

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
Monday, 6th February 2006 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor John (Chair), Councillor Coughlin (Vice-Chair) and Councillors D Long, H B Patel and R S Patel.

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors R Colwill and R Blackman.

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

2. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 13th December 2005**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13th December 2005 be approved as an accurate record.

3. **Matters Arising**

None.

4. **Deputations**

None.

5. **Authority to Award Contract for Occupational Health Services**

The Committee received a report which requested authority to award contracts as required by Contract Standing Order No 88. The report now before Members summarised the process undertaken in tendering this contract and, following the completion of the evaluation of the tenders recommended to whom the contract should be awarded.

The Director of Human Resources and Diversity advised that a single stage tender was used due to the limited number of contractors in the market. Following the advertisement placed in October 2005 five submissions had been received and evaluated by a team of officers.

The Committee also had before them an appendix to the report which was not for publication as it contained the following category of exempt information as specified in the Schedule of the Local Government (Access to Information Act) 1985:

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

RESOLVED:-

- (ii) that the contract be awarded for Occupational Health Services to National Britannia Limited for a three-year period

commencing on 1st April 2006, with an option to extend the contract for a further two-year period;

- (i) that it be noted the Executive on 16th January had agreed the above recommendation.

6. **Childcare Voucher Scheme**

The Committee had before them a report concerning the provision of a childcare voucher scheme for Brent Council employees and which also sought the endorsement of the General Purposes Committee for employees to participate in a Salary Sacrifice Scheme, in order to receive childcare vouchers. The Director of Human Resources and Diversity outlined the terms of the scheme which Allows staff to benefit from savings on tax and national insurance up to a value of £50 per week or £217 per month.

The Committee noted with concern that where participation in the scheme would reduce and employees earnings to below the national wage they would be precluded from taking part in the scheme. Equally, staff who fell below or who were likely to fall below the lower earnings limit, i.e. the point at which National Insurance is payable, would be advised of the affect on other benefits that such a decision would mean. The Director explained that for some staff, participation in the scheme would have a negative effect on their income as it would be further reduced. The scheme was also not open to teaching staff under their existing terms and conditions which preclude them from entering into a salary sacrifice scheme.

The Committee asked to receive a report on take up after the scheme has been in operation for six months.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the introduction of a Childcare Voucher scheme as outlined in the report be approved;
- (ii) that the adoption of a Salary Sacrifice scheme as outlined in the report be agreed;
- (iii) that it be agreed the employer's savings made under the scheme, in the first instance, be used to cover the initial set up cost;
- (iv) that it be agreed the cost of maintaining the scheme be paid for, out of the money generated as a result of the savings made by the Council;
- (v) that it be agreed employees be limited to taking a maximum of £50 per week (£217 per month) in childcare vouchers;

- (vi) that it be agreed authority be delegated to the Director of Human Resources and Diversity to raise the level at which the scheme is capped in the future, in accordance with HM Revenue and Custom changes and to decide the terms on which childcare vouchers will be offered to the Council's employees.

7. Local Elections 2006 – Polling Stations and Places

The Committee had before them a report which sought agreement to the polling places to be used for the forthcoming local elections to be held on 4th May 2006.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the list of polling places set out in the report be approved for the local elections to be held in 2006;
- (ii) that in the event of any unforeseen changes between now and the local elections date, authority be delegated to the Democratic Services Manager to designate polling places, in consultation with the Leaders of the three political groups

8. Sub-Committee Membership Changes

None.

9. Appointments to Outside Bodies

Tricycle Theatre

Nominations were sought for two Members of the Council to serve on the Board of the Tricycle Theatre.

RESOLVED:-

that Councillor D Long and Councillor Gillani be appointed to serve on the Board of the Tricycle Theatre.

10. Any Other Urgent Business

None.

The meeting ended at 7.15 pm

A JOHN
Chair

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