

## Minutes

### CORPORATE SERVICES AND PARTNERSHIPS POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

29 November 2016

Meeting held at Committee Room 4 - Civic Centre,  
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



	<p><b>Committee Members Present:</b> Councillors Scott Seaman-Digby (Chairman), Richard Mills (Vice-Chairman), Henry Higgins, Wayne Bridges, Raymond Graham, Duncan Flynn, Robin Sansarpuri (Labour Lead), Tony Burles and Narinder Garg</p> <p><b>Also Present:</b></p> <p><b>LBH Officers Present:</b> Melissa Sage (Head of Category Management), Luke Taylor (Democratic Services Officer), Mike Talbot (Workforce and Organisational Development Manager) and Helena Webster (Community Engagement &amp; Town Centres Team Leader)</p> <p><b>Press and Public:</b></p>
17.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>
18.	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
19.	<p><b>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2016</b> (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held 26 September 2016 were agreed.</p>
20.	<p><b>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC</b> (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>It was agreed that all items of business would be considered in public.</p>
21.	<p><b>HR RECRUITMENT PROCESS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>At the meeting of Committee held on 26 September 2016, approval was given to this Committee's next review topic on the Human Resources Recruitment Process.</p> <p>The Council's Workforce &amp; Organisational Development Manager attended the meeting and Mr Robert Peasnell, Managing director of TMP Worldwide, was in attendance at the meeting to speak at the Committee's first witness session. TMP Worldwide is a resourcing business that helps organisations recruit and retain staff across various industries, including the public sector.</p> <p>Mr Peasnell addressed the Committee, confirming that, despite a brief impact on the</p>

market, Brexit had not made a huge change to the market, where there were still more job seekers than vacancies.

Mr Peasnell confirmed it was important for Hillingdon Council to be involved in the market to secure workers who wished to move on in the future. To do this, the Council must find ways to consistently make itself desirable to potential employees.

### **Advertising**

Members heard that the more progressive employers in the market are now defining their offer to staff, differentiating themselves from other employers and improving their brand and reputation.

Articulating this brand was vital, and recently there has been a shift from paid advertising to social media and other online sites such as Youtube and LinkedIn. These avenues give the Council an opportunity to improve visibility, and progressive employers are using videos and short films to show what a working day in their business is like.

Members agreed the need to improve the brand of Hillingdon Council, but understood this was a more difficult task for public sector employers. At times there is little to differentiate between Councils outside of location and pay. The Council's Workforce and Organisational Development Manager confirmed that in the past, Hillingdon had used learning or development as a means to be different, and cited the Child/Social Care Work Progression Scheme as an example, where staff could work through a development scheme at their own pace to achieve a qualification. Developing Hillingdon's unique selling point is vital to recruitment, and Heathrow Airport could be a useful asset in this regard.

### **Reaching Appropriate Candidates**

The Committee were told of the importance to building a talent pool of prospective candidates who showed interest in roles, thus reducing the need for paid advertising. One possible way of widening this talent pool is by reaching out to former employees or those who worked with the Council or lived in the Borough. By doing this, the day-to-day reality of being an employee of Hillingdon Council is shared more accurately, and those applying for jobs will be keener to do the role, and potentially perform higher, as they have a better understanding of what the role entails.

Websites, such as 'Glassdoor', also allow the Council to tap into another network. These sites allow workers to rate their employer, and have become very prevalent in the private sector; Deloitte has stopped exit interviews altogether and now asked former staff to rate them online instead. The Council could claim their profile online, and open new doors to advertise the brand, as well as painting an accurate picture of what it is like to work at Hillingdon Council. These perceptions give a more consistent and authentic feel to recruitment, and along with the rise of advocacy among staff members, which could be improved with incentives such as referral bonuses.

Paying staff members to recruit can be controversial, although it often results in staff who fit the business culturally and improved staff retention, as those recruited have a more authentic idea about the role they apply for. Staff referral bonuses are popular among the private sector, with Microsoft recruiting around 60% of its employees from referrals, and TMP Worldwide see it as an important recruiting method.

Recruitment, however, must also remain visible, and referrals can create problems with

diversity. Others find cash rewards unpalatable, and look to other drivers to encourage referrals, such as learning opportunities, more annual leave, or donations to charity, but referrals do paint accurate pictures of what it is like to work at an employer, and also aid staff retention rates, which are much higher in the private sector than public sector.

The Committee commented on setting up an alumni network, and stated that other Councils used leavers, residents from the area, community leaders or professionals, such as teachers or doctors, to reach out on their behalf and create a network to recruit from. LinkedIn would also provide a helpful tool in doing this, and Members asked whether it was possible to actively find and manage an alumni network such as this to help put out information about the Council and its job opportunities. **(Action to be taken by Mike Talbot, Workforce & Organisational Development Manager).**

One issue raised by the Workforce and Organisational Development Manager was that there is currently not enough data on leavers from the Council, and non-voluntary leavers' opinions may be very different to those who left the organisation voluntarily or moved onto new careers. Since January 2016 the Council has operated an anonymous exit survey, but it is difficult to tap into alumni before that date.

### **Video Content and Online Targeting of Employees**

Responding to Councillors' questioning, Mr Peasnell confirmed that leading brands that use video content to help recruitment often upload them to their website, but can also use Youtube or other more targeted sites to get the information out, such as sending out embedded videos to prospective candidates. One further way to target recruits was by tapping into the personalisation of websites and using targeting adverts. Many sites now host adverts that use cookies to understand what websites a user has been looking at; perhaps this could be used to use these adverts to push the Council's recruitment process to those who have been looking for employment. TMP Worldwide are currently using a similar technique on the AA website.

