

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE  
MONDAY, 18 APRIL 2011**

Councillors Meehan (Chair), Khan, Waters, Whyte, Wilson, Rice (Vice-Chair) and Bloch

Apologies None

Also Present: Ian Bailey, Belinda Evans, Stuart Young, Diana Edmonds, Dave Burn, Ros Cooke and Michael Wood.

<b>MINUTE NO.</b>	<b>SUBJECT/DECISION</b>
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<b>GPCO125</b>	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)</b></p> <p>None</p>
<b>GPCO126</b>	<p><b>URGENT BUSINESS</b></p> <p>There were no items of urgent business submitted.</p>
<b>GPCO127</b>	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p> <p>Cllr Wilson declared a personal interest, as part of the discussion on item 8, After School Childcare, by virtue of his position as a school governor at Weston Park Primary School.</p>
<b>GPCO128</b>	<p><b>DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS</b></p> <p>The Committee received deputations from Sean Fox and Andrea Holden (Employee side Representatives) on agenda items: 6) – Restructure of Haringey Early Years Service. 8) Procurement Service Function Review. There was also a deputation received from Gwen O’Garrow, a parent from Hornsey Ridge school, in relation to agenda item 7) After School Childcare. Details of their comments and representations are recorded under the relevant minute below.</p> <p>There were two petitions received by the Committee. The first is in relation to the agenda item 6, Restructure of the Early Years and the second on item 7, After School Child Care.</p> <p>In accordance with the Council Constitution, Part 4, Council Procedure rules, paragraph 11.1 – Petitions - . The Petitions were handed to the Chair of the Committee and recorded as received by the representative of the Head of Local Democracy &amp; Member Services with no further debate. The Chair of the Committee would report the Council’s response to the petition at the next ordinary meeting of the Committee. A copy of this response would be sent to the Petitioners.</p>
<b>GPCO129</b>	<p><b>FEEDBACK AND INFORMATION GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE</b></p>

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The Committee considered proposals for the centralisation of the management of all Council complaints, Member's enquiries, Freedom of Information and data protection enquiries function. In addition, an information governance function would be established to be based within the new centralised Feedback and Information Governance team. There were currently 26 officers located across the Council covering feedback and complaints functions and following the centralisation this function it would be reduced to 13. The Committee noted the consultation exercise undertaken and the inclusion of the Records Management functions and staff into this restructure. The Committee were further referred to the findings of the equalities impact assessment and union responses which were appended to the report.

The restructure was estimated to make savings of £270k, a majority of these savings had already been achieved due to directorates making reductions to these posts as part of their own restructures, and pre agreed savings and reviews. Therefore these savings were not cashable as they had already been taken by individual services.

The Committee were advised that the inclusion of the additional posts allocated to Records Management was a positive step as it would enable the Council to keep this expertise and help ensure that information is managed as legally required; enable effective filing/archiving practices to be developed, where needed, and used consistently across the Council.

The Committee enquired about how the priority of improvement and efficiency would be kept to given the reduction in posts dealing with Member's enquiries and complaints. In answer to this, the Committee noted that existing processes would be reengineered to ensure that efficiency was the key priority. This was exemplified by the changes made to the complaints process, the three stage complaints process would be reduced to two with all stage two complaints to be investigated by the centralised team. There would now also be a single centralised port for receiving and processing complaints from across the Council.

**RESOLVED**

That the proposed centralisation of feedback and information governance functions as outlined in the report and appendices be agreed.

**GPCO130 RESTRUCTURE OF HARINGEY EARLY YEARS SERVICES**

The Committee considered proposals for the restructure of teams employed centrally by the Children and Young People's Service to support the delivery of early year's provision. It was noted that at present, staff were spread across a number of service areas. The key proposal was to replace these teams with a single smaller team that would provide essential statutory services.

In response to the consultation with staff and key stakeholders, some changes have been made to some of the roles. A revised structure chart and list showing the posts in the new structure was attached at Appendix 6. There was however no change to the proposed level of saving or the role and function of the service. The

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changes listed in paragraph 6.4 were as follows:

- Line management arrangements have been altered and conveyed in the structure chart at Appendix 6.
- Two deputy head of service posts had been redesignated as lead officers for their respective areas – Early Years Lead for Early Intervention & Prevention and Early Years Lead for Vulnerable Children with Multiple & Complex Needs.
- The Childcare Support Officer Job Description had been revised to have a stronger focus on business support and contract monitoring. The job title was now a Business Support Officer.
- The 0.5 FTE 2-year old pilot project co-ordinator roles had been expanded to incorporate additional duties supporting the work of the team. The post was now full-time and the job title was now Early Years Support Officer. The grade remained at PO1.

