



General Purposes Committee

Monday 18 January 2021 at 9.30 am

Please note this will be held as an online virtual meeting

The link to the meeting will be available [HERE](#)

Membership:

Members

Councillors:

M Butt (Chair)
McLennan (Vice-Chair)
Colwill
Farah
Nerva
M Patel
Krupa Sheth
Tatler

Substitute Members

Councillors:

Afzal, S Choudhary, Dixon, Kabir, Knight, Southwood
and Stephens

Councillors:

Kansagra and Maurice

For further information contact: Rashella Rapley, Governance Officer - 020 8937 3051

For electronic copies of minutes, reports and agendas, and to be alerted when the minutes of this meeting have been published visit:

democracy.brent.gov.uk

The press and public are welcome to attend this as an online meeting. The link to the meeting will be available [HERE](#)

Notes for Members - Declarations of Interest:

If a Member is aware they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest* in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent and must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If a Member is aware they have a Personal Interest** in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent.

If the Personal Interest is also significant enough to affect your judgement of a public interest and either it affects a financial position or relates to a regulatory matter then after disclosing the interest to the meeting the Member must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item, except that they may first make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to the matter, provided that the public are allowed to attend the meeting for those purposes.

***Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:**

- (a) **Employment, etc.** - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit gain.
- (b) **Sponsorship** - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect of expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of election; including from a trade union.
- (c) **Contracts** - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between the Councillors or their partner (or a body in which one has a beneficial interest) and the council.
- (d) **Land** - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.
- (e) **Licences** - Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.
- (f) **Corporate tenancies** - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which the Councillor or their partner have a beneficial interest.
- (g) **Securities** - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

****Personal Interests:**

The business relates to or affects:

(a) Anybody of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management, and:

- To which you are appointed by the council;
- which exercises functions of a public nature;
- which is directed is to charitable purposes;
- whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy (including a political party of trade union).

(b) The interests of a person from whom you have received gifts or hospitality of at least £50 as a member in the municipal year;

or

A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial position of:

- You yourself;
- a member of your family or your friend or any person with whom you have a close association or any person or body who is the subject of a registrable personal interest.

Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Item	Page
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1	Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members	
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2	Declarations of interests	
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Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting, the nature and existence of any relevant disclosable pecuniary or personal interests in the items on this agenda and to specify the item(s) to which they relate.

3	Deputations (if any)	
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To hear any deputations received from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 67.

4	Minutes of the previous meeting	1 - 6
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To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 7 December 2020 as a correct record.

5	Matters arising (if any)	
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To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

6	Review of Polling Places 2021	7 - 14
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To consider a report from the Chief Executive detailing the results of a review of polling places undertaken prior to the rescheduled GLA election in May 2021.

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Contact Officer: Sean O'Sullivan

Acting Electoral Registration &
Services Manager

Email: sean.o'sullivan2@brent.gov.uk

Tel: 07425 613 565

7 Appointments to Sub-Committees / Outside Bodies

To consider any appointments needing to be made in relation to the Sub Committees appointed by the General Purposes Committee.

8 Exclusion of Press and Public

There are currently items on the agenda that will require the exclusion of the press or public.

9 Any other urgent business

Notice of items to be raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Head of Executive and Member Services or her representative before the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 60.

Date of Next Meeting: Monday 15 March 2021 at 9:30am



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PUPOSES COMMITTEE

Held as an online meeting on Monday 7 December 2020 at 09:30

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

1. Apologies for absence and clarification of alternative members

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Colwill, with Councillor Kansagra attending as a substitute member.

2. Declaration of interests

There were no declarations of interests made by Members.

3. Deputations (if any)

There were no deputations received.

4. Minutes of previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 29 September 2020 be approved as an accurate record.

5. Matters arising (if any)

None

6. Extra Day Leave Christmas Closure

Martin Williams, Head of Human Resources, introduced the report seeking the Committee's approval to recognise 24 December 2020 as an additional day of Bank Holiday leave for staff.

In considering the report members were keen to recognise and acknowledge the commitment of Brent staff throughout the year in such difficult circumstances given the challenges created as a result of dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members noted the range of actions and initiatives, which had been developed and delivered across the Council in response to the pandemic, whilst also continuing to deliver business as usual, as outlined in section 4 of the report.

