



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Held as an online virtual meeting on Tuesday 29 September 2020 at 10.00 am

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

1. Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members

None received.

Councillor Butt, as Chair, took the opportunity to formally welcome Councillor Nerva to his first meeting as a member of the Committee.

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 Monday 7 September 2020 be approved as an accurate record.

5. Matters Arising (if any)

There were no matters arising.

6. Apprentice Pay Rates

Martin Williams, Head of Human Resources, introduced the report detailing the outcome of a review of apprenticeship pay rates following approval of the Apprenticeship Strategy by Cabinet in October 2017 and development of the associated Action Plan.

The Committee noted

- That the Apprenticeship Strategy and associated action plan for 2020 onwards had set out the key areas of activity that would lead the council to increase the take-up of apprenticeships in Brent and to utilise the opportunity of the Apprenticeship Levy to support career progression.

- The progress made in implementing the strategy to support workforce development and address skills gaps as detailed in section 3.1 of the report. Given the increase in standards now available, the Council has been able to better align apprenticeships with key skill shortage areas, which had resulted in a shift from apprenticeships focussed on business administration and customer service standards at Levels 2 and 3 to a wider spread across different areas from Level 2 to 7.
- The current and previous Pay Rates as detailed in 3.4 of the report reflected the increase in the National Living and London Living Wages. As the rate agreed for Level 3 apprentices was not aligned to a national rate, this had not increased since the last review and as a result of this, Level 3 apprentices were currently paid at a lower level than those at Level 2.
- Following the review of existing pay rates (informed by benchmarking with other London Boroughs) it was being proposed that Level 2 and 3 apprentices were paid at the National Living Wage (NLW) rate (applicable to those aged over 25) irrespective of age and the London Living Wage (LLW) as a minimum for Level 4 apprentices and above. Given the small number of Level 2 apprentices within the Council, there was no longer the need for a differential between Levels 2 and 3.
- In recognition of the entry criteria for higher-level apprenticeships and in order to attract and retain individuals in areas with specific skills shortage, it was proposed that these could be paid at a rate above the LLW subject to agreement by the relevant Director in consultation with the Head of HR, in line with the Market Supplements Policy.

During the discussions that followed, members welcomed the positive progress made in terms of the number and quality of apprenticeships being offered. As a result of a request at the meeting, it was agreed that a further breakdown would be provided for members outside of the meeting on the number of apprentices currently employed across the Council and at what level. It was also confirmed that subject to approval, the new rates of pay would be backdated to April 2020 with any annual uplift aligned to changes in the LLW or NLW. Members were also keen to ensure that the necessary links were established between the opportunities being made available through the apprenticeship strategy and the Black Community Action Plan.

Members welcomed the progress that had been made and it was **RESOLVED:**

- (1) To note the progress made in implementing the Apprenticeship Strategy with particular emphasis on the use of the levy to support workforce development and address skills shortages.
- (2) To agree to the recommended new apprenticeship pay rates for the council's own apprentices, as set out in paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6 of the report. This was on the basis it would help attract and retain individuals in a more competitive apprenticeship market whilst enabling the independent living of people who do not or could not live at home.

7. **i4B Key Worker Housing Scheme**

Martin Williams, Head of Human Resources, introduced the report updating the Committee in respect of the Council's offer to council staff of Key Worker Housing provided by i4B, including the Council roles to be identified as Keyworker roles and the terms on which Key Worker housing would be provided, including the potential tax implications for individuals.

Discussing the financial and legal implications received following the publication of the original report, Martin Williams brought to the attention of Members that 5.3 of the report confirmed the Council's tax advisors had concluded that the i4B Key Worker Housing Scheme was not considered a taxable benefit for Brent Council staff. This had been based on the offering being made available to people other than Council employees and a calculation of the employment related benefit conducted on the cost of the property and proposed rent.