The Employee side addressed the Committee and highlighted their deep concerns about the restructure of his service . They pointed to references in the report about the work and connections of the Early Years service to Children's Centres. The restructure of this latter service was the subject of a separate exercise. The public consultation on which would end on the 20<sup>th</sup> April and staff consultation begin. The Employee side, as communicated previously at Committee meetings, requested that the restructure of the Early Years team be deferred and considered alongside the Children's Centres restructure report by the Committee in June. This would allow staff from the Early Year's provision to be considered for posts in the Children's Centres structure. The Employee side further expressed their anxiety about the feasibility of the restructured service to deliver an Early Year's service given the reductions being made and were concerned about the future condition of the Family Information Service.

In answer to these concerns, the Deputy Director for Business Support in Children's Services explained that delays to the restructure processes in both services would have severe financial impacts with delays leading to more staff reductions. There were a small number of staff that had been identified which could be considered for posts in the Children's Centres structure and the employment ringfences would be held to accommodate these eligible staff. This delay would have a relatively small impact on the budget target for this area. In terms of the concerns expressed on the outreach work of the service, it was hoped that once the Children's Centres structure was finalised and viewed by the Employee side, they would be assured that this was a key priority for the new service. The Family Information Service would still fulfil its basic statutory function and the service was hopeful of keeping its best attributes. Information on services would be assessable with web links to the service examined to ensure maximum accessibility. The Employee side were assured that the previous job descriptions of employees subject to the early years restructure were being examined in relation to single status rulings. This was to understand if there were compensation requirements to be met. Responding to concerns about the workload of the new team, it was noted that the staff likely to be working in the new structure would be those that would be experienced and equipped to work across agencies and departments. A key task for the new service was the prioritisation of work for which management would be responsible for and

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ensuring that staff would not be overstretched. The service would prioritise support to newly registered childminders and those with weak OFSTED ratings.

The Committee learned that service provided courses for childminders on developing their educational skills with the children they looked after. These courses were run by a combination of teachers and experienced childminders. These officers worked across a spectrum of services i.e. schools, play groups, private nurseries and were primarily concerned with delivering early years foundation one (this was a key deliverable and likened to key stage 1 achievements but in an early years setting). The current service ,where applicable, was charging for this facility which was also offered to the private sector. Although, the proportion of income received from this charge was small, the Committee were assured that the service would utilise on any available options for recharging of services and generation of funding.

Some members raised queries regarding the pay scale of managers in this restructured service. In reply to this, the Committee noted that pay scales would need to reflect the increased complexities of the positions and grades and job description requirements.

The Committee noted that the new structure following changes made, as a result of the consultation, were set on page 103 of the agenda pack.

The Chair enquired about the progress of the Children and Families restructure and was advised that this was planned for completion and consideration by Committee in June along with the Children's Centres Report. The Chair requested that the Children's Centres report contain a timetable for recruitment to provide the Committee with a fuller understanding of the final shape of the service.

**RESOLVED**

- i. That the Committee note that the formal consultations on these proposals began on 03<sup>rd</sup> February 2011 and was concluded on the 14<sup>th</sup> March.
- ii. That the comments received from staff and trades unions and the management responses to these in appendix 5 be noted.
- iii. That the proposed restructure as set out in Appendix 1 and summarised in section 6 of the report, taking account the outcome of the staff consultation and management response , be agreed with due regard given to the Council's public sector equalities duties.
- iv. That Cllr Bloch's opposition to the above recommendations be noted.

**GPCO131 AFTER SCHOOL CHILDCARE**

The Committee received a deputation from a group of parents from Hornsey Ridge School who wanted to speak against the transfer of the after school provision at their school to St Aidens . This transfer of provision was a

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consequence of the Council's curtailment of funding to borough wide after school provision. The spokes person for the group was Gwen O'Garrow who reported to the Committee the exceptional current facilities provided to children at Hornsey Ridge school which were to a very high standard. On behalf of the deputation, Gwen O' Garrow expressed concern about the facilities on offer at St Aiden's which she felt were not on par with the current facilities at Hornsey Ridge school. She proposed that the school should be given the opportunity to try and increase the numbers of children attending the after school club to make the service more financially viable. The Committee heard that as part of the consultation, parents had not been given the option of considering an increase to the fees for this provision. This may have been acceptable to them given the value and necessity of the service. The deputation called on the Committee to reconsider the recommendations of the report which were to reduce Council employed staff providing after school childcare and consider their duties as an authority to provide childcare for parents and in turn allow them to work or access education. The deputation further asked the Committee to consider the need for this service by the community in Hornsey and thanked the Committee for listening to their views.

