



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Held as an online meeting on Monday 18 January 2021 at 9.30 am

PRESENT (in remote attendance): Councillor M Butt (Chair), Councillor McLennan (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Farah, Kansagra, Mili Patel, Nerva, Krupa Sheth and Tatler.

Also present (in remote attendance): Councillors Southwood

1. Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Colwill, with Councillor Kansagra attending as a substitute member and also from Carolyn Downs (Chief Executive) with Peter Gadsdon (Strategic Director Customer & Digital Services) attending as her representative.

2. Declarations of interests

There were no declarations of interests made by Members.

3. Deputations (if any)

There were no deputations received.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 7 December 2020, be approved as an accurate record.

5. Matters arising (if any)

There were no matters arising.

6. Review of Polling Places 2021

Sean O'Sullivan, Acting Electoral Registration & Service Manager introduced the report detailing the requirement on all local authorities to undertake a review of their UK Parliamentary polling districts and places at least once every five years. The last review of polling places took place in 2018 and came into force in February 2019.

Members were informed that prior to any election, it was normal practice to carry out an informal review of polling places across the borough looking at the experiences from previous elections and the availability of premises for the forthcoming election. Since the 2019 review two national polls had taken place, but as both had been called at very short notice it had not been possible to undertake

informal reviews for either election. A review was undertaken prior to the 2020 Mayoral and London Assembly elections being postponed, which was reported to Committee in February 2020.

Members noted the outcome of the Poling District review, as detailed in section 3 of the report. In addition to the previous change identified in relation to Alperton ward (NAL4 Abbey Estate Community Centre) two further changes had been identified for consideration as a result of the current review relating to the non-availability of polling places in Northwick Park and Kilburn wards.

The following comments were raised in response to the outcome of the review:

- (a) Looking beyond the Mayor of London and London Assembly elections in May 2021 members were advised that a full review would be required prior to the 2022 Local Borough Elections, as a result of the new boundaries coming into effect following the Local Government Boundary Review. Queries highlighted at the meeting in relation to Queens Park and Kenton wards would therefore need to be considered as part of that process on which a further update would be provided for the Committee later in the year as the work to finalise polling districts and places was progressed.
- (b) An update was also sought on the arrangements being made to deliver the May elections taking account of the restrictions in place as a result of the Covid pandemic. The challenges in delivering a safe election during the pandemic taking account of the social distancing restrictions were recognised by members who, in response, were advised of the planning being undertaken on a London wide basis. Whilst the use of postal voting would be encouraged, it had been agreed that the elections would be conducted as a standard poll, including the use of physically voting at polling stations. Although plans remained under review, it was confirmed the Brent & Harrow Constituency count was scheduled to take place at Alexandra Palace, as originally planned and would be conducted as an e-Count.

Members thanked the Elections Team for the work undertaken to complete the review and following on from the discussion and advice provided during the meeting it was **RESOLVED**:

- (1) That the polling stations listed below be adopted for the Greater London Authority elections on 6 May 2021:
 - (a) NAL4: Abbey Estate Community Centre be relocated to a temporary polling station outside of the building, unless the building renovations were completed in time for the election.
 - (b) NNP4: Northwick Park Hospital Social Club be replaced by Northwick Park Pavilion
 - (c) HKI4: The Carlton Centre be replaced by Brent Hubs Office, William Dunbar House, Albert Road
 - (d) That all other polling stations remain as agreed in the 2019 Polling District review.

- (2) That in the event of any other polling places becoming unavailable before the May 2021 elections, authority be delegated to the Returning Officer to make any further changes required to polling places for these elections in consultation with the leaders of the political groups on the Council.

7. Appointments to Sub-Committees / Outside Bodies

None

8. Exclusion of Press and Public

There were no items that required the exclusion of the press or public.

9. Any other urgent business

None.

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for, Monday 15 March 2021 at 09:30.

The meeting closed at 09:47

COUNCILLOR MUHAMMED BUTT
Chair