

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, 28 OCTOBER 2010**

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

Apologies Councillor Davies, Whyte and Wilson

Also Present: Councillor Jenks, Scott and Solomon

<b>MINUTE NO.</b>	<b>SUBJECT/DECISION</b>
<b>GPCO31.</b>	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Wilson, Davies, and Whyte and they were substituted by Councillors Jenks, Scott and Solomon.</p>
<b>GPCO32.</b>	<p><b>URGENT BUSINESS</b></p> <p>This being a special meeting of the committee and in accordance with Part 4, Section B paragraph 17 of the Council's Constitution there were no items of urgent business considered.</p>
<b>GPCO33.</b>	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest submitted.</p>
<b>GPCO34.</b>	<p><b>DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS</b></p> <p>The committee received deputations from Sean Fox (Employee Side Union Representative ) on agenda items:5 – Trade Union Facilities, Duties, Activities and Time Off Arrangements, 6 – Efficiency Amendment to the Redeployment Policy , 8 – Service Functions Review Policy and Performance Functions, 9 – Service Functions Review Marketing and Communications Functions and 11 Service Functions Review - Planning and Regeneration. Details of Mr Fox's comments are recorded under the relevant minute below.</p>
<b>GPCO35.</b>	<p><b>TRADE UNION FACILITIES, DUTIES, ACTIVITIES AND TIME OFF ARRANGEMENTS</b></p> <p>Steve Davies, Head of Human Resources, introduced the report which put forward the principles of a review into Trade Union facilities, duties, activities, and time off arrangements. The review's aim was reducing expenditure on current union time off provision. Members noted paragraph 7.8 of the report which detailed the key principles to be followed in the review. The Head of Human Resources offered to informally discuss with Trade Union representatives their concerns on the findings of the benchmarking survey into trade union membership and duties carried out by London Councils which was used to inform the report and recommendations.</p> <p>Sean Fox, representing the Employee side, addressed the meeting and requested that the report be deferred and that the 6 months notice served upon and the</p>

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Employee side secretary be lifted. Mr Fox asked that due consideration be given to the present workloads of union officials. Demands for their services had increased significantly and union officials were often undertaking unpaid work to keep up with the requirements of management and members. As the agenda, for this meeting, indicated there were a number of service function reviews which would require the response of union officials.

The committee sought an understanding of the responsibility for trade union official's employment with the Council and how their employment would be affected if they were part of a restructure or service function review. The committee understood that union officials were firstly elected into their union roles and then seconded from their existing council employee role to undertake union duties. Therefore union official's substantive posts were not protected if part of a review or restructure. Following release from their union duties, officials would be subject to the same HR process as other employees.

Having heard the deputation of the employee side, the committee concluded that there be no change to principles of the review. Members recommended that there be a full and open consultation with the Employee side on the proposals contained in the report and a final report be submitted to the next committee meeting in January. Should discussions be ongoing, at this time a progress report would be considered by the committee.

**RESOLVED**

- i. To approve the general principles, as set out in paragraph 7.8, for reviewing the trade union facilities, duties, activities and time off arrangements across the Council .
- ii. That the committee receive , at their next meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2011, detailed proposals following consultation with trade unions on recommended changes to the Trade Union Facilities Duties, Activities, and Time Off Arrangements.

**GPCO36. EFFICIENCY AMENDMENT TO THE REDEPLOYMENT POLICY**

Steve Davies, Head of Human Resources, introduced an updated report on the amendments to the Council's redeployment policy. The key change being that an employee's redeployment search period will run concurrently with their contractual notice .The amendments to the redeployment policy were essential in contributing to the Council's efficiency savings agenda and enabling change processes currently taking place in the Council. Following the formal consultation and the inclusion of legally required conditions relating to staff on maternity, paternity, adoption leave and redeployees with a disability covered by the DDA, members were asked to agree the amendments to the policy. The committee were advised that existing improvements to the accuracy of establishment information enabled vacancies and posts covered by agency staff to be more identifiable and would contribute to employees needing less time in the redeployment pool.

