



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

**Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 10 March 2025 at
9.30 am**

PRESENT: Councillor M Butt (Chair), Councillor M Patel (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Benea, Donnelly-Jackson, Grahl, Lorber, Nerva and Rubin.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Farah

1. Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members

Members were advised that Councillor Grahl was attending the meeting as a substitute in place of Councillor Krupa Sheth.

No other apologies or notification of alternative membership had been received.

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 15 January 2025 be approved as a correct record.

5. Matters arising (if any)

There were no matters arising.

6. Brent's Workforce Equalities Report 2023-24 and Gender Ethnicity and Disability Pay Gap Report March 2025

Councillor Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet member for Finance & Resources, introduced a report from the Corporate Director Law & Governance which presented Brent's Workforce Equalities Report 2023/24 and Gender Ethnicity and Disability Pay Gap Report March 2025.

In presenting the report, the Committee was informed that the document provided a comprehensive overview of the annual workforce equalities data, as well as an analysis of the pay gap data pertaining to gender, ethnicity, and disability. The main headlines identified in relation to the workforce equalities data analysis included:

- The average age of the workforce had remained the same as the previous year (although represented an older profile compared to the local population);
- The percentage of Brent employees with a disability (8%) had remained the same as the previous year, although Brent had a higher proportion of disabled employees compared to the London Borough average of 7%, and represented across various pay grades;
- Almost three quarters (71%) of employees were from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups – the highest rate across all London Boroughs and also higher than the percentage in the Brent population (64%) and up 2% points since the previous year;
- BAME employees constituted up to two-thirds(70%) of those promoted over the year, closely reflecting their proportion in the overall workforce, and showing an increase from the previous year (69%). Whilst remaining less well represented at the HAY grades (42%) it was pointed out this was up from 41% in the previous year;
- In light of International Women's Month, it was highlighted that women comprised over two-thirds of the workforce (64%) but remained less well represented at the highest pay grades, indicating a need for further efforts in this area. It was, however, noted that women were better represented among those promoted with efforts being made to reduce the pay gap continuing with 53% of the top 5% of earners being women (up from 52% during the previous year).

Details were also provided on the proportion of females, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and disabled employees in each pay quartile during 2024, as detailed in section 5.3 of the report and as a percentage of the Council's workforce, as detailed in section 5.15 of the report. Alongside the priority actions identified within the published Workforce Equalities report, the Pay Gap report had also identified several priority actions designed to address the pay gap issues during 2024-25, which had been set out within Appendix 2 of the report.

Having thanked Councillor Mili Patel for introducing the report, the Chair then moved on to invite questions and comments from the Committee, with the following comments and issues discussed:

- In commending the efforts and progress being made in seeking to address the pay gap in terms of BAME employees, further details were sought on the reasons why the mean and median pay gap for Asian employees had widened during the year along with the measures being implemented to address the issue. In response, Musrat Zaman (Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development) advised that although there had been an increase in the proportion of Asian employees in the upper two pay quartiles there had also been a decrease in the proportion of Asian employees at HAY grades, which was likely to have resulted in a larger pay gap for Asian employees. Despite a high volume of applications for these positions, it was recognised that they did not always translate into successful appointments. Consequently, a targeted initiative was planned to evaluate the candidate supply and identify any processes that might be hindering individuals progress, including potential unconscious bias within the recruitment process.

- In welcoming reference to the Council's successful renewal of its Disability Confident Leader status, further details were sought on the outcome of the accompanying internal review which had identified the need for additional resources to support the Council's disabled workforce including proposed improvements and resources in this area. In response, Musrat Zaman (Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development) indicated that the Council was in the process of recruiting an additional post on a one year fixed-term contract, specifically to support disabilities. The role would focus on reviewing current processes and assisting individuals with reasonable adjustments. In addition, the implementation of a Disability Passport Scheme was also under consideration, with work and support also being provided through the Disability Network Group and Shared Technology Service in relation to any necessary technical equipment and support required.
- Reference was made to data within the Annual Workforce Equalities Report regarding 'Disability and Age' with members noting that the percentage of Brent's workforce with a disability was 1% higher when compared to the wider workforce across London and with the percentage of employees with disabilities increasing with age. Given the data outlined, further details were sought on future learning as the workforce continued to age with a particular focus on employment during pensionable age and the wider implications. In response, Musrat Zaman (Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development) recognised the challenges identified and outlined the activity being undertaken to ensure the necessary support was provided in continuing to promote the Council as an inclusive employer including for those with disabilities, regardless of age. In terms of the skills required within the workforce for the future, it was pointed out these were not age-dependent and instead based on the necessary skill set, which may require some upskilling e.g. in necessary digital and technical skills with the emphasis on younger individuals joining the organisation work-ready, also identified as a balance. The importance of keeping existing staff skilled while also seeking other desired skills in the market, as emerging talents would be in demand, was also emphasised. The range of skills and experience contributed by older employees had therefore been recognised as an important component within the workforce with flexible working arrangements also in place to support the retention of these skills and experience over a longer period. In terms of areas for ongoing focus, the need had already been identified, within the People Strategy currently being developed, to focus on knowledge transfer and workforce resilience in order to support the retention of knowledge and skills within the workforce, thereby minimising the skills gap when employees left the organisation.

With no further comments raised, members acknowledged the good practice in Brent and in thanking officers for the responses and commending the positive progress being made it was **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To note and endorse the findings from Brent's Workforce Equalities Report April 2023 - March 2024
- (2) To note and endorse the findings from the Gender Ethnicity and Disability Pay Gap Report - March 2025

- (3) To endorse the action plans contained in both the Brent Workforce Equalities & Gender, Ethnicity and Disability Pay Gap Reports.

7. Appointments to Sub-Committees / Outside Bodies

Councillor Muhammed Butt introduced an item setting out a proposed change in appointment to the General Purposes Sub-committees for the remainder of the 2024-2025 Municipal Year.

As a result, it was **RESOLVED** to agree the following change in appointments in relation to the Senior Staff Appointments Sub Committee, and Senior Staff Appeals Sub Committee General Purposes Sub-Committees for the 2024 - 2025 Municipal Year:

- (1) Councillor Benea to replace Councillor Tatler as a substitute member of the Senior Staff Appointments Sub Committee and Senior Staff Appeals Sub Committee.

The membership of both Committees would therefore be as follows:

SENIOR STAFF APPOINTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE

M BUTT (C)	LABOUR
M.PATEL (VC)	LABOUR
KANSAGRA	CONSERVATIVE
KRUPA SHETH	LABOUR
GRAHL	LABOUR

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS:

LABOUR: BENEA, DONNELLY-JACKSON, FARAH, KNIGHT, NERVA, RUBIN
CONSERVATIVE: MAURICE, MISTRY

SENIOR STAFF APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEE

M BUTT (C)	LABOUR
M.PATEL (VC)	LABOUR
KANSAGRA	CONSERVATIVE
KRUPA SHETH	LABOUR
GRAHL	LABOUR

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS:

LABOUR: BENEA, DONNELLY-JACKSON, FARAH, KNIGHT, NERVA, RUBIN
CONSERVATIVE: MAURICE, MISTRY

8. Exclusion of Press and Public

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

9. **Any other urgent business**

No items of urgent business were raised at the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.41AM.

COUNCILLOR MUHAMMED BUTT
Chair