

Dionne Williams-Dodoo
Polly Dunn
Oliver Sanandres
John Cater

- Human Resources Department
- Town Clerk's Department
- Town Clerk's Department
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1. **APOLOGIES**

In advance of the meeting, formal apologies were received from Timothy McNally and Benjamin Murphy.

2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED – that the draft public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday, 3 July 2024 be approved as an accurate record.

4. **WORKPLACE ATTENDANCE**

The Committee considered a Report of the Executive Director of Human Resources & Chief People Officer concerning the City Corporation's Workplace Attendance Policy.

After opening remarks from the Town Clerk and the Chief People Officer & Executive Director of Human Resources, several Members issued their support for the paper and the retention of the minimum three day per week (60%) workplace attendance frequency for City employees in the hybrid and academic categories. It was clear that, post-pandemic, the norms around working patterns had changed fundamentally across the world and, in order to operate successfully in a highly competitive market for talented individuals, the organisation had to provide a competitive offer, both to retain and recruit the right people.

It was also vital, given that the amended workplace attendance policy had only been implemented on 2 September, to provide some stability to members of staff on a matter which had attracted a substantial amount of uncertainty over the past couple of years. In addition, the recent Staff Survey results had indicated significant opposition from the workforce for any further increases to the workplace attendance rate at this time. Members did, however, note the unfortunate wording in paragraph 18 of the Report concerning the potential for damage to staff engagement and member reputations should the recommendations in the Report be rejected and suggested that it was inappropriate to cast Members against Staff in this manner.

Whilst accepting the rationale for retaining the workplace attendance policy frequency, a Member highlighted that a large number of City Corporation staff, often on the operational frontline, were attending their designated workplace five days per week, whilst often being managed by individuals in the hybrid category (i.e., attending the workplace three days per week and working remotely for the remaining two days), this imbalance needed careful and

thoughtful consideration, particularly around managing performance and fostering an inclusive culture.

Members were also cognisant of the government's potential changes to employment legislation, particularly around flexible working rights and the likely knock-on impact these changes would have on the volume of flexible working requests should the policy for the Hybrid/Academic category be increased from a minimum of three days per week. Further updates on legislative changes will be submitted to the Corporate Services Committee in the coming months.

Several Members expressed their unease with the minimum three-day frequency, citing the recent employment statistics which indicated a slowdown in the jobs market, a Member suggested that the City would be operating in a less competitive market in the coming year and that the organisation should therefore be more bullish in bringing people back to the workplace. In addition, the Member pointed out. it was apparent that excessive home working was damaging to mental wellbeing and the City had a duty of care to employees to specify a greater degree of workplace attendance. The Member suggested that the Policy should be reviewed again in six months' time.

Separately a Member queried officers about when there would be more productivity data available for the Committee to consider and suggested that, fundamentally, the Workplace Policy should sit alongside Ambition 25 as a way in which the organisation could retain and recruit the best people.

A Member stressed the importance of monitoring the market to ensure that the organisation was able to shift to changes to patterns and norms.

In summary, the Committee was minded to retain the Policy as it stood; on behalf of the Committee, the Chair expressed his gratitude to all members of staff for their patience with these matters and thanked them for continuing to go above and beyond and consistently providing an excellent and world-class service.

RESOLVED – that the Committee:

- Made no changes at this time to the current Workplace Attendance Policy which was implemented on the 1 September 2024.
- Approved a further review in line with established policy review processes.

5. REVENUE OUTTURN 2023-24

The Committee received a Joint Report of the Deputy Town Clerk, the Chief Strategy Officer, the Comptroller & City Solicitor, the Executive Director of Human Resources & Chief People Officer, and the Chamberlain concerning a comparison between the revenue outturn for the services overseen by the Corporate Services Committee in 2023-24 with the final budget for the year.

RESOLVED – that the Committee noted the Report.

6. ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING (ERP) PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Committee received a Joint Report of the Chamberlain and the Executive Director of Human Resources & Chief People Officer concerning an update for the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Programme.

RESOLVED – that the Committee noted the Report.

