

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,  
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON  
THURSDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2006 AT  
5.00 PM

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AGENDA ITEM 2

PRESENT: Councillor D A A Peek (Chairman).  
Councillors S A Bull (as substitute for  
Councillor J O Ranger), A M Graham,  
Mrs D L E Hollebon (as substitute for Councillor P  
A Ruffles), Mrs D M Hone, M P A McMullen,  
S Rutland-Barsby.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Anne Fisher	- Chief Executive
Gerald Balabanoff	- Interim Director of Organisational Development
Jeff Hughes	- Head of Democratic Services
Tina Nash	- Head of Human Resources

290 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors J O Ranger and P A Ruffles. The Committee noted that Councillor S A Bull was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Ranger and Councillor Hollebon for Councillor Ruffles.

291 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman advised that the policy and procedures agreed at the last meeting of the Committee (31 August 2006) had been implemented.

The Chairman commented that the policies had been posted on the Council's Human Resources intranet page. A "quick link" to Human Resource policies had also been placed on the

Members' extranet  
([www.eastherts.gov.uk/extranet/index.htm](http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/extranet/index.htm)).

In support of the launch of the Human Resources policies and procedures, the Authority had held a Managers' Training Day to identify their role in the new procedures. The Authority had also provided "bite size" training sessions for staff on their rights and responsibilities under the new procedures. It was intended to repeat both of these training events. The Chairman advised that the Authority had received a great deal of positive feedback on the training provided.

The Chairman advised that, notwithstanding his absence, Councillor J O Ranger had submitted comments on a number of the issues to be considered at this meeting. The Chairman reported Councillor Ranger's comments when relevant items were being considered.

### RESOLVED ITEMS

### ACTION

#### 292 MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 31 August 2006 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### 293 PEER REVIEW FINAL REPORT

The Interim Director of Organisational Development submitted a report presenting the Peer Review Final Report.

Members recalled that the overall purpose of the Peer Review was to ascertain the effectiveness of people management across the organisation, the contribution the Authority's Human Resources function to this and the transformation of the Council.

The Committee further recalled that, at its meeting held on 31 August 2006, it had considered the Authority's initial

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draft self assessment for the IDeA Peer Review. This self assessment gave the Peer Review background information on the Council and also identified where the Council thought its strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement were and the areas it wished the Peer Review to focus on.

The Committee noted the details of a summary of the key priority areas for improvement arising from the Peer Review.

The Committee further noted that amongst the areas identified for improvement was the need for the Council to develop a comprehensive leadership and management development programme for new directors and the heads of service. It was felt that this needed to be in place in time to support the changes associated with the reorganisation and transformation of the Authority.

The Chief Executive confirmed that any development programme would form an important component in helping to ensure the Authority delivered service improvements.

The Committee noted that, in response to the Peer Review recommendations, officers would now produce an action plan. The action plan would be reported to the next meeting of the Committee for consideration. Members' suggestions as to what they would like officers to consider for inclusion in the action plan would be welcomed.

In response to comments from a Member, the Head of Human Resources stated that diversity/equality issues would form part of any leadership and management development programme. Diversity/equality training would be provided to all staff and be offered to Members. The aim of such training was to help ensure, amongst other things, that equality/diversity issues had a higher status in the organisation. In terms of member training, equality/diversity would likely form an element of the induction process for all Members elected at the May 2007 elections.

ACTION

The Committee agreed to note the Peer Review final report. It further agreed that Members should feed back any ideas for officers to consider when drafting an action plan to implement the recommendations from the Peer Review report.

RESOLVED - that (A) the Peer Review Final Report, appended to the report now submitted, be noted, and

(B) Members feed back any ideas for officers to consider when they draft an action plan to implement the recommendations from the Peer Review report.

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294 REVISED VERSIONS OF HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: MATERNITY, PATERNITY AND ADOPTION LEAVE AND GENERAL LEAVE

The Leader of the Council submitted a report inviting the Committee to consider and approve the following revised policies and procedures:

- Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave
- General Leave

The Committee noted that all of the revised policies and procedures now detailed had been approved by the Local Joint Panel meeting held on 25 September 2006. Each revised policy and procedure was appended to the report now submitted.