The committee considered the deputation from Sean Fox, Employee side secretary, who raised concerns about: the short time that staff will have to find an alternative employment, exclusion of staff from future redeployment opportunities,

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the cost of potential redundancies for longer serving staff, why a voluntary redundancy scheme was not being considered, and compliance to DDA for medical redeployments. The committee noted that the trade unions would not support the revised redeployment policy.

In considering the key points of the deputation, Members sought further understanding on the impact of the amendments to the redeployment policy. Clarification was provided on how amendments will impact on staff in the middle of maternity leave, and the how the period of notice is worked out for staff and senior managers. The Head of Human Resources advised that the totality of the savings to be achieved from the amendments to redeployment policy was yet unknown but an example of a cost saving to a redeployed employee salary on SO1 grade was provided as a guide. There were questions about employees who did not want to participate in service restructures or be included in the redeployment pool .It was noted that there was no voluntary redundancy scheme in operation. Employees wanting to leave the organisation would be subject to the normal HR processes. The reason being that it was important for the employment process to be perceived as fair by all employees in the council. Consideration was also being given to the future design of the organisation.

**RESOLVED**

- i. That all redeployees be offered a period of redeployment to run concurrently with their period of contractual notice and that the period be paused when a redeployee is placed in a trial job.
- ii. That a range of assessment information to determine the interview selection of redeployees for a redeployment opportunity.
- iii. That women who have commenced their statutory maternity leave, employees who have commenced their statutory adoption leave and men who have commenced their statutory additional paternity leave and have been issued with their redundancy notice be given preferential treatment for a redeployment opportunity.
- iv. That when making a selection decision for a redeployment opportunity, redeployees with a disability who are covered by the DDA, will be considered at the same time as other redeployees.

**GPCO37. THE 2009/10 EMPLOYMENT PROFILE REPORT**

Steve Davies, LBH, introduced the report which set out the key workforce statistics for the last financial year (1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010). The committee noted that the employment profile compiled is based on information provided on 9067 staff employed in the borough. Information excluded casual /sessional staff that was used on an as and when needed basis. The workforce profile of the Council was broadly reflective of the population served . The report contained key statistical information on : ethnicity of staff, sickness absence, working patterns, gender, and length of service, agency usage, disability, and turnover and grading of staff. The committee noted the statistics regarding gender which would be relevant as future service reviews progress. Information was further provided to

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	<p>Members on the definition of part time workers and percentage of women defined as high earners and those being from a BME community.</p> <p>The employment profile was an essential workforce planning tool and information from it would contribute to strategic plans and actions by Human Resources and Organisational Development.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. That the contents of the attached Employee Profile Analysis in Appendix A be noted.</li><li>ii. That officers ensure that Equality Impact Assessments have been completed on key projects and policies before reports are considered by the committee.</li></ul>
<p><b>GPCO38.</b></p>	<p><b>SERVICE FUNCTIONS REVIEW (SFR) - POLICY AND PERFORMANCE FUNCTIONS</b></p> <p>Stuart Young, Assistant Chief Executive for People and Organisational Development introduced the Service Functions Review (SFR) of the Policy and Performance Functions and the revised service structure which would create a Council-wide centralised shared service. An earlier report had been considered by the committee, at their September meeting, and following a period of formal consultation changes had been made to the report. This included some posts being removed from the ringfence as they were better suited to a different service function review and an additional post, performance analyst, being added to the structure of the business intelligence team in response to wider concerns about the capacity of the team.</p> <p>The committee noted the deputation of Sean Fox, Employee side, who reiterated that the concerns of Trade Union officials, raised at the previous meeting on this report, had not altered. There was anxiety that the equalities function would not be given due priority in the proposed structure and this was especially concerning as there were forthcoming key issues for the Council to address, as a result of the CSR, which would require an equalities input. The committee further noted that some staff had wanted further clarification about what their employment options would be if they chose not be part of the assessment and recruitment process for the new policy and performance structure.</p> <p>In response to concerns about the equalities function it was noted that completion of Equalities Impact Assessments and other such equalities duties would remain an essential part of the policy function. The committee heard that an equalities forward plan would be compiled to ensure that Equality Impact Assessments were completed on key projects and policies in good time. The committee were advised that the model for delivery of the new centralised service would ensure that there was a skilled policy resource available to meet the policy needs of the Council. The Assistant Chief Executive and the Head of Performance and Policy offered to have informal conversations with staff who did not want to be part of the employment process for the new structure. There was sufficient time for these conversations before the assessment and recruitment stage began.</p>

