

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.30 P.M. ON MONDAY, 12 JUNE 2023

**COMMITTEE ROOM - TOWER HAMLETS TOWN HALL, 160 WHITECHAPEL
ROAD, LONDON E1 1BJ**

Members Present in Person:

Councillor Bellal Uddin (Chair)
Councillor Kabir Ahmed
Councillor Saied Ahmed
Councillor Sabina Khan
Councillor Maium Talukdar
Councillor Abdal Ullah

Members In Attendance Virtually:

Councillor Ayas Miah

Officers Present in Person:

Agnes Adrien (Head of Litigation, Legal Services)
Joel West (Democratic Services Team Leader (Committee))
Musrat Zaman (Director of HR, OD & Business Support Services)

Officers In Attendance Virtually:

Carole S Bowes (Employment Lawyer, Legal Services, Directorate
Law, Probity and Governance)
Pat Chen (Head of HR)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None were declared.

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED that Councillor Maium Talukdar is elected Vice Chair of the Human Resources Committee for 2023-24.

3. WORK PLAN

Further to questions from Committee members, Musrat Zaman, Director of Workforce, OD and Business Support, advised that discussions on future officer structure, restructures etc would be channelled via the proposed new internal boards and were not planned to be reported to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

1. That the work plan be noted.

4. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 Human Resources Committee Terms of Reference, Membership and Dates of Meetings 23-24

Joel West, Democratic Services Team Leader (Committee) introduced the report that asked the Committee to note its terms of reference and delegated powers, membership and dates of meetings for 2023-24.

Members of the Committee asked that the wording of the terms of reference be tightened to clarify limits of officer delegated authority, explicitly reference the role of political groups in determining nominations to sub-committee memberships and reflect any powers reserved to the Head of Paid Service and/or Mayor for determining criteria for appointment of chief officers. Members also felt the terms of reference should clarify how the delegations to the Monitoring Officer would be treated if that officer were the subject of proceedings (for example, disciplinary hearings). Officers advised that, whilst the terms of reference had been approved by full Council, they would initiate proceedings to progress the requested changes.

Councillor Kabir Ahmed wished to record his objection to the resolution to note the terms of reference.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

1. Note its terms of reference, quorum, membership and dates of future meetings as set out in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 to the report.

4.2 Establishment of Appointment Sub Committee

Joel West, Democratic Services Team Leader (Committee) introduced the report that recommended the establishment of an Appointments Sub-Committee for the current municipal year and the process for Chief Officer/Deputy Chief Officer appointments and proposed criteria for membership of the Sub-Committee in accordance with the Constitution and agreed procedures. Joel explained that the Committee were also asked to agree to the establishment of an Employee Appeal Sub Committee, with terms of reference and procedure rules as tabled in a separate document.

Further to questions from the Committee, Musrat Zaman, Director Workforce, OD and Business Support, explained that Employee Appeals Sub Committee would hear all appeals against dismissal arising from disciplinary matters performance and capability and sickness.

The Committee discussed the proposed terms of reference of the Employee Appeal Sub Committee as tabled. The Committee noted the membership did

not include a political proportionality requirement. Some members indicated the sub committee should reflect political proportionality. Other members noted that the requirement for ethnicity and gender balance at meetings of the sub committee could be compromised if political balance had to be secured.

Councillor Kabir Ahmed proposed and Councillor Maium Talukdar seconded a motion that the terms of reference of the Employee Appeal Sub Committee be amended to specify that its membership be politically balanced. This was put to the vote and agreed.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

1. Agree the terms of reference for Appointments Sub-Committees for the remainder of the municipal year 2023/24 as set out at paragraph 4.1 of the 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 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 group leaders;
3. Note the process for appointment to Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer posts as set out at section 5 of the report; and
4. Agree the terms of reference and procedure rules for the Employee Appeal Sub Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2023/24 as set out in the tabled papers, subject to an additional clause to specify that the membership be politically balanced.

4.3 Annual report on employee relations casework and policies

Reasons for urgency were noted and agreed.

Pat Chen, (Head of HR) introduced the report that updated the Committee on the level and management of employee relations casework and policy within the Council, highlighting progress made for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Further to questions from the Committee, Pat provided more details on:

- Possible explanations for some of the data trends
- Efforts to obtain and use benchmarking data. Pat noted this was challenging due to the absence of a standard recording approach between local authorities.
- Employees' rights to be accompanied at, and the importance of ensuring balance amongst members on determining bodies, e.g. disciplinary panels.
- The role and independence of occupational health advisors.

- Efforts to empower younger employees to challenge and speak out about their workplace rights.

RESOLVED that:

1. The report be noted.

4.4 Pay Policy Statement 2023-23

Reasons for urgency were noted and agreed.

Pat Chen, Head of HR introduced the report that proposed a 2023/24 pay policy statement for the Council, prior to its submission to Full Council on 19 July 2023. Pat noted the statement would be published soon after agreement by Full Council.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

1. Notes the draft 2023/24 pay policy statement and recommends its adoption by Full Council on 19 July 2023.
2. Delegates to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Workforce, OD and Business Support, Chair of the HR Committee and Monitoring Officer, authority to make any minor changes to the 2023/24 pay policy statement.

4.5 Update on Senior Recruitment (including acting up and interim arrangements)

Reasons for urgency were noted and agreed.

Pat Chen, Head of HR introduced the report that updated Members on senior posts, recent recruitment activity and interim arrangements in senior officer posts.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

1. Notes the current position on the recruitment to senior management vacancies in the Council structure and the interim arrangements in place.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

None.

The meeting ended at 7.35 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Bellal Uddin
Human Resources Committee