



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE Thursday 2 August 2018 at 5.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors M Butt (Chair), McLennan (Vice-Chair), Agha, Farah, Hirani, Kansagra (as substitute for Councillor Colwill), Southwood (as substitute for Councillor Krupa Sheth) and Tatler

Also present: Councillors M Patel

1. **Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Colwill and Krupa Sheth, with Councillors Kansagra and Southwood present as substitute members.

2. **Declarations of interests**

There were no declarations of interests made by Members.

3. **Deputations (if any)**

There were no deputations received.

4. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Tuesday 17 July 2018, be approved as an accurate record.

5. **Matters arising (if any)**

There were no matters arising.

6. **Voluntary Redundancy Policy**

Debra Norman (the Council's Director of Legal and HR) introduced the report which recommended the adoption of a Voluntary Redundancy (VR) Policy and the implementation of a VR process to inform the next round of restructures and staff reductions to meet saving targets. She explained that the purpose of the scheme was to enable savings to be made via voluntary rather than compulsory redundancy as far as possible as making someone redundant could incur a high cost to the organisation. The scheme was expected to have a positive impact on employee engagement as staff could volunteer to leave and create an opportunity for a junior colleague to be promoted, especially in cases when it had been planned to delete the job role of the latter in an upcoming restructure. Carolyn Downs (the Council's Chief Executive) added that a similar approach had been adopted when the restructure of the Regeneration and Environment Department had taken place and feedback had been positive.

If the VR policy was to be approved, the scheme would be open for applications from 3 August 2018 to 28 September 2018, following which cases would be considered at Departmental Management Team (DMT) meetings and would be forward to the Council Management Team (CMT) for a final approval.

In relation to the Equality Impact Assessment of the Voluntary Redundancy Policy, Ms Norman pointed out that while the scheme was designed in such a way that it would be beneficial for all age groups, older employees were likely to have longer service, which, combined with early payment of unreduced pension for those 55 years or more, could have an impact on the application of the affordability test in the Policy. Nevertheless, the Policy could be justified as set out in the Equality Assessment as its ultimate aim would be to deliver savings with volunteers where possible. In response to a question about differences between male and female employees, Ms Norman said no particular group would be disadvantaged as payments would depend on age and length of service. CMT would receive a further Equality Assessment when considering the impact on equality once individual applications had been made.

Members asked questions that related to mechanisms preventing people from leaving Brent and returning to the local authority at a later stage. Ms Downs said that anyone who had taken advantage of the scheme would not be allowed to be employed by the Local Authority for a period following their departure. Furthermore, if an employee volunteered for redundancy and started a new local authority job in up to four weeks after leaving, they would be required to return the redundancy sum the Council had paid them.

Althea Loderick (the Council's Director of Resources) noted that the Policy was expected to improve service planning as employees would be aware of restructures earlier and would be able to take an advantage of the scheme. As far as the calculations of payments were concerned (paragraph 3.2 of the report on page 6 of the Agenda pack), Ms Loderick said that these could be enhanced, but the multiple had to be kept in order to maintain the differentiation between the different age categories.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The contents of the Voluntary Redundancy Policy report, be noted;
- (ii) The Voluntary Redundancy Policy set put in Appendix 1 to the report approved;
- (iii) The implementation of a voluntary redundancy process commencing on 3 August 2018 be approved;
- (iv) The Chief Executive be authorised to determine whether a voluntary redundancy exercise should be implemented in accordance with the Policy on future occasions; and
- (v) An update report, containing information on the number of employees who had taken advantage of the Voluntary Redundancy Policy, be presented at a future meeting of the General Purposes Committee.

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

The Committee noted that an update on membership of this Brent Pension Board would be provided at the meeting on 27 September 2018.

8. **Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 5.50 pm

COUNCILLOR MUHAMMED BUTT
Chair