

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
Thursday, 4th September 2003 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor John (Chair), and Councillors Kagan, Lyon and Van Colle (alternate for Councillor R. Blackman).

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Blackman, V Brown, Colwill, Coughlin, D Long, H B Patel & R S Patel.

1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None declared.

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the meetings held on 19th and 22nd May and 11th August 2003 be approved true and accurate records.

3. Deputations

None.

4. 2002/2003 Statement of Accounts

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Finance that presented the 2002/2003 Statement of Accounts of the Council, a requirement under the Accounts and Audit Regulations for the Annual Statement of Accounts to be approved by Committee. The 2002/2003 accounts were attached as an appendix to the report. The Deputy Director of Finance, Duncan McLeod stated that the accounts had been prepared well in advance to ensure that any delays and problems could be overcome to ensure that the statutory deadline was met. The approved and signed accounts would be forwarded to PricewaterhouseCoopers, the external auditors to formally commence the audit. He added that any material amendments to the accounts following the audit would be reported to the Committee.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the 2002/2003 Statement of Accounts be approved and forwarded to PricewaterhouseCoopers for audit;
- (ii) that the Chair be authorised to sign the Statement of Accounts;

5. Revised Policy on Religious Leave

At the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 14 November 2002, the committee considered a revised and improved version of the policy on Religious Leave, which has applied to teachers since the 1980s.

The Committee also considered as a separate issue a proposal to extend the policy for the first time to support staff in schools. It agreed that the policy be revised and consulted with school Governing Bodies. This report from the Director of Human Resources & Diversity presented the revised policy and recommended its adoption by members. The Human Resources Manager recommended the delay of the implementation of the new policy for support staff in nursery schools and education units where the curriculum is taught until April 2004. This would assist with absorption of budgetary implications and to link in with the new delegation of powers to nursery schools which will take place on 1st April 2004

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the new amended policy attached as appendix A to the report be adopted with immediate effect for teachers;
- (ii) that in view of the cost implications, Governing Bodies be recommended to adopt a new Religious Leave policy for support staff (attached as appendix B) separate from that to be applied to teachers, and giving up to 3 days religious leave a year, of which 1 will be paid and 2 unpaid, but only when their individual school's budgetary situation permits;
- (iii) that schools be recommended to continue with whatever practice exists in the individual school for offering some measure of Religious Leave to support staff where implementation of the new policy would cause budget difficulties to the school;
- (iv) that it be recommended to schools that where the existing individual practice of a school is to offer support staff a higher level of entitlement to Religious Leave than that contained in the new policy, the school continue to maintain its existing practice, as the new policy is intended to provide a floor of entitlement to support staff rather than a ceiling;
- (v) that the above provisions should not apply to Nursery Schools or Education units where the curriculum is taught before 1 April 2004.

6. **Welfare Loan Scheme**

This report from the Director of Human Resources & Diversity sought to review the existing welfare loan scheme and proposes a more robust framework for dealing with applications. The Senior Employment Relations Adviser said that the reviewed scheme would reflect current practices and provide clarity on the criteria for loans. She then outlined the main changes within the scheme and recommended its adoption.

RESOLVED:-

that the terms and conditions for the welfare loan scheme as set out in the appendix to the report be agreed.

7. **Minutes of Sub-Committees**

RESOLVED:-

that the following sets of minutes be received and agreed:-

- (i) Licensing Sub-Committee (B) – 20th March 2003
- (ii) Brent Pension Fund Sub-Committee – 6th June 2003 (Special) and 24th June 2003
- (iii) Licensing Sub-Committee (A) – 29th July 2003

8. **Sub-Committee Membership Changes and Appointments to Outside Bodies**

Corporation of the College of North West London

RESOLVED:-

that Councillor John be appointed to the Board of Corporation of the College of North West London.

9. **Any Other Urgent Business**

None

The meeting ended at 7.49 pm

A JOHN
Chair

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