

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
Thursday, 17th July 2008 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor John (Chair) and Councillors Bessong, Beswick, Butt, Colwill, Corcoran (for Wharton), Kansagra (for Blackman), C J Patel (for Castle), Sneddon and Van Kalwala.

Apologies were received from Councillors Blackman, Castle, Lorber and Wharton.

1. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 19th May and 26th June 2008 be received and approved as accurate records.

3. Matters Arising

There were none.

4. Deputations

There were none.

5. Appointments to Sub-Committees

RESOLVED:-

that approval be given to the following change to committee membership:-

Brent Pension Fund

Delete Councillor Fox and insert Councillor Van Kalwala as 1st alternate for Councillor Crane.

6. Service Improvement – grading of proposed new service manager posts

The Committee had before them a report from the Chief Executive which set out proposals for the creation of three new posts at the senior management level arising out of a number of structural changes designed to promote improvements in service delivery, value-for-money and delivery of the Council's key priorities. Further details on the rationale for the re-structuring and proposed new posts were contained in the report considered and agreed by the Executive on 14th July, a copy of which was also before members of the Committee.

The Committee noted that the decision of the Executive had been called in for scrutiny by the Forward Plan Select Committee.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the creation of the following new posts be noted:
 - (a) Director of Service Improvement, a Corporate Management Team Level post;
 - (b) Head of Human Resources at Assistant /Deputy Director level; and
 - (c) Civic Centre Programme Director at Assistant/Deputy Director level.
- (ii) that approval be given to the grading of the above posts as follows at the salary levels indicated in the report from the Chief Executive:

Director of Service Improvement - Hay Grade 2
Head of Human Resources – Hay Grade 3
Civic Centre Programme Director – Hay Grade 3
- (iii) that the terms and conditions of these jobs will be those currently applicable to other senior managers on Hay grades.

6. Fairness at Work Policy and Procedure

The report from the Director of Human Resources and Diversity set out the reasons for developing the new Fairness at Work (FAW) policy and procedure which replaced the former grievance and harassment policy. The meeting heard from the Strategic HR Manager (Corporate), Claire Gore, that the new policy was streamlined with an emphasis on informal resolution, with training for managers in mediation and investigating. The Code of Conduct for Council Employees would be republished so that staff were clear about expected standards of behaviour. Claire Gore advised that the policy had been drafted by a working party and that consultation had taken place with management teams and trade unions as a result of which some adjustment had been made. It was also currently being circulated to staff panels and forums. The Committee noted that some further minor adjustments to the policy may be required to ensure alignment with the disciplinary policy which was also under review.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the content of the new FAW Policy and Procedure be noted and approved, subject to any minor amendments authorised by the Director of Human Resources and Diversity;
- (ii) that where an employee's complaint is being currently considered at the formal stage, including the appeal stage, of the Council's Grievance Procedure or the Harassment policy that these complaints continue to progress using these procedures;

- (iii) that where an employee is currently pursuing a complaint at the informal stage, that if it is appropriate to progress to the formal stage that the new FAW policy and procedure be used.
- (iv) that training and development initiatives are put in place by the Corporate Learning & Development Team, to equip managers, HR personnel and FAW Information Guides for their new roles under the new policy and procedure.
- (v) that approval be also given to the amendments to the Code of Conduct for Brent Employees, included to reflect ACAS guidance on bullying and harassment, as highlighted in Appendix 2 to the report from the Director of Human Resources and Diversity.

7. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the date of next meeting of the General Purposes Committee was scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 23rd January 2009.

8. Any Other Urgent Business

There was none.

The meeting ended at 7.15 pm.

A JOHN
Chair