

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD AT 7.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 25 MARCH 2015

ROOM MP701, 7TH FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE,

5 CLOVE CRESCENT,

LONDON, E14 2BG

Members Present:

Councillor Clare Harrisson (Chair)

Councillor Rachel Blake

Councillor Dave Chesterton

Councillor Alibor Choudhury

Councillor Julia Dockerill

Apologies:

Councillor Oliur Rahman

Officers Present:

Simon Kilbey Service Head, Human Resources and Workforce Development

Mark Keeble Senior Business Partner Human Resources

Antoinette Duhaney Committee Officer

1. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

No declarations were made.

2. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the unrestricted minutes of the meetings of the Human Resources Committee held on 28th January and 19th February 2015 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the proceedings.

VARIATION OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

With the consent of the Committee, the Chair agreed to vary the order of business to allow item 3.3 to be considered prior to items 3.1 and 3.2. These minutes reflect the order in which items were considered.

3. REPORTS OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES

3.1 SENIOR MANAGEMENT VACANCIES AND APPOINTMENTS

Simon Kilbey, Head of Human Resources and Workforce Development presented the report and updated the Committee on progress with recruiting to senior management posts within the Council. During the recruitment process, there had been ongoing discussions with the Commissioners about statutory officer positions.

The Chair of the Committee expressed her disappointment at the lack of progress in appointing a Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service and reiterated the resolution passed by the Committee at a previous meeting endorsing the decision by full Council to seek to recruit a Chief Executive through a competitive selection process. However this resolution was not supported by Tower Hamlets First Members on the HR Committee.

Councillor Alibor Choudhury made reference to correspondence sent from the Commissioners to all the Political Groups expressing their concerns about the slow progress in recruiting to senior management posts and also the delay in addressing certain aspects of the BV Action Plan. Councillor Choudhury was concerned that the HR Committee should not take the blame for these delays as the delays were the result of circumstances beyond the Committee's control. The Committee had done everything in its powers to expedite the recruitment process in very challenging circumstances.

The Committee endorsed the comments made by Councillor Choudhury and the Chair stated that notwithstanding the challenges and delays experienced by the Appointments Sub-Committee(s) (ASC), some very strong candidates had been interviewed and appointments made. However the Committee was critical of the following aspects of the selection process.

Service Head Learning & Achievement – The Committee was disappointed that only 1 candidate had been shortlisted for interview. However the ASC was not informed of this until the day of the interview. Had the ASC been notified sooner, officers would have been requested to bring forward a shortlist of more candidates for interview. However recruitment to this key post would now be delayed further. The Committee was anxious for recruitment to this post to be expedited as a matter of urgency with realistic and achievable timescales/milestones agreed and set out in the job advertisement.

In response, Simon Kilbey stated that even though only 1 candidate had been shortlisted, the Corporate Director ESCW felt the candidate to be very strong and wished members to consider the candidate. Simon Kilbey added that he would feedback the Committee's concerns. The ASC made a request for further candidates to be brought forward for interview along with the candidate

already shortlisted. In the meantime, interim arrangements had been put in place to meet the demands of this post.

At the start of the selection process, although an indicative timetable had been agreed, this was changed as it did not suit ASC members. The Interim Head of Paid Service would oversee future senior management appointments and ASC Members (through the Chair), would be briefed regularly on progress. The timetable for the interviews had been revised and the ASC would interview candidates on Thursday 2nd April.

Recruiting to senior management posts – The Committee was also critical of the recruitment process in general. Members felt that the process had been managed in a disorganised way. Papers were circulated late and were often incomplete or inaccurate. The process so far did not meet the expectations of Members and added to their disenfranchisement and frustration with the process. In addition the delays in the process did not paint a good impression of the Council to prospective candidates.

In response Simon Kilbey stated that, in acknowledgement that the recruitment process had not always gone smoothly, measures would be put in place to streamline processes and keep ASC Members informed of progress. To do this he will liaise with the Service Head Democratic Services. In future papers for consideration by ASCs would be circulated well in advance of meetings and would be watermarked with a unique reference number for each individual ASC Member.

