



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

**Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 22 June 2026 at
11:15 am**

PRESENT: Councillor M Butt (Chair), Councillor Grahl (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Georgiou, Johnson, Kansagra, Knight Perrin and Unger

1. Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Clinton with Councillor Unger attending as substitute.

2. Declarations of interests

There were no declarations of interests made during the meeting.

3. Deputations (if any)

There were no deputations received.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 30 March 2026 be approved as a correct record.

5. Matters arising (if any)

There were no matters arising.

6. Contractual Change to Probationary Periods

Councillor Grahl (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources) supported by Pat Chen (Senior HR Business Partner) introduced a report seeking approval to make a contractual change as of 1 July 2026 (as a result of the Employment Rights Act 2025) to the Council's probation period for new starters from 6 months to 4 months and reduce the probation extension period from 13 weeks to 4 weeks.

In presenting the report, it was highlighted that the Employment Rights Act 2025 had introduced significant improvements to workers' rights, including the extension of statutory sick pay to all employees, and the strengthening of protections against unfair dismissal for all workers. In light of these changes, members were advised that this report correspondingly acted to reduce the probationary period from 6 months to 4 months, in order to ensure that decisions regarding suitability for confirmed

employment were made in a timely manner. It was further noted that the revised policy set out updated assessment periods and placed a greater emphasis on providing support to staff who were new to the Council. Confirmation was also provided that the trade unions had been consulted (7 May 2026) on the changes and were in agreement with the policy and procedures and the required contractual change.

Having thanked Councillor Grahl (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources) and Pat Chen (Senior HR Business Partner) for introducing the report, the Chair then moved on to invite questions and comments from the Committee, with the following comments highlighted:

- As an initial query, members sought details on how many employees would be affected by the proposed changes in comparison to the previous policy. In response, Krupa Peshavaria (HR Business Partner) noted that, from 1 July 2026, the changes were expected to affect approximately 70 new starters.
- Supplementary questions were raised regarding the number of unfair dismissal complaints previously received compared to the amount of unfair dismissal claims anticipated as a result of the proposed changes. Further questions were also raised in relation to the financial risk associated with the proposals, particularly with regard to the potential unfair dismissal claims. In response, Pat Chen (Senior HR Business Partner) advised that the Council had not historically experienced a high volume of unfair dismissal claims as the length of probation periods had previously been longer and had been managed effectively. It was explained that the rationale for the change reflected recent changes to employment legislation, under which the qualifying period required to bring an unfair dismissal claim had been reduced from 2 years to 6 months. Members were further advised that the volume of unfair dismissal claims were not anticipated to rise significantly; however, it was noted that the revised threshold increased both the financial and reputational risks for the Council, as employees were now able to bring claims at an earlier stage.
- Clarification was sought by members as to whether the implementation of the proposed changes would be applied universally or whether certain categories of employees would be exempt. In response, Pat Chen (Senior HR Business Partner) confirmed that the changes would apply solely to new employees joining from outside the organisation with effect from 1 July 2026, with the exception of specific groups, such as social workers, who were subject to a defined probationary period through the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE). It was confirmed that the changes would not apply to internal transfers within the Council.

Having thanked all those involved for their contributions to the discussion and consideration of the item, it was **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To approve the contractual change required to the probation period for all new starters as of 1 July 2026 from 6 months to 4 months.
- (2) To approve the contractual change for reducing the probation extension period from up to 13 weeks to up to 4 weeks.

7. Update on Amendments to Terms and Conditions

Councillor Grahl (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources) supported by Pat Chen (Senior HR Business Partner) introduced a report updating the Committee on the implementation of changes to terms and conditions and presenting the handbook that had been developed which detailed terms and conditions and formed the collective agreement with the trade unions.

In presenting the report, members were reminded that in October 2025, the General Purposes Committee had been asked to approve proposed changes to terms and conditions and to start consultation with staff and trade unions on the changes, which followed a review of pay and allowances to update the respective policies and address a number of inconsistencies in the way they were being applied, leading to disparity in payments to different groups of staff. Members were informed that consultation had taken place with staff and trade unions during November and December 2025 with the changes agreed as a result (outlined within section 3.2 of the report) having been implemented between January and April 2026. It was noted that the changes aimed to reduce financial commitments and introduce greater governance and oversight in relation to payments. Members were advised that the revised approach provided a more consistent, fair and transparent framework for all staff with the updated handbook having also been developed to provide an overview of the main terms and conditions developed and provide the basis of the collective agreement reached with the trade unions.

Having thanked Councillor Grahl (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources) and Pat Chen (Senior HR Business Partner) for introducing the report, the Chair then moved on to invite questions and comments from the Committee, with the following comments noted:

- As an initial query, members were keen to seek details on whether the proposed changes would result in any savings or additional expenditure. In response, Pat Chen (Senior HR Business Partner) advised that the changes were expected to generate savings overall. It was explained that the introduction of standardised payments had reduced the risk of overpayments. Members were further advised that the move away from previous GLPC based arrangements, towards the application of plain time rates, together with improved governance of standby payments, had contributed to reducing overall costs.
- As a further issue highlighted, members enquired about whether trade unions had been consulted on the proposed changes, to which Pat Chen (Senior HR Business Partner) confirmed that a local agreement had been formed with the trade unions who were in agreement with the proposed changes.

