

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD AT 19:00 ON WEDNESDAY, 28 OCTOBER 2015

**ROOM MP701, 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 Julia Dockerill
- Councillor Sirajul Islam

Apologies:

- Councillor Rabina Khan

Officers Present:

- Simon Kilbey, (Service Head (HR and Workforce Development))
- Stephen Halsey (Interim Head of Paid Service)
- Melanie Clay (Director, Law, Probity and Governance)
- Matthew Mannion (Committee Manager)
- Tom Scholes-Fogg (Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Rabina Khan.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

No declarations of pecuniary interests were made.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The unrestricted minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 1 July 2015 and 10 July 2015 were presented for approval.

RESOLVED

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the meetings of the Human Resources Committee held on 1 July 2015 and 10 July 2015 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the proceedings.

4. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 SENIOR MANAGER RECRUITMENT UPDATE

The report was introduced by Stephen Halsey, Corporate Director, Communities, Localities and Culture, who informed the Committee about the recruitment exercises that were taking place in order to fill senior management vacancies within the Council.

In relation to the upcoming recruitment exercises, he explained that Will Tuckley, the Chief Executive, had asked the Head of Paid Service to lead on confirming recruitment agencies best able to support each individual process. After reviewing their presentations it was recommended that Penna be contracted to support all the listed recruitment processes with the exception of that for the Service Head, Communications which should be supported by Green Park. Will Tuckley had supported those recommendations.

In response to questions, Stephen Halsey confirmed that Will Tuckley was aware of previous discussions about Penna and that useful due diligence discussions had been held with the recruitment agency. It was considered that Penna had provided the most comprehensive answers on how they would progress successful recruitment exercises.

Responding to questions, Stephen Halsey explained that:

- It had been agreed that the Director level posts would be recruited before the linked Service Head. It was expected that Service Head applicants would want to know who their Director was going to be. Directors would also want to be involved in confirming the arrangements for their Service Head posts.
- However, the Chief Executive was keen to recruit to all posts as quickly as possible.
- The Committee Members would need to be consulted as the process developed over issues that may arise such as changes to the health trust impacting on the roles at the Council.

Members highlighted the need to ensure that all the processes were conducted as quickly as possible to avoid long gaps between appointments. They also expressed concerns over recent occasions where lengthy interim arrangements had operated. The Chair stated that she would be discussing with Chief Executive how to ensure that the Committee could be briefed on progress in between Committee meetings.

During continued discussion of the report further questions were asked, officers responded as follows:

- Melanie Clay, Director, Law, Probity and Governance, reported that she was reviewing how to best support the Democratic Services function to determine how it best fit within her structure. She also noted

a number of changes at Service Head level within Law, Probity and Governance that would require action. She confirmed that she would look to ensure that when roles were advertised they would not then change shortly afterwards.

- Simon Kilbey reported that there were nationwide skills shortage in recruiting to Service Head, Learning and Achievement type posts but it was hoped that recruiting a Corporate Director would help encourage applicants.
- Timetables were set out for a number of the recruitment processes but that these could be altered if it proved necessary.

In discussing the report, Members made a number of comments including that:

- Officers should look at whether the way the posts were advertised made them sound enticing enough.
- For example, the Service Head, Communications post could emphasise the national and international nature of media interest in the Borough, the crisis management role and also the need to develop social media use.
- The Service Head, Learning and Achievement should had the word 'education' in the job title.
- Officers should explore whether low levels of interested indicated a reluctance of candidates to apply for posts at Tower Hamlets Council.
- Whether appropriate exit interviews were being undertaken and lessons learned.

Moving on to discuss the Chief Executive post, Members requested that they be presented with information on the Chief Executive's appraisal arrangements as Members were not currently clear what arrangements were being followed and had not been able to sign off on any process. Officers confirmed that discussions had been taking place including with the Commissioners and that a process involving the Mayor and a panel including an independent advisor was being set up. Group Leaders would also be involved in the process. It was agreed to ensure that the Human Resources Committee Members were able to review and comment on the arrangement, or sign off the process if that was appropriate.

