

Minutes

**Corporate Services and Partnerships Policy
Overview Committee
Thursday, 21 September 2017
Meeting held at Committee Room 3 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW**



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Come into effect on: Immediately (or call-in date)

Members Present:

Councillors Scott Seaman-Digby (Chairman)
Richard Mills (Vice-Chairman)
Beulah East
Jazz Dhillon
Wayne Bridges
Raymond Graham
Henry Higgins
Robin Sansarpuri

Apologies:

Duncan Flynn

Officers Present:

Luke Broome, Trainee Internal Auditor
Ross Forsyth, Regulatory Services Officer
Luke Taylor, Democratic Services Officer

24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Flynn.

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

26. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 JULY 2017

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2017 were approved as a correct record.

27. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was agreed that all items would be considered in public.

28. MINOR REVIEW I - STAFF INDUCTION AND RETENTION

At the meeting of the Committee on 15 June 2017, approval was given to this Committee's next review topic on Employee Induction and Retention at the Council.

The Council's Trainee Internal Auditor was in attendance at the meeting to speak to the Committee at the review's witness session, discussing his experience of the Council's induction process.

Members heard that the Trainee Internal Auditor had been employed at the Council for four months, and the induction involved several stages; the first day at the Council was spent familiarising himself with the organisation and the building, and meeting colleagues who worked within the team. The next stage involved a number of E-Learning modules on the Council's intranet, involving information of the role of local authorities, and what the Council does. Compulsory modules on topics such as health and safety and the Data Protection Act were completed over the next week.

After meeting colleagues, there was further job-specific training, involving a mock internal audit and shadowing of colleagues to learn more about the role. The Committee was informed that there were weekly one-to-one meetings with managers, alongside the Performance and Development Appraisal (PADA) system; there was also due to be an in-depth review at six months following the probation period.

Councillors questioned if an induction or "Welcome to Hillingdon" pack was received before or on starting, and heard that this was not the case. The contract was received before the employee's start date, and most of the information on the Council was received via the E-Learning system. Councillors questioned whether it might be nice for employees to receive a short briefing pack, along with their contract, in the post.

Responding to Members, the Trainee Internal Auditor confirmed that this was his first role at a local authority, and the information regarding local authorities was very comprehensive. However, it was possible that if someone had no knowledge of local government, then it could be a lot of information to take in.

The Committee asked if there was a personal side to the induction, and heard that the Audit department employees had coffee with new starters as a way of introducing themselves.

The Trainee Internal Auditor also told Councillors that information on the code of conduct and benefits of the role, along with other basics, was passed on by the Line Manager on the first day. With regards to other departments, the only opportunity to meet employees from different directorates was at the "Meet the Chief Executive" induction session, however, this was not an opportunity to speak to others who have just started at the organisation. Members heard that the Head of Finance meets with all new starters within the department, but there were no plans to meet other Heads of Service or employees from outside your own department and area.

Councillors agreed that the "Meet the Chief Executive" event was formal and did not give new employees an opportunity to socialise with each other or meet other new starters. It was suggested it may be useful to consider an event, or other format, that would allow new starters to meet others who have joined around the same time as them on a monthly or quarterly basis, as this would encourage networking and help

bridge the gaps between departments. Furthermore, it would also give new starters a point of contact in other departments that might be helpful to get work done.

Members questioned the political aspects of the induction, and how much a new starter would have learned from the induction process of the political system and makeup at the Council. It was confirmed that some of this was laid out in the e-Learning system, but the majority was learnt from face-to-face discussions with team members and colleagues.

The Committee commented that it would be helpful to know more information regarding the inductions at different levels of new employees, for example, whether there was a more comprehensive induction for those employees who are Heads of Service or higher grades.

Members also asked whether it was possible to receive login details for the E-Learning modules so that they could use the system and understand better what employees had to do during their induction period.

The Trainee Internal Auditor responded to Councillors' questioning regarding possible improvements that could be made to the induction process, and confirmed that it might be beneficial to have an in-depth review after three months in the role. Currently the review takes place after six months when the probation period ends, but it was suggested that moving this to three months might allow new employees to make adjustments or improvements that could help them in their role earlier in their employment.

The Committee noted that that most employees only meet Councillors at committee meetings, and it might be beneficial to have Members from both parties involved in the induction process too.

