

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, 28 JUNE 2007**

Councillors Griffith (Chair), Beynon, Bloch, Dodds, Hoban, Kober, Whyte and Stanton (substituting for Khan)

Apologies Councillor GMMH Rahman Khan

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<b>MINUTE NO.</b>	<b>SUBJECT/DECISION</b>
<b>GPCO01.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)</b>  Apologies for absence were received from Councillor GMMH Rahman Khan, who was substituted for by Councillor Stanton.
<b>GPCO02.</b>	<b>URGENT BUSINESS</b>  The Chair agreed to admit a tabled version of item 7, Statement of Accounts as urgent business as a result of the tight deadline for the production of the accounts. The tabled version incorporated cosmetic corrections to figures, with Officers keen to present the most accurate copy possible to be signed off by Members.
<b>GPCO03.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>  Councillor Stanton declared a personal interest in respect of item 7, Statement of Accounts, in respect of him being a member of the board of Homes for Haringey. He also declared a prejudicial interest in respect of item 9, Member Nominations for Assistant Chief Executive Posts, being the partner of a Council officer who could be effected by the decision, and left the room for the duration of that item.
<b>GPCO04.</b>	<b>DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS</b>  There were no such items.
<b>GPCO05.</b>	<b>MINUTES</b>  <b>RESOLVED:</b>  1. That the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes committee held on 8 March 2007 be confirmed and signed.
<b>GPCO06.</b>	<b>MINUTES OF GENERAL PURPOSES SUB-BODIES</b>  With the consent of the Chair, the minutes of the Council & Employee Joint Consultative Committee of 5 <sup>th</sup> March 2007 were withdrawn pending review.  <b>RESOLVED:</b>  1. That the following minutes of sub-bodies of the General Purposes Committee be noted:

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**Planning Applications Sub-Committee:**

- i) 26 February 2007
- ii) 26 March 2007
- iii) 17 April 2007
- iv) 30 April 2007
- v) 14 May 2007
- vi) 17 May 2007

**Pensions Panel:**

- i) 26 March 2007
- ii) 16 April 2007

**GPCO07. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2006/07**

Councillor Stanton declared a personal interest in respect of this item, by nature of him being a member of the board of Homes for Haringey.

The committee received this report to set out the Council's financial statements for approval. The statements had been prepared with the aim of giving clear and concise information about the financial affairs of the Authority to Members of the Council, the public and other stakeholders.

Members agreed to accept a tabled version of this report, incorporating cosmetic corrections to figures.

Members noted the status of the accounts of the Alexandra Palace and Park Charitable Trust, included as they were as a separate appendix. In response to enquiries over the outstanding Alexandra Palace debt, Officers stated that this was not present in the accounts as a result of permission being received from the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2004-5 to catalyse the outstanding debt, writing it out of the accounts. However, it was noted that the right to collect the debt remained, should the opportunity arise. This would then be counted as extraordinary income. Members were assured that this did not materially effect the accounts being signed off, and were further assured that this was signed off as correct accounting practice in the previous municipal year.

Members enquired as to the statement of gains and losses contained within the accounts. Officers stated that this provided a breakdown of how the Council's balance sheet had moved from one year to the next. The major movements this

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	<p>year included a re-evaluation of fixed assets and the value of the Pension Fund deficit, together with other relatively minor movements.</p> <p>Member enquired into whether Schools were included in the Council's accounts. They were informed by Officers that individual School balances were under the control of each governing body, and were thus not available to the Council.</p> <p>Members enquired as to why the Council was engaging in cut-backs when its reserves had seemingly increased. Officers responded that the some of the differences were not 'real' cash differences, indicating that the table on page 51 of the report gave a better view of the current reserves picture.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That the Statement of Accounts 2006/07 be approved as set out in the report.</li></ol>
<p><b>GPCO08.</b></p>	<p><b>MEMBER NOMINATIONS FOR THE RECRUITMENT &amp; SELECTION PROCESS FOR TWO ASSISTANT DIRECTOR LEVEL POSTS</b></p> <p>The committee received this report to nominate members from the General Purposes Committee to take part in each of the recruitment and selection processes for the appointment of the Assistant Director (Strategic and Community Housing Services) and the Assistant Director (Access and Customer Focus).</p> <p>The Assistant Chief Executive (People &amp; O.D.) stated that his preference was for a smaller panel, ideally comprising five Members. Being mindful of the short timescale for the recruitment, a five Member panel would contain a sufficient number to conduct a constructive interview whilst minimising potential scheduling difficulties.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That the panel comprise 5 Members, including one representatives from GP (not 2 as stated in the report).</li></ol>
<p><b>GPCO09.</b></p>	<p><b>MEMBER NOMINATIONS FOR THE RECRUITMENT &amp; SELECTION PROCESS FOR THE POSTS OF ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (POLICY, PERFORMANCE, PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNICATION) AND HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS</b></p> <p>Councillor Stanton declared a prejudicial interest in respect of this item, Member Nominations for Assistant Chief Executive Posts, being the partner of a Council officer who could be effected by the decision, and left the room for its duration.</p> <p>The committee received this report to nominate two members of the General Purposes Committee to take part in each of the recruitment and selection process for the appointment of the Assistant Chief Executive and the head of Communications. Members agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair, Councillors Griffith and Khan, were to be the GP representative, pending their availability being confirmed.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p>