### **Other Forms of Recruitment Outside Social Media**

Members raised concerns about those members of the public who may not have access to, or be computer literate, and said that the Council must also continue to use magazine adverts and word of mouth to recruit. Mr Peasnell commented that the internet is only a part of the recruitment process, and it was vital for the Council to continue using JobCentre Plus, newsagents, community leaders, and other local methods to approach all possible employees.

The Workforce and Organisational Development Management confirmed there were contingency plans in place for those without internet access, but more people were becoming computer literate in today's world, and it was a vital way to improve recruitment. Some roles, however, would have a different type of application to the online application that the Council currently employs, and many of these would be through agencies.

### **Interviews and Appointments**

The Workforce and Organisational Development Manager confirmed interview may vary, and for more senior levels these can be a series of meetings, while Skype can also be used for overseas applicants on occasions, although face-to-face interviews are preferred where possible. The Council also consulted with Trade Unions about the possibility of two-tier interviews. Applicants are made aware of the application process when applying, but the process may still be streamlined to make it quicker and try to

prevent delays that result in applicants being recruited by other employers. Follow-up calls are also vital to keep interest of applicants in case another candidate turns down the position.

Members asked about the percentage of those employed that do not make it through the six-month probation period, and the Workforce and Organisational Development Manager commented that this was considered the failure rate of recruitment. The probation period is target-based, and therefore those who did not make it through probation would have fallen below a standard level of expectations.

The Chairman asked for Councillors to feedback their thoughts on the recruitment process to the Workforce and Organisational Development Manager before the end of January to ensure they were in writing before the end of the review.

- **RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the report and officers be asked to progress the actions outlined above for the next meeting.**

22. **TOWN CENTRES SCHEME UPDATE** (*Agenda Item 6*)

The report on the Town Centres Scheme from the previous meeting was intended to provide the Committee with oversight of the extensive programme of work on which the Council is engaged to enhance Hillingdon's town centres in the period leading up to 2018.

The Community Engagement and Town Centres Team Leader attended the meeting to present the report to Committee and answer any queries, as well as answering those questions raised at the previous Committee meeting.

Members commented that the scheme had led to investment, higher occupancy rates and big brands moving into local Wards, but one of the Members observed that in the case of Northwood Hills Town Centre improvements, there had been an exasperation of congestion at the Northwood Hills Circus Roundabout. Officers confirmed that this was a consequence of the Town Centre scheme, being affected by the opening of the Heathrow Aviation Engineering University Technical College in September 2014. This new education facility for 14-19 year olds has a catchment area of a 12 mile radius of Northwood Hills, leading to peak time traffic implications which are currently under review as a traffic planning matter as part of the school's planning consent.

The Committee asked if in the future, these issues could be better understood and appreciated by all stakeholders. It was confirmed that S106 traffic surveys and school travel plans are being looked at to ascertain and mitigate impact on Northwood Hills Town Centre.

The Committee asked whether the surveys on the Town Centres Scheme were shared with Councillors, and it was determined that they were sent to all Ward Councillors. The Chairman asked that future evaluations could be shared with him for information.

Councillors heard that money has been spent on tree pits to give the area a more permeable surface. Previously trees were planted in subterranean "boxes" formed of concrete, but the tree pits keep trees healthier, as well as helping drainage. Public transport and cycle lanes have been improved from the Uxbridge Road to Hayes and Harlington Station, and more rubbish bins have been positioned in towns, to help with environmental improvements.

Members were informed that the take-up of shop grants increases over time. At first the take-up can be slow in some areas, but once one shop applies for a grant, others often follow suit. The Council asks for feedback on the grants scheme which has helped the scheme be administered and payments can now be staged, and instead of being paid retrospectively, quotes are now sourced and managed before businesses are invoiced.

- **RESOLVED: That the report be noted and future evaluations be shared with the Chairman by the Community Engagement and Town Centres Team Leader.**

23. **PROCUREMENT ACTIVITY AND FORWARD PLAN ON CONTRACTS** (*Agenda Item 7*)

The Head of Category Management attended the meeting to provide a verbal update on Procurement Activity and the Forward Plan on contracts, providing Members with a report at the meeting.

The Committee heard that there have been a number of changes to the Procurement Team over recent months, with the new intention of the team to analyse the market and look at competing ideas to come up with strategic views for future projects. There are more accurate records now being kept, with a database confirming the start and end dates of contracts, and staff members have more training, including the opportunity to study for a professional qualification.

Members were informed that the Council have a flexible approach to tenders, taking money into account but also focussing on quality where necessary. Cost may be important in purchasing stationary, but social care tenders focus on quality; where the Council have a duty of care on essential services, quality is always the overriding factor.

Councillors asked that a quarterly report on Procurement Activity and the Forward Plan on Contracts be brought before the Committee in the future as an update item.

- **RESOLVED: That the report be noted and a quarterly report on Procurement Activity and the Forward Plan on Contracts be brought before the Committee.**

24. **FORWARD PLAN** (*Agenda Item 8*)

- **RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan was noted.**

25. **WORK PROGRAMME 2016/2017** (*Agenda Item 9*)

Members discussed the possibility of moving the meeting currently scheduled on 7 February 2017 to 2 February 2017.

The Committee asked for an update on progress made in relation to the Heathrow Business Rates review at the February meeting.

Councillors requested that they be contacted with regards to future update items that are scheduled for future meetings.

Members agreed to add an update item on Procurement Activity and the Forward Plan on Contracts to the work programme on a quarterly basis.

	The meeting, which commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.51 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Luke Taylor on 01895 250693. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.