In respect of the Service Head, Public Realm post, Simon Kilbey advised that interim arrangements would be put in place pending the recruitment of a permanent replacement. Subsequent to the agenda being published for this meeting, the Service Head, Housing Allocations had resigned and interim arrangements would also be made to have this post covered in the meantime.

The Chair suggested that in cases where a Service Head resigned, the opportunity should be taken to review the structure of the service and it was also suggested that officers appointed to senior management posts should engage with key members and be involved in any major decisions made in respect of their service area before they took up post.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the progress on recruitment to Senior Management vacancies of Corporate Director Resources, Director of Law, Probity and Governance, Service Head Customer Access, Transformation and ICT, Service Head Children's Social Care, Director of Public Health and Service Head Learning & Achievement be noted.
- (2) That it be noted that the Service Head, Public Realm has recently tendered his resignation and that, in due course, arrangements for recruitment to this post will be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

- (3) That the feedback from Members on how the ASCs have been managed be noted and the comments taken on board.

3.2 NEW STARTERS QUARTERLY REPORT OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2014

The report was presented by Simon Kilbey, Service Head HR & WD. He flagged up the key issues within the report. 30 apprenticeships had been awarded. Feedback on the apprentices was positive with many requests for apprentices to be retained. The Council's apprenticeship scheme was among the best in London and had achieved several accolades. There was more demand for apprentices than placements available and Skillsmatch supported the Council in this process.

In response to questions and comments from Members, Mr Kilbey stated that there was no evidence to suggest that Skillsmatch was not able to meet the Council's requirements. However to date, apprenticeship placements had been oversubscribed and good calibre apprentices had been recruited and most retained. Given that Skillsmatch was currently able to assist the Council in meeting its needs, there were no immediate plans to use other providers, but this could be explored in the future.

Recruitment of Social Workers was a challenge for all Local Authorities in London with staff being poached. In addition many SWs were seeking employment through agencies as it was more financially beneficial than a permanent contract. There was good placement support for NQSWs and many were retained at the completion of their placement.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That a report on other providers who can support apprenticeship schemes and facilitate engagement with hard to reach communities be presented to a future meeting.

3.3 EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS AND WORKFORCE SAVINGS UPDATE

The report was introduced by Mark Keeble, Senior HR & WD Business Partner. It was reported that 120 posts were to be deleted resulting in savings of £3.5m. A briefing session would be held in the following week in respect of Public Health Outreach Workers (15 posts available). Staff leaving the Council's employment who were residents of the Borough had been referred to Skillsmatch for support. Non-residents had been referred to SeeTec in Stratford. To date there had been no compulsory redundancies and officers were confident that all Home Care Staff wishing to remain in the Council's employment would be redeployed into alternative posts

The biggest risk was the Home Care service and the following key points were highlighted:

- Out of a total of 73 Home Care staff, 45 had requested VR/ER.

Of the 28 Home Care staff that wished to remain with LBTH:

- 12 would be appointed to Service User Liaison roles (including 2 to Monitoring Supervisor roles)
- 4 going to be Reablement Officers posts
- 2 going into Day Care Officer roles
- 2 going to be Driver/Technicians posts
- 2 going to be Passenger Assistants posts
- 5 remaining staff were undecided; Employment opportunities within Parking Services and Idea Stores were being considered

In response to questions and observations from Members, Mr Kilbey stated work was under way to consider other measures/options to achieve the required savings and a further update report would be presented to the Committee In May 2015.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the current position on the outcome of Employment Options requests and actions taken in response to the Equality Impact Assessment be noted.
- (2) That the information provided on the delivery of workforce savings and measures in place to reduce the risk of compulsory redundancy be noted.
- (3) That the current position of arrangements for managing redeployment be noted.
- (4) That the position on individual exits costing £100k or more be noted.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no urgent business.

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.

Summary of Part 2 (Exempt) Proceedings

6. RESTRICTED MINUTES

The restricted minutes of the meetings of the Human Resources Committee held on 28th January and 19th February 2015 were agreed as a correct record subject to minor amendments.

The meeting ended at 8.48 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Clare Harrisson
Human Resources Committee