The Committee welcomed the deputation and enquired about the activity previously undertaken to address the declining numbers of children attending this after school provision. At this point, in the meeting, Cllr Wilson also declared a personal interest in his subject by virtue of his school governor position at the neighbouring school, Weston Park. Members of the deputation explained that there was little effective advertisement of the after school provision provided by Hornsey Ridge school. Following research, by the parents, there was found to be no information on government websites or local websites on this after school provision. Parents at the nearby schools of Rokesly and Weston Park had been spoken to and they showed little knowledge of the existence of this provision which further highlighted the need for effective advertising of this school service. The deputation believed that the opportunity should be given for this as this would impact on the number of children attending this provision. The Committee noted that the concept of improved PR had been suggested in the consultation period by the parents and sought further understanding of the number of children attending the after school provision. This was reported to be seventeen with children aged four and upwards.

The Deputy Director of the Children's Service was asked to introduce the report which contained proposals to curtail the Council's direct delivery and subsidy of after school childcare and to which the deputation spoke in relation to. It was important to keep in mind the context of which the reductions to a number services provided by the Children's service were predicated. This was the requirement for the Children's service to make £14.1 million of savings immediately in 2011/12. This saving target was to be met through a restructure of the service and would inevitably mean that direct services, such as after school provision and were not a statutory services could no longer be resourced by the local authority. Funding from central government was no longer provided directly to local authorities for this service. Whilst the impact was unfortunate on Hornsey Ridge school, the local authority were examining the priorities for services across the borough as a whole. It was noted that there were currently 14 after school providers in the borough which would be affected by the proposals to cease funding of these services. The Schools Forum had agreed to additional resources

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for 2011/12 only, to assist with supporting the transition of the service to those schools that are able to provide the service on a sustainable long term basis. There had been discussions with Weston Park school on taking over the after school provision to Hornsey Ridge school children but the school did not feel able to subsume this service. The local authority had held discussions with the YMCA about continuing this after school service for Hornsey Ridge pupils. This centre was located near the school and provided after school provision. The YMCA service had recently been assessed as a "good" service by OFSTED and they were able to assist and admit the children from Hornsey Ridge after school club. Arrangements could also be made for the children to be walked to the centre from the school by a teacher / school officer.

Understanding was sought by the Committee on the previous activities of the Council to increase numbers at this after school provision given that the funding was £45 per head ,a high amount compared to funding of places in other parts of the borough. It was explained that there had been previous benchmarking exercises undertaken to examine the cost of after school provision per child per head and it had found that the subsidy provided by the local authority was higher when compared to other boroughs. There had been past consultation with parents at Hornsey Ridge School on this provision. Whilst parents were eager to initially register their commitment to using the provision , this was not fully followed up by all parents. Currently there were 17 parents signed up to the service.

In responding to the deputation's concerns about the facilities at St Aidens, the local authority committed to re-examine this provision as it was understood that St Aiden's had previously had an OFSTED report 3 years ago.

The Committee were advised that ,following the commitment of the Schools Forum to fund the transitional arrangements for after school provision, this would assist with funding the walker who would be responsible for safely transporting the children from Hornsey Ridge school to their new provision.

The Committee were advised that guidance was available from the Council to the deputation party about the requirements of setting up a voluntary group to possibly manage and continue this service if they wished to explore this as an option.

The Committee noted the findings of the equalities impact assessment on the disproportionate effect of the proposals on female staff and those aged between 44-55. The Committee were advised that the Council would continue to work with schools to, where possible and an option, continue the employment of the displaced Council funded staff under different management conditions.

The Committee shared the deputations and union's sadness at the deletion of this service which had in the past been recognised nationally as setting the example for childcare provision. However, the Council were required to reduce their budget by 41 million and were not in a position to fund direct or non statutory services. It would also be difficult to fund services on the assumption of increased uptake or increased funding by users as unfortunately the reductions to the Children's Services budget needed to be made in a short term. The Chair reiterated the offer made by the service to provide advice the deputation party in examining the option of setting up a voluntary group to manage this service.