Members agreed that Councillors of all parties needed to have confidence in the Chief Executive and that he was seen as independent of the Mayor.

The Human Resources Committee expressed its thanks to Stephen Halsey for his work as Interim Head of Paid Service.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the progress on recruitment to Senior Management vacancies of Chief Executive, Corporate Director Resources, Director of Law, Probity and Governance, Director of Adults' Services, Corporate Director Children's Services, Service Head, Finance and Procurement,

Service Head Public Realm, Service Head Legal, Service Head Communications and Marketing, Service Head Learning & Achievement and Service Head, Commissioning and Health.

2. To note that recruitment consultants have been invited to submit proposals to support the Council in recruiting to the two Director posts and those Service Head posts for which consultants have not previously been engaged.
3. To note that there will be an intensive recruitment period with a number of Appointments Sub Committees needing to be convened early in the New Year and with one currently indicatively scheduled to take place in the week prior to the festive break.

4.2 HUMAN RESOURCES & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Simon Kilbey, Service Head for Human Resources & Workforce Development provided a verbal Update to the Committee on the arrangements for presenting HR and workforce data to the Committee. Members were asked to submit any suggestions that they had to Simon Kilbey and the Chair regarding the content of the future reports. He also explained that officers were still exploring how to collect some of the requested data such as that around apprenticeships.

Councillor Rachel Blake suggested that the quarterly recruitment report for new starters (Page 7 of the agenda, paragraph 3.3) showed there were still issues when it came to recruiting local residents and ethnic minorities. She said the Committee and the Council would not have information on new starters between April 2015 and June 2015 until at least January 2016, which meant that any adverse trends would not be spotted before the end of year report. He stated around 25 posts had been advertised and filled in partnership with Skills Match. Officers were targeting schools to aim for a better gender mix. The current 2/3 male and 1/3 female split was still a concern and would be investigated further along with concerns that particular groups were not applying.

Ideas being explored by officers included:

- Looking to see when large council contracts were being put out to tender.
- Better linking with community groups and schools.
- Linking with other providers beyond skills match.
- How to encourage buy-in from local businesses.
- The need to ensure all parts of the Council were engaged.

However, it was noted that the Council recruited more apprenticeships than most boroughs and that retention rates were high.

Councillors stated it was important to push council providers and partners for them to advertise and train apprentices. The Chair asked Simon Kilbey to see if one of the officers involved in recruiting apprenticeships and also an

apprentice could come and speak to the Committee to provide their take on the situation. ask somebody to speak to the Committee to discuss apprentices and jobs, and answer any questions the Committee may have.

RESOLVED

1. To note the verbal update and to send any comments or suggestions to the Chair and to Simon Kilbey on information Members would like to see included in the reports in future.

4.3 ENCOURAGING EQUALITIES DATA

Simon Kilbey, Service Head for Human Resources & Workforce Development explained to the Committee that the equalities report published in the supplementary agenda showed what the council is doing in relation to Equalities data.

He added that it was important to make people feel that they could inform the Council regarding protected characteristics and to make them feel comfortable working at Tower Hamlets Council.

There was general agreement from the Committee that it was important to attract staff from a variety of different backgrounds.

RESOLVED

1. To note the report.

5. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS

It was agreed that future meetings of the Human Resources Committee should start at 19:00, rather than the current start time of 19:30 – subject to there being no other Council business. It was agreed that the change in time should begin from the on 19th January 2016.

6. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

A motion was passed in the unrestricted section of the meeting to exclude the press and public during the consideration of the following items.

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.

7. EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The restricted minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 1 July 2015 and 10 July 2015 were presented for approval.

RESOLVED

1. That the restricted minutes of the meetings of the Human Resources Committee held on 1 July 2015 and 10 July 2015 be agreed and signed by the Chair, as a correct record of the proceedings.

8. ANY OTHER EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no other exempt or confidential business which the Chair considered urgent.

The meeting ended at 20:45

Chair, Councillor Clare Harrisson
Human Resources Committee