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	<p>1. That the panel comprise 7 Members, including two representatives from GP.</p>
<b>GPCO10.</b>	<p><b>DELIVERING THE H.R. STRATEGY</b></p> <p>The committee received this report to be advised of work HR had been doing to deliver on the HR Strategy in the 2006/07 financial year. They were also informed of remaining work planned for the 2007/08 financial year.</p> <p>Members noted that this was the final update of the strategy to be produced, ended as it did in 2007. Officers updated Members on key ongoing HR issues and initiatives, highlighting the good response in the staff survey and success stories around diversity and the Health for Life programme. It was noted that a dedicated redeployment officer, appointed six months ago, had successfully engineered a 33% redeployment rate, which had saved the Council an estimated £250,000.</p> <p>Members raised a number of queries over statistics and strategies laid out in the report. Members were informed that work was on-going in reducing the amount of time between the advertisement of a position and appointment with a target of reducing it to ten weeks from the current level of twelve. Directorates were aware of demographic staff shortage issues, with tools such as the graduate scheme being used to address shortfalls in key areas. In terms of flexible working, it was noted that staff were taking up a variety of flexible working initiatives such as home and mobile working, with new initiatives being currently piloted.</p> <p>In terms of exit questionnaires, it was noted that rates of return were low, but Members were assured of the importance of ascertaining the reasons behind 18% of Council employees leaving their positions within one year of being appointed. Members enquired over the disciplinary and grievance procedure, and were informed that the length of process was closely monitored; the average period of suspension had now been reduced from 156 days to 90.</p> <p>The committee noted that a policy on stress management was currently being worked on, and a report on its implementation was due to be taken before the Chief Executive's Management Board in July. The committee further noted that the Council was working at employing more local people, particularly those from deprived parts of the borough through a variety of initiatives such as that with the College of North East London and targeted social care classes in Northumberland Park.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That Members of the committee be provided with a breakdown of appraisals completed by pay grade.</li><li>2. That Members be provided with information on initiatives encouraging young people in Tottenham to attend university.</li><li>3. That the report be noted.</li></ol>
<b>GPCO11.</b>	<p><b>COUNCIL EMPLOYMENT PROFILE</b></p> <p>The committee received this report to be advised of key workforce statistics for the</p>

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financial year 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007.

Key headlines highlighted by the profile were a £500,000 saving as a result of a reduction of sickness absence, a £600,000 saving as a result of the new agency staff contract and a £250,000 saving as a result of work ongoing in redeployment. Members noted that the Acting Head of H.R. had recently taken the Chair of a London-wide group using data to drive improvement, and that this principle was assisting ongoing work informed by the profile.

Members requested information concerning the number of grievance cases ongoing against the Council, and Officers agreed to provide this information in future profile reports.

Officers stated that work on long-term sickness absence was largely responsible for driving down the Council's sick day average, and that work would shortly be ongoing on short-term sickness absence, with a number of ideas being considered.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the profile be reported to Members again next year, and that data on grievance cases be included.
2. That HR continue to consider measures to combat staff sickness
3. That the report be noted.

**GPCO12. PEOPLE & O.D. SERVICES RESHAPING 2007**

The committee received this report to approve the reshaping of the Human Resources and Organisational Development services.

Members were informed that although the changes were partly driven by considerations of finance, Officers believed the proposed structure was superior to that currently in place and that the changes would be made regardless of any financial imperative. Members noted the work which had gone into the proposed new structure, including engagement with staff and the study of similar set-ups in other organisations. Officers were confident that the proposed efficiencies could be achieved whilst maintaining and improving performance.

Members noted that the new structure would be operational by October, and requested that the committee be reported back to in due course on the outcome of the reshaping.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That an update on the implementation of the restructure be brought back to the committee in six months time.
2. That the proposed restructure be agreed as set out in the report recommendations.

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<b>GPCO13.</b>	<b>NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS</b>  There was no such business.
<b>GPCO14.</b>	<b>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC</b>  The following business was subject to a motion to exclude the press and public.
<b>GPCO15.</b>	<b>EXEMPT MINUTES OF GENERAL PURPOSES SUB-BODIES</b>  <b>RESOLVED:</b>  1. That the exempt minutes of the following meetings of the Pensions Panel be agreed:  i)    26 March 2007  ii)   16 April 2007  2. That the exempt minutes of the following Member Level Appeals be agreed:  i)    11 January 2007  ii)   23 January 2007  iii)  29 January 2007 & 8 February 2007  iv)   1 February 2007 & 8 February 2007  v)    12 February 2007  vi)   22 February 2007  vii)  8 March 2007  viii) 14 March 2007 & 16 March 2007  ix)   20 March 2007  x)    12 April 2007
<b>GPCO16.</b>	<b>ANY NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS</b>  There was no such business.

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Councillor EDDIE GRIFFITH

Chair