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	<p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. That the Committee note that formal staff consultation on these proposals began on 8th February 2011 and was concluded on the 9th March and that public consultation began on the 14th February and concluded in 8th April 2011.</li><li>ii. That the comments received from staff and trade unions and the management response to these in Appendix 5 be noted.</li><li>iii. That the proposed reduction in staff as set out in the consultation document (appendix 1) taking into account the outcome of the staff consultation be agreed with due regard given to the Council's public sector duties.</li></ul>
<b>GPCO132</b>	<p><b>PROCUREMENT SERVICE FUNCTION REVIEW</b></p> <p>Members were informed that as part of the Haringey Efficiency and savings Programme(HESP) a review of the Procurement function (including transaction processing across the Council had been undertaken in order to arrive at a revised Procurement structure and new model of delivery of the Procurement function .</p> <p>The Head of Procurement provided Members with the context behind the proposals being made which was essentially to centralise the Procurement structure. The Council had currently 960 live contracts, therefore this was a high spend and high risk area where good management was crucial. The department had been set the savings target of £416k which was to be achieved over the next two years with £312k allocated for delivery in this financial year. The proposed model for the Procurement function would include transactional processing, procurement of supplies and services, construction, property, commercial contract management, category management and energy management. The consultation period with staff had been completed on the 08<sup>th</sup> April and there was appended to the report a log of the changes to job titles and descriptions made in response to feedback. The service offer was set out on page 100 of the agenda pack and this had not changed since consideration by the Committee on March 22 2011. The equalities impact assessment had been updated to further reflect feedback from the consultation.</p> <p>The Employee side spoke to the Committee about their concerns on the application of ringfences which they felt had been indifferently applied. They felt that the exercise had favoured procurement staff already working in central procurement and therefore there were seen to be little opportunities for directorate staff to be successful in obtaining a procurement post. They compared the Procurement review to the Finance service function review which had used more open ringfences and contributed to staff feeling that the process was fairer with an equal prospect of a job. They highlighted the lack of information provided on the recruitment procedure , with only the standard information provided to staff in</p>

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the review which did not indicate the methods to be used in the recruitment procedure i.e. interviews or tests, limiting staff preparation. There was also substantial responses received from officers involved in the review in the consultation period which suggested that the manner of the process followed was not favoured. In response to these issues raised, The Head of Procurement advised that the function review of Procurement had followed the same process as the Finance review. The difference being that officers which had 20% of procurement duties involved in their posts were part of the review. In the Finance review officers with 50% of finance duties were included in this. The Procurement service had followed Finance and Human Resources advice at every aspect of the review .

Due to the nature of the concerns raised by the Employee side, the Committee wanted to ensure that employees felt that they were treated fairly in the recruitment process and it was important that all posts were recruited to without leaving any vacancies. The Assistant Chief Executive offered to review the ringfence proposals contained in the review in detail and update the Committee on these outcomes at their meeting on May 19<sup>th</sup>. The Committee agreed in principle to the recommendations of the report subject to receiving this update.

The Committee were informed that the revisions to contract standing orders which would reflect the changes to financial thresholds, would be for agreement by Full Council, following consideration by the Constitution Review Working Group.

**RESOLVED**

- i. That the proposed new centralised Procurement structure be approved subject to a further report back to Committee on the 19<sup>th</sup> May from the Assistant Chief Executive on the review of employment ringfences to be applied in the recruitment process to posts in the new structure.
- ii. That the timetable for implementation of the review be noted.

**GPCO133 CULTURE LIBRARIES AND LEARNING**

The Committee considered proposals for staff changes in Libraries, Archives and Museum Services in order to meet Council approved budget reductions and the loss of ABG funding from 2011/12. The proposals had been subject to full staff and public consultation . Union comments had useful and in some cases their suggestions were taken forward in the restructure. Clarification was sought on the total number of staff remaining in the service after the restructure and the Assistant Director for Culture Libraries and Learning agreed to provide this information to all Committee members following the meeting.

The Committee commented on recommendation 3.2 which sought approval to revised weekend opening hours for the Libraries service . This decision was agreed to not be within the remit of the General Purposes Committee's terms of reference and understanding was sought on whether this issue had been discussed as part of a previous Cabinet report? It was noted that this decision



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	<p>was required as a result of the withdrawal of Area Based Funding which supported the provision of this weekend service. The Committee recommended that the Assistant Director for Culture, Libraries and Learning seek advice on the correct decision making body to enable this decision.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. That the revised post changes and deletions detailed in Appendices A and B taking into account the outcome of the consultation outlined in Appendix C be approved with due regard given to the authority's public sector equalities duties.</li><li>ii. That the revised structure to be implemented from the 01 May 2011 be noted.</li><li>iii. That the level of savings to be achieved from the review in 2011/12 outlined in paragraph 11 be noted.</li></ul>
<b>GPCO134</b>	<b>ITEMS OF EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS</b>  None

Councillor George Meehan

Chair