

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2003 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor John (Chair), Councillor Coughlin (Vice-Chair) and Councillors R Colwill, Duffin (for HB Patel), Fox (for Lyon), Kagan, D Long and R S Patel.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Blackman, Lyon and HB Patel.

**1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests**

None.

**2. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2003 were approved as a correct record .

**3. Deputations**

None.

**4. Remuneration Strategy – Recruitment and Retention and Single Status**

The Council's budget for 2003/2004 contains provision of £1m (with future growth built in) to meet the costs of a remuneration strategy, in particular for the introduction of recruitment and retention initiatives and the cost of implementation of the National Agreement on single status employment. In addition pay anomalies require action to ensure standardisation of service conditions.

The report considered the allocation of the £1m growth budget in order to alleviate recruitment and retention difficulties and sought to determine how best to allocate remaining funds to achieve single status employment and remove pay anomalies once recruitment and retention priorities have been met.

The Interim Director of Human Resources amended his report by deleting the last line of text shown under the tables on the last page of the report.

RESOLVED:-

that, subject to Executive approval of the allocation of the necessary funding from the £1m growth budget for 2003/2004:

- (a) the first priority is the introduction of recruitment and retention initiatives to achieve an immediate impact on improved service delivery and a reduction in costs associated with difficulties in

recruitment and retention of professional staff, at an estimated overall cost of approximately £600k in a full financial year.

- (b) recruitment and retention packages be introduced to staff in the following service areas:-

Corporate Services – Legal Services. Market supplements of £5k p.a. to 3 contract lawyers for an initial 2-year period (total £15k p.a.)

Environmental Services – A graduate scheme supporting the professional training of 4 new graduates per annum at a cost of £75k in the first year and £85k p.a. thereafter.

Environmental Services – The application of market supplements to hard to fill posts in Planning, Building Control, Transportation, Environmental Health and Trading Standards, to be funded in part from remuneration strategy allocation as set out in the body of the report, at a cost of £130k p.a.

Social Services – Initiatives as set out in the report, at a total cost of £226k p.a. as follows:-

- Linked grades for Team Managers £18.2k
- Community Care Service re-grading £82.3k
- Children's Service retention allowances £125.5k

Housing – Allocation of £40k towards recruitment and retention for Surveyors and Senior Surveyors

Education – Application of recruitment and retention payments to Education Advisor and Educational Psychologist posts where it is particularly difficult to recruit high calibre staff - £40k

- (c) if and when further bids are forthcoming that fully justify the application of recruitment and retention payments as described in this report further reports to be brought to members for approval of specific initiatives up to an additional total cost of £64k.
- (d) the harmonisation of service conditions of Housing Benefit staff transferring from EDS be agreed, set out in paragraph 17 of the report to be achieved during 2003/2004 at a cost of £156k (full year effect).
- (e) Agreement to a way forward on single status employment set out in paragraph 16, on the basis that single status, is fully achieved in April 2004, at a cost of £1.3m in the 2004/2005 financial year, and with cost implications for future years (see paragraph 19 of the report); a breakdown of the costs being as follows:-

Incremental progression for former manual workers - £120k p.a.

Introduction of a 36 hour week at a cost of £500k p.a.

Adoption of the current former manual worker level of London Weighting of £2013 p.a. and freeze the protected Inner London Weighting at the current level. The annual cost would be £677k.

- (f) as part of the negotiations towards achieving single status, to remove pay anomalies where these are identified, in particular the ending of the current bonus incentive schemes and the termination of existing weekly pay arrangements.

**5. Pay and Retention Strategy for Care Managers, Social Workers and Approved Social Workers in the Social Services Community Care Service**

This report presented a continuation of the pay and retention strategy for qualified social work staff. It followed a report to Social Services Deciding Committee of 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2001 when improvements to the grading of social workers in Children's Services were agreed.

It proposed that the same improvements be made to the grading of social work staff in Community Care in order that this group of staff achieves parity with its colleagues in Children's Services. This is an important further step towards resolving recruitment and retention difficulties in the Department in what continues to be a highly competitive labour market.

The report needed to be read in conjunction with a further report elsewhere on the agenda that proposed a new career grade for Team Managers in Community Care and Children's Services of PO4/5.

The actions proposed would achieve one coherent pay structure for all social work staff employed in the Social Services Department and to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003.

RESOLVED:-

that the contents of the report be noted and the improvements to the remuneration of care managers and approved social workers in the Community Care Division, as detailed in paragraphs 7.6 and 7.8 of the report, be agreed.

**6. New Career Grade for Social Work Team Managers in Social Services**

This report developed the pay and retention strategy for Team Managers in the Community Care Services, Children's Services and the Youth Offending Team by creating a new career grade for this group of staff. It follows on from a report to Social Services Deciding Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2001, when improvements to the grading of social workers in Children's Services were agreed. It needed to be read in conjunction with the report elsewhere in the agenda that furthers the pay and retention strategy for social work staff in Community Care.

RESOLVED:-

that the report be noted and the grade range for Team Managers be extended from PO4/5, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003.

**7. Retention Allowances for Children's Services Social Workers**

This report proposed the payment of an annual retention allowance to Children's Services' social workers to encourage experienced social workers to remain in Brent employment. This stemmed from the difficulties experienced in recruiting qualified social workers to Children's Services due to the competition for this group of staff from other London local authorities.

RESOLVED:-

that the report be noted and that payment of an annual retention allowance to social workers who have remained in Brent employment for twelve months preceding the payment, be agreed.

**8. Indemnities for Senior Officers in respect of signing Contract Certificates under the Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997**

The report sought approval to the variation of the contracts of Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officers to provide for an indemnity from the Council in circumstances where the officer signs a certificate under the Contracts Act following authorisation by the Executive or a relevant Council Committee or by the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that a variation be made to the contracts of existing Chief and Deputy Chief Officers to provide for an indemnity in the form set out in appendix 1 to the report where the officer signs a contract certificate under the Local Government (Contract Act 1997) following authorisation by the Executive, a Council committee or by the Chief Executive;

- (ii) that a similar indemnity be included in contracts issued to Chief and Deputy Chief Officers in the future.

**9. Replacement of Board Member for Brent Housing Partnership**

A vacancy had arisen for one of the Council nominated directors on the Board of Brent Housing Partnership (BHP), the Council's wholly owned company responsible for managing the Council's housing stock.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that Councillor Kansagra be appointed as one of the Council nominated directors on the Board of Brent Housing Partnership.
- (ii) that the director of Housing be authorised to write to the company secretary of BHP giving notice of the appointment.

**10. Minutes of Sub-Committees**

Minutes of the Licensing (B) Sub-Committee of 20<sup>th</sup> March 2003 were not available and minutes of the Teachers' JCC of 4<sup>th</sup> March had not been included with the agenda. Minutes of the Schools Disciplinary Sub-Committee of 6<sup>th</sup> May and Licensing Sub-Committee of 8<sup>th</sup> May were tabled.

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the following sub-committees be received:

- (i) Brent Pension Fund – 26<sup>th</sup> November 2002 and 11<sup>th</sup> March 2003
- (ii) Teachers' Joint Consultative Committee – 4<sup>th</sup> March 2003
- (iii) Senior Staff Appointments (Director of Human Resources and Diversity) – 15<sup>th</sup> April 2003
- (iv) Schools Disciplinary – 6<sup>th</sup> May 2003
- (v) Licensing (A) – 8<sup>th</sup> May 2003

The meeting ended at 8.15 pm.

A JOHN  
Chair