Members thanked staff for all their hard work throughout the year in the most difficult of circumstances, in order to ensure that council services continued to be delivered and residents were supported during such a challenging time.

In welcoming the report, it was also noted that should members be minded to agree the proposal, this would not involve any additional financial implications and arrangements would remain in place to ensure the continued provision of emergency and out of hours' services.

As a result, it was therefore **RESOLVED** to designate the 24 December 2020 as an additional Bank Holiday leave for staff.

7. Voluntary Redundancy Scheme update

Debra Norman, Director of Legal, Audit and HR Services, introduced the report providing an update in respect of the Council's 2020 Voluntary Redundancy Scheme. The report also outlined the impact on the scheme of a current consultation concerning changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and some changes already in force, in new Regulations concerning Public Sector exit payments.

In considering the report, Debra Norman informed members that following the Chief Executive having authorised the opening of a further Voluntary Redundancy Scheme in September 2020, 123 members of staff had submitted applications. As a result of the applications having been assessed (on the basis of the process outlined within section 4.2 of the report) 75 had been agreed. Members were advised that in addition, a further 12 had been considered appropriate for approval, but the cost of severance for these individuals was in excess of £95,000 taking account of pension strain costs should an unreduced pension be paid. Members' attention was drawn to the legal uncertainties surrounding these specific severance payments, which had been set out within sections 4.7 to 4.14 of the report, as a result of recent Government guidance and consultation. Given the uncertainty, the Committee noted that the LGPS Advisory Board had suggested that administering authorities take steps to mitigate their risk in respect of redundancies where the cost of severance was in excess of £95,000 suggesting that an actuarially reduced or deferred pension without the cash payment referred to by the Government guidance was offered. Whilst recognising the unsatisfactory nature of this position for both the Council and affected staff, this was currently being proposed as the recommended approach. In addition, it was also recommended that the Pension Fund adopt the new draft Government Actuary's Department (GAD) strain factors in advance of the LGPS Regulations being updated, as expected by the time the staff taking voluntary redundancy under the scheme came to leave the council.

Members were advised that as a result of the current position 3 of the 12 staff affected had subsequently withdrawn their request for voluntary redundancy with members noting the impact in terms of both the organisation and staff morale. The position and approach being adopted had also been subject to discussion with Trade Union representatives (as detailed in section 4.22 of the report). Whilst clear about their opposition to the Government's legislation in respect of

Exit Payments and the detrimental impact on staff moving forward, they had been appreciative of the Council's transparency in respect of the proposals outlined and felt the approach being adopted was reasonable in view of the current difficult position faced by the Council. A request had been made for the Council to consider seeking waivers for those staff impacted by the Exit Cap, although members noted that these were unlikely to receive consent given the criteria established by Government was very restrictive.

Following on from the discussion and advice provided during the meeting it was **RESOLVED:**

- (1) To note the proposed approach to redundancies where the cost of severance for an individual was in excess of £95,000 taking into account pension strain costs if an unreduced pension was paid pending clarity as to legal entitlements in those circumstances.
- (2) To note that none of the payments in respect of individuals pursuant to the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme included any element in addition to sums calculated in accordance with the Council's Managing Change Policy and the strain payments that would arise under the Local Government Pension Scheme if unreduced pensions were paid.
- (3) To note the overall outcome of the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme run during September 2020.
- (4) To agree, as the administering authority of the Brent Pension Fund, to adopt the early retirement strain factors from the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) as outlined in sections 5.17 – 5.21 of the report.

8. Council Tax Base 2021/2022

Ravinder Jassar (Head of Finance, Brent Council) introduced the report setting out the Council Tax base for 2021/22 in order to enable the Council to fulfil its statutory role under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended).

Members noted that calculation of the Tax Base was based on a formula involving two elements:

- a. the number of taxable properties shown as "Band D equivalents"; and
- b. the expected collection rate for the year;

In presenting the report, the Committee were advised that the calculation for the number of taxable properties had included an estimate for the number of new housing developments anticipated across the borough. The general trend was also supported by the level of new Council Tax registrations currently awaiting banding by the Valuation Office Agency. Members noted the position would, however, continue to be monitored so that if at any time, the rate of new properties coming on stream slowed, a further adjustment could be made to ensure the collection fund remained in balance.