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The committee discussed how policy staff with existing service specific specialist knowledge and scrutiny officers would be accommodated in the structure. Members noted that the new structure would enable the policy team to respond to the policy demands of the organisation and still use their expertise in a multi disciplinary way. It was felt that dedication to a task would not be impinged by policy officer having existing expertise in another area.

The committee discussed the independence of scrutiny officers and referred to the recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which asked for an independent and dedicated scrutiny support function to remain. The chair advised that it was the overarching role of all officers, regardless of the service that they were situated in, to provide independent advice to Members of the Council and in turn support the Member structure. **There was an expectation that the scrutiny function would be appropriately resourced within the proposed new structure of the service.** However practically the new service would ensure, that when an officer has developed a policy, they would not be asked to scrutinize it.

Following, the addition of the performance analyst post, the committee questioned whether further posts would be added and if, there were likely to be any further concessions to the cost target. Examples of potential calls on resources to the team outlined were: external inspections which would continue from Ofsted and CQC and ensuring policy implementation. The committee were advised that, at the outset, service function reviews may contain objective cost targets but as consultation and assessment of the needs of the service progress target figures could change. In answering the query on policy and implementation, the committee noted that it was important to distinguish that policy development lay with the Policy team but that implementation remained close to the service.

**RESOLVED**

- i. That it be noted that the formal consultation on the proposed centralised model for the policy and performance and the associated efficiencies had been completed.
- ii. That the proposed staffing arrangements for the strategic planning and support unit as set out in Annex 2 of the report be agreed.
- iii. That the committee note the timetable for delivery as set out in section 7 of appendix 1.
- iv. That a 6 month review of the new Policy and Performance function take place.

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<b>GPCO39.</b>	<p><b>SERVICE FUNCTIONS REVIEW (SFR) - MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS FUNCTIONS</b></p> <p>The Assistant Chief Executive for People and Organisational Development introduced the report which set out the proposals for streamlining marketing and communications functions and creating a centralised model for this service. The new structure would enable the Council to make key efficiency savings in the areas of procurement, marketing work, and staff costs. Printing services would be outsourced and there were existing printing framework contracts in place which would be called upon for a service. There would be a phased closure of the print room with a single machine maintained by an operative for a period of 12 months to provide a service to the democratic function of the Council. Printing facilities would be reviewed 12 months and the interim period would be used to develop report planning practices in the Council to eradicate the number of reports requiring emergency printing.</p> <p>The committee considered a deputation from Sean Fox, Employee side, who welcomed the changes made to the report since the last meeting of the committee in September. However the Employee side still had reservations about the focus of the review, particularly in relation to the print room service, and how savings figures had been arrived at. There had been considerable effort made by current operatives of the service to ensure a good service with complete prices offered which, in their view, was not reflected in the review findings on cost. In relation to these points the committee noted that the contract framework agreements for printing were standard agreements and would have penalty clauses attached for unmet demands. The committee agreed that they would only consider proposals on the use of procurement contracts if the cost was less than what was currently being offered by in house service.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. That the committee note the formal consultation for the Marketing and Communications and the associated efficiencies took place from the 06 September until 6<sup>th</sup> October 2010.</li><li>ii. Approve the proposals for a Marketing and Communications Service as detailed in appendix 1, and subject to the amendment at paragraph 11.5 as set out in the main report. That the committee note that this amendment will not alter the overall financial savings mentioned in the report as provision had been made for the temporary retention of some in house capacity.</li><li>iii. That the timetable for delivery be noted.</li></ul>
<b>GPCO40.</b>	<p><b>PROPOSAL FOR THE REORGANISATION AND REALIGNMENT OF CORE STATUTORY SERVICES WITHIN THE SCHOOL STANDARDS AND INCLUSION SERVICE</b></p> <p>The Deputy Director, School Standards and inclusion introduced the report which set out the proposals for the reorganisation and realignment of core statutory services within the School Standards and Inclusion Service. The changes to the service were borne out of necessity as a number of government grants, that fund posts within the schools Standard service, were being terminated by government with effect from 31 March 2011. In other cases grants would be paid directly to</p>

