, officers responded:

- The appointment of a Director of Public Health was overdue and the Director would need to focus on establishing an operational health commissioning network and a service fit for purpose.
- The merger of the housing options and housing benefits service would not undermine the existing levels of excellent service delivery and the appointment of a new Service Head would ensure that the service continued to do so.

Stephen Halsey informed the Committee that he intended to report back on progress at an extraordinary meeting scheduled in December.

The Committee, duly

RESOLVED –

- (1) That in the light of increasing operational complexities in the field of Education, Safeguarding, Health and Social Care as set out in Section 5 of the report, that a structural options appraisal be undertaken on the configuration of these services led by the Head of Paid Service and supported by the Corporate Director ESCW.
- (2) That the Head of Paid Service supported by the Corporate Director ESCW bring to the next meeting a further report on this matter.
- (3) That the other revisions proposed to senior management posts in other parts of the council be noted and the Head of Paid Service in conjunction with Service Head (Human Resources and Workforce Development) be authorised to take necessary steps to ensure the changes to Senior Officer Posts affected were undertaken within existing agreed frameworks and procedures in order to bring about the effective implementation of the revisions.

6. SENIOR MANAGEMENT VACANCIES

The report was introduced by Simon Kilbey who explained that the report provided an update on the current senior management vacancies and progress on recruitment to the following senior management vacancies:

- (a) The recruitment for the Corporate Director of Resources and Director of Law, Probity and Governance posts had commenced with searches underway and an advert in the Municipal Journal. The indicative timetable currently envisaged a recommended shortlist being brought to the Appointments Sub-Committee in mid-December.
- (b) Recruitment consultants had been invited to tender for the recruitment of the Director of Public Health. It was envisaged that a

recommended shortlist would be brought to the Appointments Sub-Committee in late January / early February.

Stephen Halsey informed the Committee that he had been contacted by potential candidates for the Director of Resources and Director of Law, Probity and Governance posts and it was apparent that the council was perceived as a high performing local authority and that the financial pressures that the council was experiencing were no different than those being experienced elsewhere. On the recruitment of the Service Head posts identified in the report it was imperative that these positions were also filled in a timely way.

In response to Members questions, officers responded:

- That the decision to fill the post with a consultant was taken by the Head of Paid Service's delegated authority from council to enable the continued efficient service delivery. The consultant was recruited to deal with finding a solution to the commissioning delivery prior to the appointment of a Service Head.
- There were exceptional reasons for the appointment of the consultant as the council had to immediately deal with the TUPE transfer of the Majlish homecare service in-house. The consultant would not be working for more than three months before another recruitment exercise was underway.

Simon Kilbey agreed that he would regularly report to the Committee on senior posts that were filled on a temporary contract basis.

7. APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE – SELECTION OF RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS AND NEXT STEPS

Stephen Halsey and Councillor Alibor Choudhury left the meeting room for the duration of this item. Stephen Halsey left the meeting to ensure that there was no conflict of interest. The meeting went into private session where presentations were made by Penna and GreenPark.

Members asked questions to the recruitment consultants and gave feedback to the Service Head (Human Resources and Workforce Development) on the recruitment consultants' proposals.

The Committee, duly

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Service Head (Human Resources and Workforce Development) note the Committee's comments on the recruitment consultants' proposals.
- (2) That the process bestayed pending PWC report and any directions from Secretary of State, this position to be reviewed at the next HR Committee.

8. 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.

9. RESTRICTED MINUTES

The restricted minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 15 September 2014 were presented for approval. The Committee, duly

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the restricted minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on 15 September 2014 be agreed and signed by the Chair, as a correct record of the proceedings.

10. EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS SAVINGS PROGRAMME

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the officer recommendations be agreed.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

Councillor Clare Harrison reported that the council had not formally recognised the trade unions in a formal written agreement. She understood that trade union relations was an executive function and, therefore, requested that a report be produced for the Mayor requesting him to formally agree to the council to formalise in a written agreement their recognition of the trade unions. The Committee requested that the Head of Paid Service's report to the Mayor come to the Committee for noting.

The Committee, duly

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Head of Paid Service be requested to take a report to the Mayor on the formal recognition of the trade unions.
- (2) That the Head of Paid Service's be requested to table his report to the Mayor before the Committee for noting.

The meeting ended at 10.07 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Clare Harrisson
Human Resources Committee