In terms of the expected Council Tax collection rate, members were advised that this had needed to be adjusted to reflect the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the in-year collection rate for 2020/21. Current modelling suggested that a reduction in the 2020/21 collection rate of 3% was expected. This was significant, however; collection would continue to be attempted in future years, albeit there was a risk that the long-term collection rate would not be met. As a result of the ongoing impact of Covid-19 to the economy and the postponement of normal debt recovery action, members were advised it was too early to be able to estimate the short and long term impact on collection. It had therefore been deemed prudent to reduce the long-term collection rate to reflect the reality that there would be an impact on collection and for 2021/22 a collection level of 97.50% was considered reasonable.

Members recognised and supported the prudent nature of the assumptions being made and as a result, it was **RESOLVED**:

- (1) That the Band D equivalent number of properties was calculated as shown in accordance with the Government regulations.
- (2) That the collection rate for Council Tax for 2021/22 was set at 97.5%.
- (3) That subject to (1) and (2) above, a Council Tax Base for 2021/22 of 98,450 Band D equivalent properties (after collection rate allowance deduction) be approved.

9. Public Sector Pay Freeze 2021/2022

Debra Norman, Director of Legal, Audit and HR Services, introduced the report providing an update in respect of the Public Sector pay freeze for 2021/22 announced in the Government's spending review and the implications for remuneration for council employees.

Whilst noting the Council's adherence to the National Pay Bargaining Framework for Local Government and need to comply with its Pay Policy and statement members were keen to consider the provision of appropriate recognition for staff in order to reflect their continuing commitment in such difficult circumstances during the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, the Committee was being asked to agree that a report be brought forward to Full Council in February 2021 in order to consider any amendments (should they be necessary) to the Pay Policy and Pay Policy Statement in order to enable any appropriate form of recognition to be made.

As a result, the Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- (1) Note the constraints on reward and remuneration for employees, which would result from the Public Sector pay freeze.
- (2) Agree that a report be brought to the February 2021 Council meeting to propose amendments to the council's Pay Policy and (if necessary) to its Pay Policy Statement to enable appropriate recognition of the continuing

commitment in difficult circumstances shown by council staff during the COVID crisis.

10. Appointments to Sub-Committees / Outside Bodies

None

11. Exclusion of Press and Public

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

12. Any other urgent business


None

It was noted that the next meeting had been scheduled for Monday 18 January 2021

The meeting closed at 9:48am

COUNCILLOR MUHAMMED BUTT
Chair

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	General Purposes Committee 18 January 2021
	Report from the Chief Executive and Returning Officer
Review of Polling Places 2021	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Non-key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	One: Appendix 1: List of Polling Places
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Sean O'Sullivan Acting Electoral Registration & Services Manager Email: sean.o'sullivan2@brent.gov.uk Tel: 07425 613 565

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 All local authorities must review their UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places at least once every five years. The last review of polling places took place in 2018. It came into force for February 2019, having been approved by the General Purposes Committee on 21 January 2019.
- 1.2 Normal practice prior to any election is to carry out an informal review of polling places across the borough based on experience at the previous election and investigation into the availability of premises for the forthcoming election.
- 1.3 Since the 2019 polling district review, two national polls have taken place. Both were called at very short notice and we were therefore unable to undertake this informal review for either election. A review was carried out prior to the 2020 Mayoral and London Assembly elections being postponed and reported to this Sub-Committee. This report proposes, in addition to one affecting Alperton ward previously reported to you, two further changes brought about by the non-availability of two polling places in Northwick Park and Kilburn wards.
- 1.4 The only scheduled elections for the life of the 2019 review are for the Mayor of London and the London Assembly, taking place on 6 May 2021. As a result of

the Local Government Boundary Review, which has now come into force, a full formal review will be required before the 2022 Local Elections when the new boundaries come into force.

2.0 Recommendations:

- 2.1 That the polling stations listed below be adopted for the Greater London Authority elections on 6 May 2021:

NAL4: Abbey Estate Community Centre be relocated to a temporary polling station outside of the building, unless it is renovated in time for this election.

