

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> June 2005 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Coughlin (Vice-Chair, in the Chair) and Councillors Lyon and R S Patel.

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors John, R Blackman, Kagan and D Long.

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

None.

**2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2005**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2005 be approved as an accurate record.

**3. Matters Arising**

None.

**4. Deputations**

None.

**5. Recruitment of Hard to Recruit Team Managers in Children's Services**

The Committee received a report from the Assistant Director of Children's Services, Janet Palmer, which outlined the need to recruit permanent Team Managers to frontline teams in Children's Services in order to ensure high quality and safe services for children in need of protection, and children who are Looked After by the Local Authority.

The Assistant Director highlighted the fact that despite a number of improvements to the terms and conditions of Team Managers and despite a recent professional advertising campaign, eight out of eleven key posts remained vacant and were currently filled by agency team managers. The Assistant Director also referred Members to appendix 1, page 9, which compared Team Managers' salaries with those of neighbouring boroughs.

Some Members queried whether the improved rates for Team Managers would motivate other boroughs to better their terms and conditions for their Team Managers and the Assistant Director

acknowledged that whilst this had the potential to be the case, it should nonetheless allow Brent to fill the much needed vacant posts.

Members enquired if every effort possible had been made in order to try to recruit to these posts and the Assistant Director confirmed that this had been the case. Members also noted that the vacant posts had also offered opportunity for promotion for those members of staff in lower positions, yet remained unfilled.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that a payment of £2,000 gross be agreed as a “golden hello” to attract new recruits to eleven hard to recruit to team manager posts in Children Services;
- (ii) that it be agreed the existing retention payment of £1,200 per annum be replaced with a market supplement of £3,200 per annum in order to retain current permanent team managers and to attract new recruits in the hard to recruit to team manager posts;
- (iii) that Members agree to delegate to the Director of Social Services and from 4<sup>th</sup> July 2005 the Director of Children and Families the authority to determine the conditions and circumstances under which the “golden hello” and the market supplement will be varied or terminated.

**6. Appointments to Outside Bodies**

None.

**7. Any Other Urgent Business**

None

**8. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

RESOLVED:-

that the press and public be now excluded from the meeting as the following report is not for publication as it contains a category of exempt information as specified in the Local Government Act 1972, namely:

“Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (other than the Authority).”

**9. Pension Transfer of Former EDS Staff**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Finance which concerned the pension position of employees who transferred from the employment of Electronic Data Services (EDS) to that of the Council following the decision to provide the Revenues and Benefits Service in-house at the end of the EDS contract. Some Members enquired whether EDS were contributing to the cost in addition to the Council. The Director of Finance confirmed that this was the case and that EDS were providing a substantial proportion of the total cost required.

Members referred to recommendation (i) which asked Members to note the exceptional circumstances and asked for further information. The Director explained that the exceptional circumstances included recognition that these members of staff formed the bulk of the most experienced staff in the Department and consequently this agreement was necessary for retention and staff morale. Members heard that the service, despite massive improvements, remained fragile, and that any disruption would impact on some of the most vulnerable members of the community.

Some Members enquired whether it was possible that there was a danger that a precedent might be set for other similar cases. The Director of Finance explained that this was not a significant concern as there were no other significant out-sourced services comparable to this one. The Chair also noted that bringing this service back in-house had been a positive move, in that the Council had taken responsibility for a failing service and had changed it to become a good service with a well motivated workforce.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (i) that the exceptional circumstances as set out in paragraph 3.9 of the report be noted;
- (ii) that the current estimates of the cost of the proposed increased membership as set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report be noted;
- (iii) that, subject to EDS paying enhanced transfer values as described in paragraph 3.8 of the report, it be agreed to exercise the Council's discretion under Regulation 52 of the Local Government Pension Scheme ("LGPS") to augment the service of those employees who transfer membership from the EDS 1994 Scheme and Retirement Plan into the LGPS (the "employees");
- (iv) that the Director of Finance be given delegated authority to agree the final amounts to be paid by EDS, and by the Council under Regulation 52 of the LGPS, to increase scheme membership to equal day for day service for the employees

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm.

D COUGHLIN  
Vice-Chair, the Chair

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