Having thanked all those involved for their contributions to the discussion and consideration of the item, it was **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To note the updates provided within the report and endorse the Terms & Condition Handbook, as detailed within Appendix 1 of the report.

- (2) To note the outline of future work being undertaken in relation to additional payments for certain categories of staff and the payment of expenses.

8. **Review of Representation of Political Groups and Appointments**

James Kinsella (Governance & Scrutiny Manager) introduced a report from the Corporate Director Finance & Resources detailing the outcome of a review on the representation of political groups on those Sub Committees appointed by the General Purposes Committee.

Members were advised this followed the review undertaken at the Annual Council meeting on 20 May 2026 relating to the representation of political groups on the Council's main committees. It was noted that the purpose of the review was to ensure that the allocation of seats reflected the current political balance of the Council following the local borough elections in May 2026. The Committee noted that the General Purposes Committee had 3 Sub Committees; namely, the Senior Staff Appointments Sub Committee, the Staff Appeals Sub Committee, and the Pension Fund Sub Committee, to which the political balance requirements applied. Attention was then drawn to section 3.2 of the committee report, which detailed the basis upon which the political balance requirements had been applied for the purpose of the review, including the allocation of seats between political groups. Members heard that, in accordance with the principles set out in the report, the final seat out of the 7 available for allocation on the Pension Fund Sub Committee fell to be determined between the Conservative Group and the Liberal Democrats Group. It was confirmed that, following consultation with the relevant Group Leaders, it had been agreed, subject to the approval of the General Purposes Committee, that this seat would be allocated to the Conservative Group.

The Committee was therefore asked to approve the outcome of the review as set out in the report and to approve the appointments to the Sub Committees, as nominated by each political group, which were subsequently detailed under item 9 on the agenda.

As a result, it was **RESOLVED** on the basis of the current membership of the Council:

- (1) To agree the size of each sub-committee to be appointed by the Committee.
- (2) To agree the allocation of seats to political groups on each of the sub committees in accordance with political balance rules, as detailed in section 3 of the report; and
- (3) To appoint Chairs and Vice Chairs, members and substitutes to each Sub-committee (to be confirmed under Item 9 of the agenda) giving effect to the wishes of the political group(s) allocated the seats.

9. **Appointments to the General Purposes Sub-Committees**

Following on from Item 8 above, Councillor Muhammed Butt introduced an item setting out the proposed appointments to the General Purposes Sub-committees for the 2026-2027 Municipal Year.

As a result, it **RESOLVED** to agree the following appointments to the General Purposes Sub-Committees for the 2026 - 2027 Municipal Year:

SENIOR STAFF APPOINTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE

M BUTT (C)	LABOUR
GRAHL	LABOUR
KANSAGRA	CONSERVATIVE
GEORGIU	LIBERAL DEMOCRATS
MITCHELL	GREEN

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS:

LABOUR: DIXON, KNIGHT,
CONSERVATIVE: MISHRA & MISTRY
LIBERAL DEMOCRATS: LORBER & UNGER
GREEN: AMADHI MOGHADDAM & RYAN

SENIOR STAFF APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEE

M BUTT (C)	LABOUR
GRAHL	LABOUR
KANSAGRA	CONSERVATIVE
LORBER	LIBERAL DEMOCRATS
MITCHELL	GREEN

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS:

LABOUR: DIXON, KNIGHT,
CONSERVATIVE: MISHRA & MISTRY
LIBERAL DEMOCRATS: GEORGIU & UNGER
GREEN: RYAN & WARSAME

BRENT PENSION FUND SUB-COMMITTEE

BURN (C)	LABOUR
ANDERSON	LABOUR
I.AHMED	LABOUR
KANSAGRA	CONSERVATIVE
H.PATEL	CONSERVATIVE
BROWN	LIBERAL DEMOCRATS
RYAN	GREEN

CO-OPTED NON-VOTING:

ELIZABETH BANKOLE (UNISON)

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS:

LABOUR: AGHA, BAJWA, CHOUDRY, THOAMS
CONSERVATIVE: CHOWDHURY & DO ROSARIO
LIBERAL DEMOCRATS: LORBER & UNGER
GREEN: GALLAGHER & PERRIN

BRENT PENSION BOARD

FULL MEMBERS:

DAVID EWART (C)
S.BUTT
DAR

INDEPENDENT CHAIR (31.12.2026)

LABOUR

LABOUR

CHRIS BALA
BOLA GEORGE
ROBERT WHEELER
VACANCY
COUNCIL)

PENSION SCHEME MEMBER
TRADE UNION (UNISON) MEMBER
TRADE UNION (GMB) MEMBER
EMPLOYER MEMBER (NON-BRENT

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS:

No provision is included within the Boards Terms of Reference for substitute members.

10. Exclusion of Press and Public

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

11. Any other urgent business

No items of urgent business were raised at the meeting.

The meeting closed at 11:30 am

COUNCILLOR MUHAMMED BUTT
Chair