NNP4: Northwick Park Hospital Social Club be replaced by Northwick Park Pavilion

HKi4: The Carlton Centre be replaced by Brent Hubs Office, William Dunbar House, Albert Road

That all other polling stations remain as agreed in the 2019 Polling District review.

- 2.2 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.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 Any wards not listed below are unaffected by changes to the stations agreed by the 2019 Polling District Review. Should anything change prior to the meeting a verbal update will be provided.

3.2 Alperton Ward NAL4

Abbey Estate Community Centre

Due to a leak the building has sustained a significant amount of damage and is presently not fit for use as a polling station. There is space for a temporary polling station outside of the building. This was reported to and agreed by your Sub-Committee in January 2020.

3.3 Kilburn Ward HKi4

Carlton Centre

This building is no longer available as a result of continuing development works in South Kilburn. A suitable alternative has been identified at Brent Hubs Office which is at the foot of William Dunbar House on Albert Road. It has until recently been used by Council staff but is currently unused and available for use on 6 May.

3.4 Northwick Park Ward NNP2

Northwick Park Social Club

This long-standing polling place is earmarked for demolition and will cease to be available. It is proposed that it be replaced by Northwick Park pavilion which is a short distance from the hospital and university accommodation whose residents comprise the electorate in this polling district

3.5 Polling districts, polling places and polling stations may be defined as follows:

A **polling district** is a geographical sub-division of an electoral area, i.e. a UK Parliamentary constituency, a European Parliamentary electoral region, a ward or an electoral division.

A **polling place** is a geographical area in which a polling station is located. However, as there is no legal definition of what a polling place is, the geographical area could be defined as tightly as a particular building or as widely as the entire polling district. Most commonly in Brent, it has been defined as the premises inside which voting takes place.

A **polling station** is the actual area where the process of voting takes place, and must be located within the polling place designated for the particular polling district.

3.6 If a building becomes unavailable before an election, the polling place can be changed by the local authority in accordance with their decision making arrangements. A full list of all polling places in the borough is attached at Appendix 1.

4.0 Financial Implications

The costs of Greater London Authority elections are met by the GLA.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 The Representation of the People Act 1983 requires the council to divide every parliamentary constituency or part thereof within its area into polling districts and that these be kept under review. The council must also ensure that all electors are given such facilities for voting as may be reasonable in the circumstances.

5.2 It should be noted that for the purpose of taking the poll in England and Wales, the (Acting) Returning Officer is entitled to use free of charge schools maintained or assisted by a local authority as well as those schools that receive grants made out of monies provided by Parliament. These include academies and free schools. However, where possible and to avoid disruption during examination periods we have avoided using secondary schools.

6.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

6.1 The relevant Ward councillors in Alperton, Northwick Park and Kilburn have been notified of these proposed changes. The members for Alperton ward have

all responded expressing no objection to the proposal. Two members from Northwick Park have expressed their support for the proposal in their ward. No objections or other comments have been received to date. Any further comments received, following publication of the report will be reported to the Committee.

7.0 Equality Implications

- 7.1 Local authorities have a duty to review the accessibility of all polling places to disabled voters and ensure that every polling place and prospective polling place for which it is responsible is accessible to disabled voters 'so far as is reasonable and practicable'.

8. Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

- 8.1 There are no direct human resources or property implications.

Report sign off:

CAROLYN DOWNS

Chief Executive & Returning Officer

Appendix 1 – List of all polling places in Brent

Polling District	Location
Alperton ward	
NAL1	Lyon Park School Nursery
NAL2	Alperton Baptist Church Hall
NAL3	Church of God Prophecy Wembley
NAL4	Abbey Estate Community Centre
Barnhill ward	
NBA1	Preston & Mall Youth & Community Centre
NBA2	Hut in Preston Road Car Park
NBA3	Church of The Ascension Parish Hall
NBA4	Hut Outside 15 Kings Drive
NBA5	Chalkhill Primary School
NBA6	English Martyrs Church Hall
Brondesbury Park ward	
HBP1	The Library at Willesden Green
HBP2	Stember Hall Scouts Hut
HBP3	Queens Park Community School
HBP4	The Refectory at Christ Church with St Laurence
HBP5	Brondesbury Park Bowling Club
Dollis Hill ward	
CDO1	Braintcroft School
CDO2	Kingfisher Community Centre
CDO3	Our Lady of Grace RC Junior School
CDO4	Our Lady of Grace RC Infants School
Dudden Hill ward	
CDU1	St Catherine's Church
CDU2	Northview School
CDU3	Gladstone Park Primary School
CDU4	Hut at St Marys Parish Centre
CDU5	Pakistan Community Centre
Fryent ward	
NFR1	Father O'Callaghan Centre
NFR2	Holy Innocents Church Hall
NFR3	Hut Outside Pizza Hut
NFR4	St Robert Southwell School
NFR5	Oliver Goldsmith Primary School
NFR6	Fryent Primary School
NFR7	Oliver Goldsmith Primary School