Members thanked the Trainee Internal Auditor for attending the meeting and detailing his experiences throughout his induction.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the evidence given at the witness session.

29. SAFETY AT SPORTS GROUNDS

The Regulatory Services Officer was in attendance at the meeting and introduced the report to Members, noting that it had previously been considered by the Residents and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee, but it was since considered that it fell under the remit of the Corporate Services and Partnerships Policy Overview Committee instead.

The Chairman requested that as the report had previously been sent to the Residents and Environment Services POC, that it once again be forwarded on to the Committee.

The Regulatory Services Officer informed the Committee that the Council carried out annual inspections of each sports ground in the Borough. Members heard that the majority of the eight grounds usually had attendances of fewer than 100, making them very low risk, but the limited resources of the relevant sports clubs also meant it was difficult for them to invest in renewing grounds where works were suggested by the Council.

Responding to Councillors' questioning, the Regulatory Services Officer confirmed that high-risk events, such as the Twenty20 cricket, were not held in sports grounds but required involvement of the emergency services and a risk assessment to ensure that they were safe.

Members heard that it would be advantageous for the Council to visit sports grounds with regulated stands twice a year to ensure more comprehensive checks. The Committee also commented that it would be beneficial for consultation with Regulatory Services to take place regarding any new sports developments, to ensure safety levels at sports grounds are kept to a high standard.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the report and agreed to send the report to the Cabinet Member for Community, Commerce and Regeneration for approval.

30. MINOR REVIEW II - SCOPING REPORT

At the Committee meeting on 25 July 2017, it was proposed that a review into homophobic, biphobic, transphobic (HBT) bullying take place, and at this meeting, Members were presented with a scoping report which provided details of surveys, both local and national, which investigated HBT bullying, as well as previous work that the Council had undertaken in this area.

Members suggested that further witnesses for the review could include an employee at a local A&E department that may have seen instances of violence towards members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. The Committee also expressed its support for idea of a potential private testimony from members of the public who had suffered bullying in the past, and agreed that this could be done in a private setting with officers, and possible one or two Councillors, present. It was suggested that a local LGBT Group might be able to help arrange this. Another potential witness included the Chairman of the Children, Young People and Learning Policy Overview Committee.

Councillors discussed further lines of enquiry for the review, including:

- In cases of HBT bullying, where the Council is involved, how can these cases be resolved at the earliest possible point?
- At what age are LGBT issues first taught in schools, and what are pupils taught?
- What factors are associated with effective interventions to prevent HBT bullying?

Members noted that with the change to academies, it was not possible to enforce teaching LGBT issues in schools, but information could be passed onto schools to encourage it.

The Committee agreed to discuss the following questions during the review:

- What forms of HBT anti-bullying initiatives exist in school and / or outside schools for school-aged children and young people, with specific reference to those aimed at reducing HBT bullying?
- What specific factors are associated with effective initiatives and interventions?

- How effective are these interventions in reducing the prevalence of HBT bullying and impact of bullying on LGBT children and young people (and those perceived to be LGBT/different)?
- What evidence is there that those interventions are effective?
- What examples are there of facilitators or barriers to effective programmes?

Members also outlined some changes to the proposed timeframe of the review, as detailed in the Work Programme.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the scoping report and the review regarding homophobic, transphobic and biphobic bullying be progressed.

31. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED: That the forward plan was noted.

32. WORK PROGRAMME 2017/2018

RESOLVED: That the work programme was noted, subject to the following changes:

- The report regarding Council ICT for Staff be moved to the meeting on 7 March 2018;
- The update on the implementation of the review regarding Recruitment in Hillingdon be moved to the meeting on 7 March 2018;
- Minor Review I (Employee Induction and Retention): Recommendations be moved to the meeting on 7 November 2017;
- Minor Review II (HBT Bullying): First Witness Session be moved to the meeting on 7 November 2017;
- Minor Review I (Employee Induction and Retention): Final Report be moved to the meeting on 4 January 2018;
- Minor Review II (HBT Bullying): Recommendations be moved to the meeting on 4 January 2018;
- Minor Review II (HBT Bullying): Final Report be moved to the meeting on 1 February 2018; and
- The Committee meeting scheduled to take place on 10 October 2017 be cancelled to allow further time to arrange witnesses for the reviews.