

Minutes

CORPORATE SERVICES AND PARTNERSHIPS POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

9 March 2017



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

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| | <p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Scott Seaman-Digby (Chairman) Richard Mills (Vice-Chairman) Tony Burles Wayne Bridges Duncan Flynn Narinder Garg Raymond Graham Henry Higgins Robin Sansarpuri</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Ian Anderson Melissa Sage, Head of Category Management Mike Talbot, Workforce and Organisational Development Manager Luke Taylor, Democratic Services Officer</p> | |
| 45. | <p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p> | |
| 46. | <p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p> | |
| 47. | <p>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 FEBRUARY 2017 (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2017 were agreed.</p> | |
| 48. | <p>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>It was agreed that all items of business would be considered in public.</p> | |
| 49. | <p>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN THE COUNCIL (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>The Workforce and Organisational Development Manager introduced the report, confirming that the Council has a specific Equality and Diversity policy, together with employment policies such as Recruitment and Selection and Absence Management, that cover protected characteristics outlined in the Equalities Act 2010.</p> <p>Members heard that 83% of disabilities are acquired during employment and the Council has a focus on monitoring its own staff, including employing an occupational health visitor to check on the</p> | <p>Action by</p> |

wellbeing of staff and free access to a physiotherapy clinic for staff.

The Committee was informed that London Borough of Hillingdon were awarded Disability Confident Employer (Level 2) status, indicated that the Council has an inclusive and accessible recruitment process and is proactive in making reasonable workplace adjustments to support employees with a disability to maintain productive employment.

The Workforce and Organisational Development Manager commented that black and ethnic minorities were underrepresented within Council staff, in comparison with Hillingdon residents, many staff members did not live within the Borough or London and different demographics lead to the lower BAME percentile. Furthermore, 10.2% of staff members did not specify their ethnicity. However, in contrast there is a considerably higher percentage of female employees than men, and one reason for this is the number of roles which are more popular with women than men. Furthermore, the median salary for women is higher than that of men in the Council, which bucks the national trend.

Members questioned what was being done to improve the number of employees under the age of 25, and heard that the Council were aware of the need to employ more young staff members, and hoped that the new apprentice scheme would help in this regard. Twenty apprenticeships were being advertised currently, but the Council hoped to employ 132 employees as part of the scheme.

Responding to the Committee's questions, the Workforce and Organisational Development Manager also confirmed that out of roughly 600 managers, 425 had equality training, or were currently being trained in this way.

The Committee asked for an update on the communities and demographics that are approached for roles at the Council, and it was confirmed Members would receive an update into this over the coming weeks.

- **RESOLVED:** That the report was noted.

Mike Talbot,
Workforce and
Organisational
Development
Manager

50. **PROCUREMENT MONTHLY REPORT** (*Agenda Item 6*)

The Head of Procurement was in attendance at the meeting to introduce the report, which provided a summary of current projects within the Council and the forward plan on contracts.

Responding to questioning from Members, it was confirmed that where there was only one response to a tender, this could be down to a number of reasons, but the most common reasons were that there were not many organisations in the field, or the Council's requests did not fit outside organisation's business models. However, the Committee heard that very few tenders only receive one response.

The Committee also heard that e-procurement allowed a network of contracts on record for those under £50,000, with a 80% focus on price. As long as the tenders were fit for purpose, then the Council would sign with the cheapest tender.

Members asked that the Head of Procurement introduced the next quarterly report at the meeting, but following this, an information item would suffice.

- **RESOLVED:** That the report was noted.

51. **THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE** (*Agenda Item 7*)

The Council's Complaints Manager was in attendance to introduce the report which examined the outcome of the 2014/15 Major Review into the Council's corporate complaints procedure.

Members heard that the changes implemented following the review allowed the Council to streamline the complaints process to save both staff and customers' time by taking minor complaints out of the process and allowing stage 2 and 3 complaints to be sent directly to the Ombudsman when necessary. The introduction of the Ombudsman into the process also means that it is more independent for customers.

Complaint numbers continue to fall, particularly in regards to Stage 3 complaints, which have reduced from 35 in the year of the review, to just three this year.

The Committee questioned whether the Council have been overturned in any complaints' processes, and the Complaints Manager stated that this happened twice in 2015/16. These situations usually arise on a difference in opinion, most commonly in housing appeals.

Members confirmed that they were happy with the outcome of the review, and pleased that the recommended changes have had a significant and positive impact upon the Council and its staff.

- **RESOLVED:** That the report was noted.

52. **REDUCING OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT** (*Agenda Item 8*)

The report before Members provided an update on the impact of the 2013/14 Major Review into reducing the Council's carbon footprint.

The Committee commented that they had some questions with regards to the report, and asked that an Officer be available to attend the next meeting to answer their queries on the report.

- **RESOLVED:** That the Committee request an Officer attend the next meeting to introduce the report and answer any relevant questions.

53. **FORWARD PLAN** (*Agenda Item 9*)

- **RESOLVED:** That the forward plan was noted.

54. **WORK PROGRAMME 2016/2017** (*Agenda Item 10*)

The Chairman noted that the April meeting will include an agenda item with regards to future topics for the Committee's review process. The Chairman asked that Members attend the next meeting with topics in mind for this process.

It was also confirmed that two items be added to the work programme for the meeting in June, as speakers would be asked to attend to discuss homophobic bullying within

schools and also what the Council was doing in regards to apprenticeships.

Members also asked that an update on Heathrow Business Rates be introduced at the meeting in April, but noted that should there be no details available for an update then an email should be sent to the Committee updating them on the situation.

- **RESOLVED:** That the work programme was noted, and the relevant items be added to the work programme for future meetings.

The meeting, which commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.10 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.