Harlesden ward	
CHA1	Church End & Roundwood Unity Centre
CHA2	Leopold Primary School
CHA3	St Joseph's RC Primary School
CHA4	John Keble CE Primary School
CHA5	Harlesden Primary School
Kensal Green ward	
CKG1	Roundwood Youth Centre
CKG2	Newman Catholic College
CKG3	All Souls Church Hall
CKG4	Furness Primary School
CKG5	St Mark's Church Hall
CKG6	Hazel Road Community Centre
Kenton ward	
NKE1	Lindsay Park Baptist Church Hall
NKE2	Claremont High School
NKE3	Uxendon Manor Primary School
NKE4	Hut at Harrow District Masonic Centre
NKE5	Mount Stewart Infant School
Kilburn ward	
Hki1	Christchurch (Brondesbury) CE School
HKi2	Kilburn Square Housing Co-Op
HKi3	Kilburn Square Housing Co-Op
HKi4	
HKi5	Marian Community Centre
Mapesbury ward	
CMA1	Mora Primary School
CMA2	Anson Primary School
CMA3	St Gabriel's Hall
CMA4	St Gabriel's Hall
CMA5	Watling Gardens Community Centre
Northwick Park ward	
NNP1	Hut Opposite 86 Northwick Avenue
NNP2	
NNP3	Byron Court Primary School
NNP4	Sudbury Court Pavilion
NNP5	St George's Church Hall
NNP6	St Cuthbert's Church Hall
Preston ward	
NPR1	Preston Park Primary School
NPR2	Hut on Pellatt Road
NPR3	Wembley Christian Centre
NPR4	Wembley Primary School

Queen's Park ward	
HQP1	Manor School
HQP2	Princess Frederica CE Primary School
HQP3	Ark Franklin Academy
HQP4	Princess Frederica CE Primary School
HQP5	Ark Franklin Academy
Queensbury ward	
NQY1	Queensbury Methodist Church
NQY2	Hut Outside The Arch Climbing Wall
NQY3	White Cross Hall
NQY4	Kingsbury Library
NQY5	Roe Green Primary School
Stonebridge ward	
CST1	St Raphael's Children's Centre
CST2	Mitchell Brook School
CST3	Leopold Gwenneth Rickus
CST4	Brentfield Primary School
CST5	Brent Hub Community Enterprise Centre
Sudbury ward	
NSU1	Sudbury Methodist Church Hall
NSU2	LNER Sports & Social Club
NSU3	Sudbury Baptist Church Hall
NSU4	Sudbury Primary School
NSU5	St John's Community Centre
Tokington ward	
CTO1	The Yellow
CTO2	Brent Civic Centre
CTO3	Oakington Manor Primary School
CTO4	St Michael's Church Hall
CTO5	Elsley Primary School
Welsh Harp ward	
CWH1	Hut Between 21 & 23 Mallard Way
CWH2	Fryent Primary School
CWH3	St Andrew's Church Hall
CWH4	Wykeham Primary School
CWH5	St Margaret Clitherow RC School
CWH6	Hut on Crispian Close Car Park
CWH7	Woodfield School
Wembley Central ward	
NWC1	St Joseph's Wembley Pastoral Centre
NWC2	Ealing Road Library
NWC3	Barham Primary School
NWC4	Ealing Road Methodist Church Hall

Willesden Green ward	
CWG1	St Andrew & St Francis CE Primary School
CWG2	St Mary Magdalen's RC JM School
CWG3	Kings Hall