



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE Wednesday, 11 August 2010 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor John (Chair), Councillor Butt (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Beswick, Lorber, J Moher, HB Patel and Thomas

Also Present: Councillors S Choudhary, McLennan and Naheerathan

Apologies were received from: Councillors Brown, Long and Matthews

1. **Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests**

None.

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 June 2010 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. **Appointments to Sub-Committees / Outside Bodies**

None.

4. **Rising to the challenges: re-shaping Brent Council to deliver the new Administration's priorities**

The Committee had before them a report from the Chief Executive which set out the challenges to be faced by the council over the next four years and the need for a council structure that would be equipped to meet them. The report referred to the current organisation which was considered to be fragmented with a traditional departmental structure which had remained largely unchanged for nearly two decades. The arrival of a new Administration and the adoption of a new Corporate Strategy prompted the examination of internal arrangements to ensure they were fit for purpose. This need was reinforced by the acute financial crisis facing local government which encouraged the need to review activities and to ensure that frontline services were protected and resources not wasted.

The committee also had before them an appendix to the report which was not for publication as it contained the following category of exempt information as specified in Schedule 12 of the Local Government (Access to Information Act) 1972:

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The Borough Solicitor advised that there would be functional appendices attached to the job descriptions of the director posts to be created and that specific agreement was needed by the committee to the grades of the director and assistant director posts detailed in Appendix 7 to the report. The Chief Executive confirmed that the assimilation process would involve interviews.

In response to questions from Councillor Lorber on the proposal to delete the Business Transformation department and how its work would be taken forward without a senior director in post at what could be considered a critical time, the Chief Executive stated that views had been expressed during the consultation on the size of the corporate centre which he did not necessarily accept as front line services had been safeguarded however there would have been a need to review the Business Transformation Department in the near future. The proposal to make the civic centre team, working on the largest council project, part of the new Regeneration and Major Projects Department had eroded a critical part of the Business Transformation Department. Additionally, most of the business management of the transformation programme was being carried out by the Policy and Regeneration Unit. The Chief Executive assured that the transformation programme could continue effectively in the absence of a single lead department as the teams involved were strong and the current projects were good examples of staff working together under effective project management. It was the intention to appoint design and build contractors for the civic centre in the autumn and he had every confidence in council staff's ability to deliver the project on time and within budget.

The committee agreed the recommendations in the report with the additional resolutions relating to noting that functional appendices would be attached to the job descriptions of the director posts and agreeing to the grades of the director and assistant director posts detailed in the appendix to the report.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that agreement be given to the implementation and timetable issues as set out in section 6 and Appendix 3 of the report from the Chief Executive
- (ii) that the assimilation and ring-fencing arrangements proposed in section 6 of the report be noted;
- (iii) that agreement be given to the generic job descriptions for Director and Assistant Director job descriptions as set out in Appendices 4 and 5 of the Chief Executive's report noting that there will be functional addendums to the job descriptions of the Director posts;
- (iv) that the gradings for the posts of Assistant Director and Directors as set out in Appendix 7 of the report be approved.

5. Any Other Urgent Business

None.

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm

A JOHN
Chair