7. UPDATE ON MANDATORY TRAINING

The Committee received a Report of the Executive Director of Human Resources & Chief People Officer concerning the proposed changes to mandatory training at the City Corporation.

RESOLVED – that the Committee noted the Report.

8. UPDATE ON WELLBEING AND BELONGING WORKSTREAM INITIAL ACTIVITIES

The Committee received a Report of the Executive Director of Human Resources & Chief People Officer concerning the initial activities for the Wellbeing and Belonging Workstream of the People Strategy.

RESOLVED – that the Committee noted the Report.

9. COMMITTEE'S FORWARD PLAN

The Committee receive a Report of the Executive Director of Human Resources & Chief People Officer outlining the Forward Work Plan for the Committee.

RESOLVED – that the Committee noted the Report.

10. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no public questions.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There were two items of additional business which the Chair considered urgent whilst in public.

1. The Executive Director of Human Resources & Chief People Officer informed the Committee that an article had recently been posted on the MyLondon news website which highlighted some of the results from the City Corporation's 2024 Staff Survey, namely, that 10% of Survey respondents had said that they had experienced bullying, harassment or discrimination over the past year and "that just 27 per cent of respondents agreed with the sentiment: 'Members demonstrate our values and behaviours including leading for Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion', with 26 per cent disagreeing and 46 per cent neutral".

Officers assured Members that a great deal of work was going into rectifying the challenges which were highlighted in the Survey; the People Strategy would

be at the vanguard of efforts to build an inclusive culture, and all were committed to making the Corporation the best employer it could be.

2. The Executive Director of Human Resources & Chief People Officer informed the Committee that the City Corporation's Employee Assistance Provider (EAP), Health Assured, had recently had their British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) accreditation suspended due to a BBC investigation carried out in the summer which had found that Health Assured allowed strangers to "eavesdrop" on confidential calls by listening in to the helpline without the knowledge or permission of callers.

In response, and as a priority, the City Corporation had sought information from Health Assured, it was unfortunate that Health Assured had not been more proactive in reaching out to the City Corporation and it was apparent that they were not a partner that the City would wish to continue to partner with; communications about next steps would be going out to colleagues imminently. A Member reminded officers that Health Assured had also provided assistance to elected Members and asked that the rest of the Court was kept informed going forwards.

12. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

13. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED – that the draft non-public minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday, 3 July 2024 be approved as an accurate record.

14. **AMBITION 25**

The Committee considered a Report of the Executive Director of Human Resources & Chief People Officer concerning the Ambition 25 project.

15. **DELIVERING THE PEOPLE STRATEGY PROGRAMME PROCUREMENT**

The Committee considered a Report of the Executive Director of Human Resources & Chief People Officer concerning the People Strategy.

16. **SAFETY 365 HEALTH & SAFETY ASSURANCE UPDATE**

The Committee considered a Report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the Safe 365 tool and a wider Health and Safety update.

17. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

Three non-public questions were raised.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED

There were no items of urgent business.

19. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

The confidential minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 3 July 2024 were approved as an accurate record.

20. BARBICAN ESTATE OFFICE

The Committee considered a Report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services concerning the Barbican Estate Office.

21. REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Committee considered a Report of the City Surveyor concerning the City's Real Estate Investment Strategy.

22. RECRUITMENT OF ASSISTANT TOWN CLERK

The Committee considered a Report of the Executive Director of Human Resources & Chief People Officer concerning the Member-led recruitment process for the appointment of a permanent Assistant Town Clerk.

23. MANAGED SERVICE TEMPORARY AGENCY RESOURCE - PROCUREMENT STAGE 2 AWARD

The Committee considered a Joint Report of the Chamberlain and the Executive Director of Human Resources & Chief People Officer concerning the award for the Managed Services for Temporary Agency Resources contract for the City of London Corporation.

24. ANNEX TO ITEM 4 (WORKPLACE ATTENDANCE)

The Committee received a confidential annex to Item 4 (Workplace Attendance Policy)

25. TOWN CLERK'S UPDATE

The Town Clerk provided the Committee with several updates.

The meeting ended at 4.35 pm

Chair

Contact Officer: John Cater
John.Cater@cityoflondon.gov.uk