

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE  
MONDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2006**

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

<b>MINUTE NO.</b>	<b>SUBJECT/DECISION</b>
<b>GPCO26.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)</b>  None received.
<b>GPCO27.</b>	<b>URGENT BUSINESS</b>  The Chair agreed to the admission of the following items as urgent business.  i) Tabled revised financial implications and legal comments to Item 7, Introduction of a New Childcare Scheme.  ii) A tabled report entitled Appointments Panels for Director of Urban Environment & Director of Adults, Culture and Community Services. This was to be considered under Item 9, as Urgent Business.
<b>GPCO28.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>  There were no such declarations.
<b>GPCO29.</b>	<b>DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS</b>  There were no such items.
<b>GPCO30.</b>	<b>MINUTES</b>  <b>RESOLVED:</b>  That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2006 be confirmed and signed.
<b>GPCO31.</b>	<b>MINUTES OF GENERAL PURPOSES SUB-BODIES</b>  <b>RESOLVED:</b>  i) That the minutes of the meetings of the following meetings of the Planning Applications Sub-committee be noted:  - 11 September 2006 - 28 September 2006  ii) That the minutes of the following meetings of the Pensions Panel be noted:

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 15 June 2006</li><li>- 29 June 2006</li></ul>
<b>GPCO32.</b>	<p><b>INTRODUCTION OF A NEW CHILDCARE VOUCHER SCHEME</b></p> <p>Members noted the tabled amended legal comments and financial implications for the report. The amended comments provided a more detailed exposition of the legal status of the scheme, while the financial implications further emphasised the benefits of the scheme to lower rate tax payers.</p> <p>The committee received this report to outline the benefits of a childcare voucher scheme for the Council, together with implications for both employees and the employee and the employer. The report also set out an outline of further actions which were required in order to progress with scheme forward.</p> <p>Members requested that the Head of Personnel provide bench-marking information on the scheme, as well as soundings on its costs and benefits. They stated that information on the operation of the scheme in other boroughs would be beneficial before Members were to endorse the proposals.</p> <p>Further information was requested on the need for the use of a registered childminder as a criterion of entry to the scheme, particularly in situations where childminding duties were being undertaken by a member of the employee's extended family. Members also requested information on safeguards over fraud.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That the Head of Personnel report to the December meeting of the committee, providing data relating to the operation of the scheme in other equivalent boroughs, together with estimated data on its costs and value.</li><li>2. That the Head of Personnel provide the committee with information regarding the issues raised above.</li></ol>
<b>GPCO33.</b>	<p><b>RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE</b></p> <p>The committee received this report from the Head of Personnel, proposing changes to the existing Recruitment Procedure following the updating of business processes.</p> <p>The committee noted the main changes proposed in the Council's recruitment procedure. These comprised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The usage of SAP and e-forms in altering the way that information is stored and shared</li><li>- The role of the recruiting manager</li><li>- The training of Chairs, and where possible Members, of panels in recruitment and selection</li><li>- Declaring an interest and withdrawing from the selection process if any staff know one of more of the candidates outside a work</li></ul>

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	<p>situation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The requirement for the recruitment team to check the redeployment register before advertising any posts</li><li>- Agreed Response Management arrangements and the facility for applicants to apply on-line was outlined</li><li>- Amending of the method of shortlisting from weighting criteria and rating of answers to a judgement being made by the panel to decide of whether the criteria had been met</li><li>- Amending the assessment criteria at the interview stage</li><li>- Employment references to be taken up to cover the two year period prior to the recruitment exercise</li><li>- CRB disclosure certificates which show no convictions or cautions to be accepted for the purpose of agreeing a start date, pending a disclosure being requested by Haringey</li></ul> <p>Members noted that a full recruitment strategy would come before the committee at a future meeting.</p> <p>Members enquired as to the status of criminal records bureau checks, and requested that one year window be enforced for recent CRB checks. Members requested that two references remain the minimum for prospective employees.</p> <p>Members were informed that the 6 month probationary period applied for new employees, regardless of whether they came from other local authorities or not. For existing employees of the authority taking on new jobs within Haringey, a six month 'Support and Development' period applied, rather than the more formal probationary system.</p> <p>Following Member requests, the Head of Personnel agreed to discuss the policy on Appeals against Panel Decisions with the Recruitment and Retention team, to set-up a system of having full written records of all such appeals. Furthermore, the Head of Personnel agreed to ensure that the provision of sickness absence forms</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That the recommendations be agreed, subject to the changes proposed above.</li></ol>
<b>GPCO34.</b>	<p><b>NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS</b></p> <p>The committee received as urgent business a report on Appointment Panels for Director of Urban Environment, and Director of Adults, Culture &amp; Community Services from the Head of Personnel.</p> <p>The report was too urgent to await the next meeting because there was a pressing need to commence recruitment to both Director posts. The Director of Social Services was to leave the Council on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2006. The Environment Directorate is directed on an interim basis by the Director of Finance.</p> <p>It was noted that the Council had a good opportunity to attract candidates by using</p>

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a forthcoming supplement about the borough in the Municipal Journal. The issue date for the publication was to be 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2006.

Members were briefed about the arrangements for recruiting to the Director posts. It was noted that the policy in relation to Member involvement in officer appointments was contained within the Council Constitution agreed at Council on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2002. General Purposes Committee agreed a set of principles for the appointment of staff where members were involved at its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2002.

It was noted that the Council Constitution required that external appointments to chief officer and deputy chief officer posts be a non-Executive Member function carried out via the General Purposes Committee. Members noted the following proposed timetable:

- Advert appears in Municipal Journal 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2006 and Guardian
- Closing date of 27<sup>th</sup> November 2006
- Preliminary interviews held by consultants on 7&8 December (including scenario based test, Technical Assessment, and OPQ personality measure)
- Shortlisting meeting to include Members, 13-15 December
- Member Appointment Panels week commencing 18 December (plus possible stakeholder engagement)

The protocol for the composition of Appointment Panels was noted. This was:

- Leader/delegate
- Executive Member/delegate
- General Purposes Chair/delegate
- Opposition Member(s)

It was noted that the numbers against each category needed to allow for proportionality. It had generally been the case that the non-executive membership was at least equal to that of the Executive.

The Director of Personnel stated that he was considering compressing the timescale to allow for interviews to begin the week of 11<sup>th</sup> December, to avoid these occurring in the week prior to Christmas. Members enquired as to whether to advertise locally in an attempt to attract local candidates, but were of the opinion that these candidates would also read national publication such as the Municipal Journal and Guardian, where the candidacy was due to be advertised.

Members gave a preference that the panel should be made up of seven Members, comprising four from the Majority group and three from the Minority in accordance with proportionality practice. The Head of Personnel agreed to take the necessary steps to establish the panel.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the appointments panel comprise seven Members in the manner laid out above, to be convened by the Head of Personnel.
2. That the arrangements for recruitment be noted.

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Councillor EDDIE GRIFFITH

Chair