

HUMAN RESOURCES, PERFORMANCE AND DIVERSITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

MEETING, 23RD JANUARY, 2008

Present – Councillors White (Chairman), R. Allen, Ashcroft, Hayes, R. Silvester (as deputy for Councillor J. Silvester) and A. N. Spencer (as deputy for Councillor Zaman).

Also in Attendance

Mr. D. Winstanley	-	Assistant Chief Executive
Mr. F. O'Malley	-	Head of Employee Relations and HR Services
Mr. A. Donaldson	-	Head of Policy Improvement
Ms. C. Hyams	-	Head of Corporate Organisational Development
Mr. M. Dixon	-	Principal Fairness Officer
Mr. J. Shannon	-	Area Working Manager
Mrs. V. Ridge	-	Principal Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors J. Silvester and A. Wilkinson.

Councillor White in the Chair.

11. MINUTES

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Policy Development Group held on 19th September, 2007 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

12. RESPONDING TO NATIONAL SKILLS REQUIREMENTS

The Head of Corporate Organisational Development submitted a report which presented for discussion the national, regional and local drivers for skills development and outlined what this meant for the organisation.

By way of background, members were reminded that in August, 2007 this Policy Development Group was presented with the corporate workforce plan and agreed the recommendation to look at the following areas over the next twelve months to formulate appropriate organisational responses to these key issues:-

- responding to national and local requirements for skills level 2;

- young people and apprenticeships;
- partnership/new business sector developments;
- employee retention, recruitment and workforce planning; and
- organisational competencies to reflect changing requirements of workforce.

Members were advised that the purpose of the report was to address the first of the above issues which was responding to the national and local requirements for skills level 2 (equivalent to 5 GCSE's at A-C grade). Furthermore, the report also provided an update on the work that was underway in terms of apprenticeships.

Information was provided in relation to the following areas:-

- (a) what the national requirements meant for Bolton;
- (b) the Corporate Workforce Plan 2007;
- (c) Awards/Assessments/Requirements;
- (d) Comprehensive Area Assessment and Use of Resources 2008/2009;
- (e) Corporate Investors in People Assessment;
- (f) Elected Member Charter Status;
- (g) The National Skills Pledge;
- (h) the North West Skills for Life Get On Award;
- (i) Bolton Local Employment Partnership Jobs Pledge;
- (j) the awards schedule;
- (k) the current position in terms of the national skills targets; and
- (l) how the skills gap could be addressed.

In terms of the way forward it was stated that, there would be some areas of the organisation where the skills gap would be greater, and it was, therefore, recommended that a phased approach be adopted to meet those needs. One of the options would be to carry out a skills audit in those areas to identify the existing skill levels and put a plan in place to reach those not already covered. This could be rolled out in a phased approach with the focus on one department every six months to ensure a managed and consistent approach. It was proposed that the outcome of these departmental skills audits would be addressed in the following way:-

- below skills level 1 – targeted courses;
- skills level 1 – skills for life provision;
- skills level 2 – train to gain/NVQ's; and
- skills levels 3 and 4 – review of accredited programmes.

The long-term plan would be to link development activities to the national skills framework and for skill levels to be linked to job families.

Members were also advised that the implementation of the skills plans might need a resource requirement and a further report would follow once the initial audits had been completed. Furthermore, the role of the Trade Unions learning representatives was discussed and further work was being undertaken to link their role into the skills pledge.

It was agreed that proposed way forward for the organisation in terms of future skills development, as detailed in the report, be supported.

13. ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT – THE WAY FORWARD

The Head of Corporate Organisational Development submitted a report which provided details in relation to how to build on the progress and achievements in elected member development to date.

The report outlined suggestions for further improvements for the 2008-2009 which had come from many sources and, on the basis of those proposals, the following recommendations were made to maintain the impetus of elected member development provision in 2008-2009 and to ensure that members and officers remained engaged in it, viz:-

Recommended	Achieved
Further improve induction for new members to take account of feedback from 2007 inductees and suggestions from others	May 2008
Design and publicise the elected member training programme prior to the implementation of the 2008 PDP process, with new provision considered and agreed by the Training and Development Group taking particular account of the suggestions from members, officers and others and information gleaned from benchmarking with other local authorities and external agencies	May, 2008
Implement the PDP process again managed by officers from the Corporate Organisational Development team following simplification of related paperwork and again aiming for 100% commitment	June, 2008

Each elected members to prioritise their development and commit to attending at least two events from the 2008-2009 programme, as well as using other learning methods	June, 2008
Members to share officer development events and resources where appropriate	ongoing
The member development programme and individual events to be opened to partner organisations and other local authorities where appropriate	ongoing
Place greater emphasis on evaluation of member development, especially in the longer term with a focus on outcomes	ongoing
Bolton Council to seek level 2 Elected Member Development Charter Status Via North West Employers	September, 2008
The high profile of elected member Development to be maintained both within and outside the Council	ongoing
Member involvement in provision of training for officers to increase, as appropriate, in terms of direct delivery, work shadowing, and general interaction	ongoing

In conclusion it was stated that elected member development was provided to support members to deliver the Borough's strategic objectives, therefore, steps needed to be made to maintain the particularly strong focus and impetus of member development in 2007 and to increase its impact even further by ensuring that practices were truly embedded and provision continued to improve.

It was agreed that the recommended way for forward for elected member development, as now detailed, be supported and that a copy of the report be referred to the three member development champions.

14. UPDATE ON BOLTON COMMUNITY COHESION PROJECT (PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM)

The Chief Executive submitted a report which updated members on the development of the Bolton Community Cohesion Project (Preventing Violent Extremism) following the award of external funding.

The report provided information in relation to the following areas, viz:-

- the proposal for Bolton;
- remit of the development officers;
- governance arrangements;
- project delivery; and
- resources

In conclusion it was stated that the Bolton Community Cohesion Project was a key element in preventing violent extremism and would develop further after the initial set up was completed. The timescales involved in set up and implementation in the current were tight, however, it was hoped that the project would be supported beyond March, 2008 to ensure longer term benefits.

Members expressed a view that the governance arrangements should include an involvement from elected members.

It was agreed that the report be noted and that further consideration be given to the involvement of elected members within the governance arrangements.

15. DATA QUALITY FINDINGS 2006/2007

The Head of Policy Improvement gave a presentation to members which provided a breakdown of the findings from the annual KPMG data quality review 2006/2007.

Information was provided in relation to the following issues:-

- why was data quality important;
- Bolton's approach to data quality;
- key elements;
- how data was quality assessed; and
- short term priorities

It was agreed that the presentation be noted

16. SUMMARY OF EMPLOYMENT MONITORING RESULTS 2006/2007

The Assistant Chief Executive submitted a report which summarised the results of the Council's employment monitoring for 2006/2007 and detailed the contribution individual departments made to the overall results.

It was agreed:-

- (i) that the report be noted;

(ii) that the recommendations as summarised in Section 2 of the report be adopted: and

(iii) that the reports be referred to departmental management teams and HR units to inform their efforts to change workforce profiles.

(The meeting started at 2.00 p.m. and finished at 3.50 p.m.)