



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 19 May 2025 at 9.30 am

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

1. **Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members**

No apologies for absence 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 10 March 2025 be approved as a correct record.

5. **Matters arising (if any)**

There were no matters arising.

6. **Amendments to Terms and Conditions**

Councillor Mili Patel (Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources) introduced a report from the Corporate Director Finance & Resources, which outlined proposed amendments to staff pay and conditions.

Members noted that the key proposals included:

- 1) Revisions to the Chief Officers' salary scales within the Hay grade structure;
- 2) A reduction in the standard working hours for staff on Hay grades; and
- 3) Amendments to the annual leave policy for all staff, specifically relating to the accrual of long service annual leave.

Pat Chen (Senior HR Business Partner) provided further detail, highlighting the following as the principal areas of change:

- Adjustments to the Hay grade structure to address anomalies between pay grades and contractual terms;
- Rectification of inconsistencies in contracted working hours, particularly where some staff were contracted to work 40 hours per week, contrary to the standard 36-hour week; and
- Simplification and equalisation of annual leave entitlements across grades, making the policy easier to apply and more equitable.

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

- Members sought clarification on the proposals, particularly in relation to the Hay grades and the rationale for amending the contracted hours for staff from 40 to 36 hours. Questions were also raised around the additional benefits that had been afforded to officers when 40-hour contracts were originally agreed, such as increased pension contribution or holiday entitlement. In response, Pat Chen (Senior HR Business Partner) explained that there were no additional benefits to officers for working a 40-hour week. While the overall rate of pay remained unchanged, officers effectively received a lower hourly rate. There had been no financial benefits or increase in overall annual leave entitlement for those staff. The proposed changes would not result in financial gain and would correct a contractual inconsistency across the workforce with the main change involving a requirement to complete the full period of continuous service before becoming eligible for the increased annual leave entitlement.
- Concern was expressed that the report implied no financial impact, yet there were productivity implications given the level of staff who could effectively gain additional annual leave, potentially reducing service delivery capacity. Details were sought around whether staff would receive one additional annual leave day or more as a result of the proposed changes. In response, Pat Chen (Senior HR Business Partner) informed the Committee that a general estimate had been included in the report, and further analysis was underway to determine the precise number of staff that would benefit and the impact across different salary bands and levels of annual leave. It was confirmed that individual impacts would vary depending on existing contractual terms. An Equality Impact Assessment would also be conducted to evaluate the potential effects of the proposed changes on individuals with protected characteristics.
- Following on from the concerns identified, the need to avoid making any decision in advance of a comprehensive understanding of the implications for service delivery and productivity was also highlighted given the focus at a recent Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee on issues relating to service capacity within the Adult Social Care and Children and Young People services arising from complaints around the timeliness of assessments etc on which the need for accurate and detailed information was highlighted. In

response, Pat Chen (Senior HR Business Partner) acknowledged the concerns regarding the limited detail and the inclusion of only an indicative cost estimate within the current report and clarified that the figure presented was a likely approximation of the associated costs. It was emphasised that the proposals were designed to enhance staff health and wellbeing and increases in annual leave benefits often contributed to greater productivity and improved service outcomes. It was, however, noted that such benefits were inherently more challenging to quantify. It was further noted that offering improved terms and conditions of employment frequently resulted in a positive return in terms of opportunity cost.

- The Chair emphasised the strategic importance of positioning Brent as an employer of choice through implementing the right systems and policies. It was noted that the proposed changes would enhance the Council's ability to attract and retain talent, standardise working hours while also reinforcing fairness and consistency in employment practices across the organisation.
- Details were sought around whether formal consultation had been undertaken with recognised trade unions and staff representatives. In response, Pat Chen (Senior HR Business Partner) confirmed that trade unions had been fully engaged in the consultation process and had expressed support for the proposed changes.
- Members were keen to seek details on the consequences of not harmonising arrangements and questioned what lessons could be drawn for future pay structure reviews. In response, Pat Chen (Senior HR Business Partner) explained that failure to harmonise would result in continued disparities, with some Hay grade employees working 40 hours while others worked 36, despite being on the same grade. This inconsistency was unsustainable and contrary to the principles of fairness and equity. It was acknowledged that, in practice, officers on Hay grades frequently worked in excess of the standard 36-hour week. This was supported by a contractual clause stipulating that, where required due to urgent, critical, or essential organisational needs, such officers could be requested to work additional hours, an expectation that was generally met in the course of their duties.
- Whilst acknowledging the concerns identified, support was also expressed for the approach outlined within the report, with members noting that they reflected a respectful and progressive approach to workforce management, developed in consultation with trade unions to strengthen workers' rights.
- Members observed that, based on discussions with Human Resources prior to the committee report being considered at this meeting, the terms and conditions of the NJC which were set out in the green book were standardised. The proposed changes would bring Brent into alignment with other London boroughs and did not impact the pay on the Council. Confidence was expressed that the changes would have minimal impact and would position the Council ahead of the curve in terms of employment standards and strategic workforce positioning.

Having noted that Pat Chen (Senior HR Business Partner) would provide further details, following the meeting on the figures relating to affected working hours and impacted staff and thanking officers for the responses provided, it was **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To approve the amendments to the salary scales for Chief Officers within the Hay grade structure, as detailed within the report.
- (2) To approve the amendments to the contractual hours of staff in Hay graded posts as detailed in the report; and
- (3) To approve the amendments to the annual leave entitlement for staff on Hay grades and the qualifying conditions for long service leave for staff on NJC terms and conditions, as detailed in the report.

Councillor Lorber requested that he be recorded as voting against the above decision on the basis of the concerns highlighted regarding the adequacy of the information within the report presented to the Committee.

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

Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Chair) introduced a report from the Corporate Director Finance and 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 14 May 2025 relating to the representation of political groups on the Council's main committees.

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 8 of the agenda) giving effect to the wishes of the political group(s) allocated the seats.

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

Following on from Item 7 above, Councillor Muhammed Butt introduced an item setting out the proposed appointments to the General Purposes Sub-committees for the 2025-2026 Municipal Year.

As a result, it **RESOLVED** to agree the following appointments to the General Purposes Sub-Committees for the 2025 - 2026 Municipal Year:

SENIOR STAFF APPOINTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE

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

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS:

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

BRENT PENSION FUND SUB-COMMITTEE

JOHNSON (C)	LABOUR
KENNELLY (VC)	LABOUR
AHMADI MOGHADDAM	LABOUR
CHOUDRY	LABOUR
CRABB	LABOUR
KANSAGRA	CONSERVATIVE
MOLLOY	LABOUR

CO-OPTED NON-VOTING:

ELIZABETH BANKOLE (UNISON)

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS:

LABOUR: ETHAPEMI, DIXON, MAHMOOD, SHAH
CONSERVATIVE: MAURICE, J.PATEL

BRENT PENSION BOARD

DAVID EWART (C)	INDEPENDENT CHAIR (31.07.2025)
KABIR	LABOUR
SMITH	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 included within the Boards Terms of Reference for substitute members.

9. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

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

10. **Any other urgent business**

No items of urgent business were raised at the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.50 am

COUNCILLOR MUHAMMED BUTT
Chair