



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE Thursday 3 April 2014 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Butt (Chair), Councillor Moher (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Hirani, McLennan, J Moher and Pavey

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillor Hopkins

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

None declared.

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 February 2014 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. **Matters arising**

None.

4. **Deputations**

None.

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

None.

6. **Stopping Up Order - Carriageway to the rear of Nos. 302 to 308 Preston Road**

Eric Marchais (Highway and Transport Delivery) introduced the report to the committee. The report requested authorisation to make a Stopping-Up Order for an area of public highway to the rear of 302 to 308 Preston Road, under 247 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA 1990). The Order was required to complete the development of the site at 302 to 308 Preston Road and provide off-street parking related to the conversion of the second floor from office use to residential use. Eric Marchais explained that the Transport Service had the land listed as public highway; however, the developer owned the freehold and lease for that area of land. A draft Stopping-Up Order, attached for the committee's consideration at Appendix 1 to the report, had been made and advertised on 20

February 2014. Two objections had been received but following further discussions and assurances were subsequently withdrawn.

The committee also had before them an appendix to the report which was not for publication as it contained the following category of exempt information as specified in Schedule 12 of the Local Government (Access to Information Act) 1972: Information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

RESOLVED:

that the Stopping Up Order for the area of public highway to the rear of 302 to 308 Preston Road be authorised.

7. HR Strategy 2014 - 2017

Cara Davani (HR Director) presented a report to the committee on the Human Resources (HR) Strategy 2014 – 2017. If approved, this three year HR Strategy and action plan would succeed the People Strategy 2010 - 2014 which had expired in April 2014. It was explained that the People Strategy had provided an overall framework for all Human Resources and people related activities. It had been aligned to the One Council priorities and built on the council's vision to be an employer of choice. The new HR Strategy would build on the previous activities and proposed five strategic aims to provide a modern and responsive HR Service, with a particular focus on delivering value for money. It had been developed in consultation with key stakeholders and had been welcomed by the trade unions, who had offered their broad support to achieve its aims. The Corporate Management Team (CMT) would have the overarching responsibility for the implementation of the strategy, supported by the HRIG which would monitor the role out of the strategy on a quarterly basis, with annual progress reports submitted to CMT for its consideration and approval.

During members' subsequent discussion, it was queried whether associated bodies such as Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) and Brent's schools had been consulted. It was further queried whether the strategy would be submitted to the Employees' Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) for discussion.

In response, Cara Davani explained that BHP had not been consulted as they have their own HR provision (although the council does offer senior HR advice on occasions). Brent's schools had not been approached as there were distinct arrangements for schools which were provided as a traded service. The Strategy had not been discussed via the Employees' JCC as there were no areas of disagreement and the trade unions had expressed their support of the document.

RESOLVED:

that the Human Resources Strategy 2014 – 2017 and associated action plan be approved.

8. Politically Restricted Posts

A report regarding politically restricted posts was introduced to the committee by Cara Davani (HR Director). It was explained that the local government Housing Act

1989 and the Local Democracy, Economic Development Construction Act 2009 made provision for certain posts in local authorities to be politically restricted. Individuals recruited to these posts were prevented from engaging in any active political role either in or outside the workplace. The purpose of the legislation was to ensure political neutrality and to prevent advice and decisions from being improperly influenced by separate loyalties. The report set out the legislative requirements in full and identified those posts affected, with a full list attached at Appendix 1 to the report. It was noted that posts were either restricted because they were specified posts within the Act or they met certain specified criteria. Cara Davani explained that the report was presented for the committee's information and that the Head of Paid Service was responsible for approving the list of posts deemed as politically restricted.

RESOLVED:

that the report be noted.

9. **Recruitment and Selection**

Cara Davani (HR Director) introduced a report to the committee detailing a new recruitment and selection policy, which if approved, would replace the existing policy and supporting operational arrangements. It was explained that the policy provided greater clarity on best practice and simplified various process to improve efficiency of use. Members' attention was drawn to the key changes encompassed within the proposed policy, which included clarification of the arrangements for recruitment panels, the introduction of specific recruitment and selection arrangements for Head of Service posts, and the procedure to be followed when using an Executive Search Company for senior recruitment. Members were advised that the revised policy would be effective from 1 May, subject to the committee's approval.

In discussing the report, the committee agreed that the process for recruiting to Heads of Service posts should include reference to engaging the relevant Lead Members where appropriate. Cara Davani advised that an addition could be made in respect of engaging key stakeholders as appropriate but that recruitment to Heads of Service posts were officer led.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the new Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedures be approved;
- (ii) that the Human Resources Director, in consultation with the trade unions and Chief Executive¹ be authorised to make such other changes as may be necessary from time to time to the Recruitment and Selection Policy and associated procedures to ensure they remain relevant and 'fit for purpose'.

10. **Any other urgent business**

None.

¹ As amended on 17 July 2014

The meeting closed at 7.38 pm

M BUTT
Chair