In considering the report members noted the key worker roles and the terms on which key worker housing would be provided, as detailed within the i4B Key Worker Housing Allocations Policy included as Appendix 1 to the report. Members were advised that the initial offer would be focused on the block of flats purchased by i4B in Wembley, which comprised of 153 units made up of a range of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments. The aim of the Policy was to ensure a fair and equitable process in terms of the allocation of these properties to key workers based on a tiered system, as set out in section 4 of the report. Work had already been undertaken to promote the offer, with a breakdown of Council staff who had registered an interest, set out in section 4.8 of the report.

In highlighting their support for the scheme, members were pleased to note the progress made and positive interest especially in relation to staff from within Children and Young People and Community & Wellbeing. In response to a query on the detailed allocation policy, members were advised of the tenancy arrangements being offered, which would be subject to review on a 12 monthly basis or if the nature of the role changed and the tenant was no longer employed or classified as a key worker, tenancy would cease.

Members welcomed the ongoing progress, remaining keen that key worker staff had access to affordable housing. It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To approve the method by which posts were identified as being difficult to recruit and retain within the Council.
- (2) To note the advice received in relation to the key worker housing scheme not being classified as a taxable benefit for Brent's employees.

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

Councillor Butt, Leader of the Council, introduced the report which followed the review undertaken at the Annual Council meeting on 14 September 2020 in relation to the representation of political groups on main committees and subsequent appointments made to those bodies.

It was noted that the Committee was now required to review and determine the representation of political groups on its Sub-committees as set out in the report and then make appointments giving effect to the wishes of the political groups allocated seats.

RESOLVED to approve:

- (1) The size of each sub-committee to be appointed by the Committee as detailed in the report.
- (2) The allocation of seats to political groups on each of the sub-committees in accordance with political balance rules.
- (3) The appointment of Chairs, Vice-Chairs, Members and Substitutes Members to each sub-committee.

9. **Appointments to Sub-Committees / Outside Bodies**

Following on from Item 8 above, Councillor Butt introduced the item which set out the proposed appointments to the General Purposes Sub-committees for the 2020/2021 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED: That Members agree the following appointments to the General Purposes Sub-Committees for the 2020/2021 Municipal Year:

GENERAL PURPOSES SUB-COMMITTEES

SENIOR STAFF APPOINTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE

M BUTT (C)	LABOUR
MCLENNAN (VC)	LABOUR
KANSAGRA	CONSERVATIVE
KRUPA SHETH	LABOUR
TATLER	LABOUR

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS:

LABOUR: FARAH, KNIGHT, NERVA, M PATEL, STEPHENS, SOUTHWOOD
CONSERVATIVE: COLWILL, MAURICE

SENIOR STAFF APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEE

M BUTT (C)	LABOUR
MCLENNAN (VC)	LABOUR
KANSAGRA	CONSERVATIVE
NERVA	LABOUR
KRUPA SHETH	LABOUR

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS:

LABOUR: FARAH, KNIGHT, M PATEL, SOUTHWOOD
CONSERVATIVE: COLWILL, MAURICE

BRENT PENSION FUND SUB-COMMITTEE

CHOUDHARY (C)	LABOUR
ADEN (VC)	LABOUR
DALY	LABOUR
DONNELLY-JACKSON	LABOUR
MAURICE	CONSERVATIVE
MITCHELL-MURRAY	LABOUR
PERRIN	LABOUR

CO-OPTED NON-VOTING:

ELIZABETH BANKOLE (UNISON)

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS:

LABOUR: CHOUDRY, MCLEISH, NAHEERATHAN & VACANCY
CONSERVATIVE: COLWILL, KANSAGRA

BRENT PENSION BOARD

FULL MEMBERS:

DAVID EWART (C)	INDEPENDENT CHAIR
CRANE	LABOUR
KABIR	LABOUR
CHRIS BALA	PENSION SCHEME MEMBER
BOLA GEORGE	TRADE UNION (UNISON) MEMBER
ROBERT WHEELER	TRADE UNION (GMB) MEMBER
VACANCY	EMPLOYER MEMBER (NON-BRENT
COUNCIL)	

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS:

No provision is include 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**

None.

The meeting closed at 10:20am

COUNCILLOR MUHAMMED BUTT
Chair