The Committee noted that the Authority's current policy on maternity leave did not include adoption leave as set out in the Employment Act 2002. As part of the review, general leave provisions had also been included and had been updated to incorporate both accepted customer practice and best practice outside the organisation. The policies

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took account of leave provision set out in the National Joint Council (NJC) National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service (The Green Book).

The Committee noted that each of the revised policies detailed the rights and responsibility of staff and managers across a broad range of leave situations.

The Head of Human Resources commented that further amendments to the policies would probably be required, particularly in relation to the maternity/paternity and adoption policy to account for current government proposals to extend rights on maternity and related statutory rights.

In relation to the revised general leave policy, the Committee noted that the key amendment was that the career break and sabbatical leave section had been deleted and replaced with the wording from the draft flexible working policy. It was felt that this was appropriate to do in order to avoid conflicting advice and because the new wording reflected what good employers were now doing in this area to ensure equality across staff groups.

The Committee supported the Leader's recommendation that the revised policies and procedures relating to maternity, paternity and adoption leave and general leave be adopted. The Committee also agreed that these policies should be kept under review.

RESOLVED - that the revised policies and procedures relating to maternity, paternity and adoption leave and general leave be adopted and kept under review.

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295 REVISED VERSION OF HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The Leader of the Council submitted a report inviting the Committee to consider and approve a revised version of the Authority's Harassment and Bullying Policy and

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Procedure.

The Committee noted that the revised policy and procedure relating to harassment and bullying had been considered and approved by the Local Joint Panel meeting on 25 September 2006. The Interim Director of Organisational Development stated that the revised policy and procedure was appended to the report now submitted.

In response to a Member's comment, the Interim Director of Organisational Development confirmed that training would address circumstances where it was appropriate to take informal rather than formal action under the policy and procedure. He confirmed that UNISON would be consulted on the training programme.

The Committee agreed to approve the revised policy and procedure relating to harassment and bullying, together with the implementation plan, as now submitted and that they be kept under review.

RESOLVED - that the revised policy and procedure relating to harassment and bullying, together with the implementation plan, as now submitted, be approved and kept under review.

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296 REVIEW OF ADVERTISING CONTRACT

The Leader of the Council submitted a report detailing an outline process and analysis for reviewing the Council's current advertising arrangements and to provide Members with a suggested timetable for this process.

The Committee noted that, historically, the Authority had had an agreement with TMP to deliver the Council's advertising requirements. This agency arrangement covered advertising vacant positions and statutory notices.

The Committee noted that the contractual arrangement between the Authority and TMP had recently expired. TMP had not attempted to review this arrangement.

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Accordingly, the Authority would now seek tenders for the provision of advertising services. This would provide an opportunity to review the service and demonstrate value for money and ensure an appropriate standard of service was provided.

The Leader outlined the intended process to be followed to review the Authority's advertising contract. A formal tendering process would be undertaken for the appointment of a new advertising agency.

A project team would be established to oversee the tendering process. The project team would comprise officers and a Member of the Committee.

The Head of Human Resources commented that it was important that the Authority attracted and retained good quality staff to provide excellent services to the community. The Authority needed, she added, to ensure that it was promoting the organisation in the best possible light to enable it to become an employer of choice. This was particularly true in the case of hard to recruit to posts, where the Authority was often in competition with other employers. As part of the review, the project team would be examining the Council's advertising style and accompanying literature with the objective of promoting the Authority in a positive way and also to identify a unique selling point.

The Committee supported the process and timetable for review of the Council's advertising contract, as detailed in the report now submitted. It further agreed that Councillor S Rutland-Barsby should be the Member representative on the project team.

RESOLVED - that (A) the process and timetable for review of the Council's advertising contract, as detailed in the report now submitted, be agreed, and

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(B) Councillor S Rutland-Barsby be appointed as the Member representative on the project team

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ACTION

established to oversee the process for reviewing the Council's advertising contract.

297 LOCAL JOINT PANEL - MINUTES: 25 SEPTEMBER 2006

The Committee noted the Local Joint Panel recommendations in relation to revised Human Resource policies and procedures made at its meeting held on 25 September 2006 (Minutes 18 and 19 refer). The Committee had considered the recommendations concerning the revised policies and procedures earlier during the meeting (Minutes 294 and 295 above refer).

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Local Joint Panel held on 25 September 2006, be received and the recommendations detailed therein adopted.

The meeting closed at 5.55 pm.

Chairman	.....
Date	.....