



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE Thursday 7 November 2013 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Butt (Chair), Councillor R Moher (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Mrs Bacchus, Chohan, Hopkins, Kansagra, Lorber and McLennan

Also present: Councillor J Moher

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors Brown, Hirani and Pavey.

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

None declared.

2. **Minutes of the last meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 September 2013 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. **Matters arising**

None.

4. **Deputations**

None.

5. **Time off policy and procedures**

The Committee considered a report that provided details of the proposed new Time Off Policy which would replace the current arrangements. The report was introduced by Cara Davani, Operational Director of Human Resources (HR). She explained the new policy would replace existing policies for: annual leave; special leave; maternity leave; paternity leave; adoption leave and parental leave. She continued that it would be expedient both from a management and employee perspective to bring the leave arrangements together into a single policy document. Members heard that under the current arrangement, staff in post prior to 1992 received three weeks paternity leave and those in post after 1992 received two weeks' leave. The Operational Director added that there were no proposals to change any of the leave arrangements other than to offer a consistent paternity leave entitlement of three weeks to staff regardless of length of service. Members heard that the rationalisation would reflect the Council's commitment to support parental

responsibilities in an even handed way without having any detrimental impact on service delivery and departmental budgets.

In the ensuing discussion Members emphasised that special leave for jury service should be for actual sitting days and that staff should be required to return to work for those days when they would not be required. Members also felt that within the present climate it was not appropriate to offer twelve months special unpaid leave to staff and considered instead that a period not exceeding three months would be more appropriate.

The Operational Director undertook to clarify the wording for additional leave days, review the rules for judiciary service for consistency looking at best practice and to amend the policy to ensure that special unpaid leave would not exceed a period of three months.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the new time off policy and procedures be agreed;
- (iii) that special unpaid leave period should be amended from twelve months to a period not exceeding three months;
- (ii) that the Operational Director, Human Resources (or Deputy), in consultation with the Leader and then with the relevant trade unions, be authorised to make such other changes as may be necessary from time to time to the time off policy and associated procedures so as to ensure that they remain relevant and 'fit for purpose'.

6. **Restructure of senior management of the Council**

Members considered a report that recommended some changes to the senior management structure agreed by this Committee in March 2013. Members heard that the review had arisen as a result of difficulties which emerged in the recruitment and selection process for two of the Strategic Directors. The review had also taken account of the increasing complexity and possible costs of the changes envisaged for adults' social care.

Christine Gilbert, Interim Chief Executive in introducing the report stated that successful appointments had been made to most of the senior management roles in the new structure agreed by this Committee in March 2013. She continued that Gatenby Sanderson, the consultants engaged to recruit to the vacant posts of Strategic Director, Governance and Corporate Services and Strategic Director, Education, Health and Social Care had reported a low response/quality rate following interviews and testing. The recruitment consultants had therefore decided that there were insufficient high calibre candidates to produce an appropriate shortlist and in some cases, the candidates expected a much higher salary than was being offered by the Council for each post. Gatenby had continued to search over the summer unsuccessfully.

The Interim Chief Executive therefore proposed to delete those two posts and in reference to the structure chart appended to the report, to create the post of Strategic Director, Children and Young People and also the post of Strategic

Director, Adults. She clarified that the post of Strategic Director, Children and Young People would have management responsibility for the Operational Director, Early Help and Education and Operational Director, Children's Social Care. This post would also carry more general strategic responsibility as a champion for children and young people across all council services. The post of Strategic Director, Adults, would have management responsibility for adult social care with more general strategic responsibility for adults across all council services.

During discussions, Members queried the cost of the recruitment exercise and the rationale behind the proposed changes. The Interim Chief Executive was asked to clarify the circumstances under which secondments from central government would be used to undertake senior level projects.

The Interim Chief Executive responded that the recruitment cost for each post was approximately £15,000 and that further reductions would be negotiated for the recruitment of the Strategic Director, Adults if possible. The Interim Chief Executive clarified that suitably qualified personnel, who would be further assessed, would be sought from government agencies on secondment for periods of between three and six month period. She then clarified the reporting lines in the proposed structure including that of the Director of Public Health and recommended the new structure becoming live, in line with business requirements, no later than March, 2014. Members noted that where vacant posts needed to be filled, existing acting up arrangements for Children's and Families and Adult Social Care would remain in place until permanent appointments had been made to posts in the new structure.

RESOLVED:

that the revised structure be agreed as follows:

- (a) deletion of the posts of Strategic Director, Governance and Corporate Services and Strategic Director, Education, Health and Social Care;
- (b) deletion of the post of Operational Director, Adult Social Care;
- (c) establishment of the new post of Strategic Director, Adults;
- (d) establishment of new post of Strategic Director, Children and Young People;
- (e) the reporting line changes as outlined in paragraphs 4.8 of the report from the Interim Chief Executive.

7. Appointments to Sub-Committees / Outside Bodies

None.

8. Any other urgent business

None.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm

M BUTT
Chair