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schools and there was uncertainty as to whether this would include, ethnic minority achievement grant (EMAG) and support for work with Travellers, Roma and Gypsy Children. Further considerations were being given to: the reduction in resources for the Council, the ramifications of the CSR of which the impact would need to be calculated, the expected white paper which will set out the future role of Local Authorities in relation to schools. It was unlikely that schools themselves would subsume the funding of the grant aided posts. This was due to schools being asked to make separate savings by reviewing back office functions and procurement functions. This exercise would inevitably lead to reductions in school posts.

The committee noted that section 5 of the report set out the posts proposed for deletion, pending clarification of the core requirements. The committee noted that other sections of the service would also be looked at to understand if funding was sustainable to maintain them.

Clarification was sought on the future role of EMAG funding and it was noted that schools were likely to receive this as a block grant but there would not be any conditions placed on how the grant was spent.

The committee sought information on the working relationship between the Local Authority and schools. Members asked what agreements could be reached with schools to enable them to fund these posts which had been crucial to raising educational standards in the borough. It was noted that current central government emphasis was on schools working together in partnership and becoming less the responsibility of the Local Authority. This was illustrated with some posts being transferred to the control of schools. The committee learned that, even if the Local Authority were to reach agreements with schools for the funding of this post, there was not a guarantee that they could continue to fund them indefinitely. The Local Authority were undertaking urgent discussions with schools to advise them to follow their example and have a vacancy freeze in order to recruit staff that will become displaced. There would also be discussion on how the pupil premium will be spent by schools. The committee were informed that the Council was not in a financial position to fund these posts and would need to progress with the termination of posts, as set out in the report, and review of other posts in the School Standards and Inclusion service.

**RESOLVED**

- i. It be noted that formal consultation on proposals for the reorganisation and realignment of core statutory services within the School Standards and Inclusion Service began on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2010 and will continue until the 26 November 2010.
- ii. That delegated authority is given to the Director Children and Young People in consultation with the Chair of General Purposes Committee to sign off amendments and proceed to implementation following formal consultation. This is subject to there being no significant and adverse unresolved comments or substantial deviations from the proposals. In such circumstances a report will be brought back to the next meeting of the committee.

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	<p>iii. That the time table for delivery be noted.</p>
<p><b>GPCO41.</b></p>	<p><b>SERVICE FUNCTIONS REVIEW (SFR) - PLANNING AND REGENERATION FUNCTIONS</b></p> <p>The Assistant Director for Planning, Regeneration and economy, Marc Dorfman, presented the report which set out proposals for the restructuring of the Planning, Regeneration and Economy Service. Proposals would be subject to further consultation with the Employee side and final ratification by the committee. The committee noted that the number of posts in the service would be reduced to address a budget deficit which had developed as a consequence of : a reduction in income from planning and building control applications , a loss in grant funding most noticeably by the Housing and Planning delivery grant and in preparation for future budget reductions . Core staffing would be maintained in order to seek and collate external grant funding for the service. The committee were provided with a tabled addendum which outlined: the posts which could be made redundant, benchmarking information on how the services were compiled in other boroughs, and the work the service currently provided which the employees had asked themselves are put forward to the committee.</p> <p>The committee noted that the Assistant Director for Planning, Regeneration and Economy would be formally contacting the Employee side about the proposed restructure prior to the commencement of formal consultation with staff which would begin on the 8 or 15<sup>th</sup> November 2010. Following consultation with staff a final report, with recommendations, would be considered by the committee at their next meeting on the 11 January 2011.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p>i. That the restructuring proposals be approved subject to staff and Council wide consultation , an Equalities Impact Assessment being completed and final ratification by the General Purposes Committee.</p>

Councillor George Meehan

Chair

Councillor .....

Chair

**SIGNED AT MEETING.....DAY**

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OF.....

CHAIR.....