

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, 19 JULY 2006**

Councillors Griffith (Chair), Adje (Deputy Chair), Patel, Beynon, C. Harris and Whyte

Apologies Lateness – Cllrs Adje and Beynon.

Also Present: Nil.

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION
GPCO13.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)</p> <p>Apologies for lateness received on behalf of Councillors Adje and Beynon.</p> <p>The Clerk to the Committee – Mr Hart advised the meeting that at the Full Council meeting on 17 July 2006 agreed the replacement of Councillor Butcher with Councillor C. Harris. The Chair asked that the Committee note the change to the Membership.</p> <p>NOTED</p>
GPCO14.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
GPCO15.	<p>PROPOSAL OF NEW HIGH LEVEL STRUCTURE FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES</p> <p>Mr Holliday - Assistant Chief Executive TABLED some supporting papers in respect of the circulated report before the Committee. (A copy of the documents will be interleaved with the minutes). In outlining the proposals as detailed Mr Holliday highlighted the issues that necessitated a new organisational structure in accordance with ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) recommendations as set out in para 7 of the report. Mr Holliday then commented on the staffing situation and transference of staff from NIS to the Local Authority as part of the 'in sourcing' programme, and the continued interim use of temporary staff. Mr Holliday referred the Committee to the detailed tabled comments of the Head of ICT and e.government at the LB Waltham Forest in support of the proposals to move towards an ITIL.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Mr Holliday for his introduction and asked if there were any questions from members.</p> <p>In response to questions from Councillor Whyte in relation to the use of staff with short term contracts Mr Holliday commented that the use of staff on short term contracts was in order to ensure deliver of the project and that such knowledge and expertise was not available from Northgate. The majority of short term contracts were for an average period of about 5/6 months, with a few</p>

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lasting for 2/3 months and a small number since May 2005.

Concerns were expressed by Councillor Patel as to the whole issue the review of the service and the difficulties that had occurred with the Tech-refresh project, and the use of temporary staff and consultants across the Authority. Councillor Patel also sought clarification that although one other Local Authority had endorsed the ITIL model was this in fact the best solution for Haringey and whether there was confidence in this proposal.

In response to the concerns Mr Holliday commented that in respect of tech refresh this had been contracted by Northgate/Deloitte and that the decision had been taken in to now manage the service in-house. Deloitte has ceased to be involved in the contractual arrangements, and Members were aware a decision had then been taken to part company with Northgate. The Council would be taking on a number of staff from Northgate under TUPE arrangements. In the interim there would be the need to use specialised temporary staff to bridge the gap between the recruitment process for newly created IT support posts in-house and training/bringing up to speed of newly appointed staff. The use of temporary staff would only be used in the peak period, and that once full and recruitment and training to the new posts had been completed trained these temporary contracts would be terminated.

In respect of the comparisons with other Local Authorities Mr Holliday advised that it was difficult to obtain a 'like for like' comparison given the historic management of the current IT service in Haringey. It was the case that some Local Authorities had split in-house and external suppliers to their IT service, and some were solely external, though it was also the case that many companies that outsourced their service were now in sourcing. Mr Holliday also advised that in terms of confidence he was as confident as he could be that the proposed structure would deliver as required. Mr Holliday also commented that he was personally pleased with the progress thus far.

In response to further concerns from Councillor Patel the Chief Executive – Dr O'Donovan advised that the report before the Committee was about recruiting permanent staff to the proposed structure and not the continuing use of temporary staff. A report would be submitted to the Committee in the autumn from the Head of Personnel detailing the current position regarding use of consultants and temporary staff.

The Head of Personnel – Mr Young concurred with the comments of the Chief Executive. Mr Young also advised of the establishment of Resources Centre, as agreed at this Committee, which would manage the use of temporary staff across the Authority, and had been in operation for 4.5 weeks and had been effective in terms of savings already. The report to be submitted in the autumn would give an update of how well the Resources Centre was operating as well as giving a picture of the cost of consultants and temporary staff.

In response to questions from Members in respect of the implementation of the structure Mr Holliday commented that in terms of the recruitment process and staff consultation, this would commence late July, August and September and that all current temporary staff had been given clear expectations of how long they would be further required to work for. There were also discussions commencing as to whether in-house staff had employment rights to 7 newly created posts and that these posts would be recruited to first in order to release a number of temporary staff.

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Councillor Harris referred to the process and the likely end date, and whether the tabled comments from the Head of IT Services at LB Waltham Forest could be incorporated. Councillor Whyte asked who were the lead officers and members in terms of the provision of the new structure.

Mr Holliday responded that it was hoped that the recruitment to staffing structure would be completed by December 2006. In terms of the comments from the Head of IT Services at LB Waltham Forest they had been received after the agenda had been despatched, but that these comments would be incorporated within the plan. In respect of managing the process it would be himself and Councillor Basu would be the Lead Member.

Mr Holliday then responded to a number of concerns raised by the Chair in terms of a number of issues in relation to the transfer requirements and insourcing risks, the recommendations of the previous restructuring and whether there were requirements to restructure IT services on a 3 year basis. In terms of the recruitment process it was likely that there would be overlap between temporary and permanent staff and that there would be some cost implications of that overlap. It was considered that the risks of having a service such as this totally in house were a higher risk in terms of operational failures to a system. In terms of restructuring there was no requirement to restructure within a given time period though it was the case generally that IT services were more frequently restructured due to changes in the systems and changing IT requirements of an organisation.

Mr Holliday further responded to concerns expressed by both the Chair and Councillor Harris in terms of risk assessment and recruitment over the period leading up to Christmas 2006.

In responding to a number of concerns expressed by Councillor Adje Mr Young responded that all staff side organisations had been consulted as to the proposals but only UNISON had responded, but that those staff affected were in fact UNISON members . Mr Holliday also advised that it was the case that authority would be delegated to the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Chair of the General Purposes Committee and that this would be made clear and stated in the milestones shown at para 7.5. Councillor Adje suggested that, and Mr Holliday agreed to provide all new members of the Committee with a copy of the project document which had been approved in order for them to be brought up to speed.

Councillor Whyte raised the issue of project managing the process and the previous difficulties that had arisen and the recommendations of the Audit Commission in this respect. Mr Holliday responded that all the recommendations had been actioned.

On a **MOTION** by the Chair it was:

RESOLVED

- i. that the drivers for the restructure as set out in section 7 of the report and the timescales for the implementation being necessitated by the high cost and risks associated with the current temporary staffing situation be noted.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ii. that the external challenge to which these proposals have been subject, as set out in section 12 of the report be noted; andiii. that, subject to the decision of the Executive on 25 July 2006 to approve the Senior Management Structure and Functional ITS structure, the Head of Paid Service be delegated authority, in consultation with the Chair of General Purposes, or in their absence, the Vice-Chair of General Purposes Committee, to implement the staffing aspects of the restructure. <p>The meeting ended at 18:55HRS.</p> <p>Councillor E. Griffith Chair</p>
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Councillor EDDIE GRIFFITH

Chair