



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE Tuesday, 23 February 2010 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor John (Chair), Councillor Blackman (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Bessong, Beswick, Butt, Dunwell, Lorber, Sneddon and Wharton

Apologies were received from: Councillors Colwill

1. Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests

None.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 January 2010 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising

None.

4. Polling places and stations - Elections 2010

The Electoral Services Manager introduced a report which sought approval for polling places to be used in the forthcoming local elections due to be held on 6 May 2010 and also the parliamentary elections which needed to take place before 4 June 2010. In addition to responding to suggestions made at the November meeting, the report proposed changes in the light of changes to premises since that time. The Electoral Services Manager advised that it had not proved possible to reach an agreement with Transport for London to locate a temporary hut in the bays outside Northwick Park Station for polling district NNP1. It was now proposed to position the hut in nearby Northwick Avenue, which was not on a bus route, and so previously experienced traffic delays while positioning the hut should be avoided.

Members noted that voters from polling districts NFR6 and CWH2 would be voting at Fryent Primary School as alternatives proposed at the November meeting, on investigation, were found to be unsuitable. Members reminded of the need for clear signage to direct voters for the two constituencies. The Electoral Services Manager confirmed that electors voting at the polling stations affected by changes would be notified by letter.

5. **Returning Officer Indemnity**

The report from the Interim Borough Solicitor drew members' attention to the potential liability of the Chief Executive, in his capacities as Registration Officer and Returning Officer in relation to local, London, Parliamentary and European elections, for significant costs incurred in proceedings arising from his conduct of those posts and recommended appropriate action.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the authority provide an indemnity to cover the legal costs of the Chief Executive in his capacity as Registration Officer and Returning Officer in any proceedings arising from the conduct of these posts, to the extent that liability falls upon him either:
 - (a) because the scope of the authority's own insurance does not extend to cover such liability; or
 - (b) to the extent that such liability falls within the deductible applying to the authority's own insurance;
- (ii) that for this purpose the authority approve the Indemnity Resolution set out in Appendix 1 to the report from the Borough Solicitor;
- (iii) that the decision as to whether to insure any potential liability arising out of the Indemnity Resolution should rest with the Chief Finance Officer.

(In accordance with standing orders Councillor Dunwell asked that his abstention from the above decision be recorded).

6. **Managing Change Policy and Procedure**

The Assistant Director, Human Resources, introduced the managing change policy and procedure which set out the rationale for the revisions and principal changes proposed. She referred to the key principles that underlay the approach and that the intention was for organisational change to be seen as a normal part of local authority improvement and efficiency activity. Staff redundancies would be kept to a minimum where practical and the focus would be on transferable skills and strengthening redeployment procedures. The Assistant Director referred to the importance of keeping staff informed and for any processes to be seen to be fair. She then outlined the processes for assimilation, ring-fencing and skill matching to achieve skills continuity where possible which had been revised to encourage flexibility. Legal advice had taken place to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and consultation had also taken place with the trade unions.

In discussion, the Assistant Director clarified that every effort would be made to match potentially redundant employees to new jobs and help them adapt to their new roles. She also assured that managers already took into consideration the cost effectiveness of retraining and this would continue under the new change management regime. Members also questioned the arrangements for appeal and were advised that decisions would be reviewed by a senior manager unrelated to the post, to ensure objective oversight.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that approval be give to the content of the new Managing Change Policy and Procedure;
- (ii) that training and development initiatives be put in place by the Corporate Learning and Development Team, to equip managers and HR personnel for their new roles under the new policy and procedure;
- (iii) that the Assistant Director, Human Resources, be authorised to determine the effective date at which the new Managing Change Policy and Procedure was implemented across the Council, such as to ensure by that date the above mentioned training and development initiatives have been put in place to ensure effective implementation;
- (iv) that the Assistant Director, Human Resources, be authorised, after consultation with the Borough Solicitor and then consultation with the relevant trade unions, to amend the Managing Change Policy and Procedure from time to time.

7. Appointments to Sub-Committees / Outside Bodies

None.

8. Any Other Urgent Business

None.

The meeting closed at 6.35 pm

A JOHN
Chair