



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 6th December 2021 at 9:30am

PRESENT: Councillor M Butt (Chair), Councillor McLennan (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Farah, Kansagra, Nerva, Krupa Sheth, Southwood and Tatler.

1. Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mili Patel (with Councillor Southwood in attendance as a substitute member) and Councillor Colwill (with Councillor Kansagra in attendance as a substitute member).

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 8th November 2021 be approved as an accurate record.

5. Matters arising (if any)

Min 6. Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations – Century Bowling & Sports Club (Polling Station PR2)

Katie Smith, Head of Executive and Member Services, updated members that following on from the access and safety issues raised at the previous meeting by Councillor Kennelly in relation to the use of the Century Bowling & Sports Social Club as a polling station a further site visit had been undertaken. As it had been possible to secure access from both the north and south of the site it was confirmed the issues raised were now deemed to have been mitigated with use of the venue therefore confirmed and highly visible signage to also be provided.

In addition, members were advised that following on from the meeting, it had been confirmed that the North Wembley Community Seventh Day Adventist Church proposed for use as polling station NP3 in the Northwick Park ward would no longer be available. As a result it had been agreed to revert back to use of Sudbury Court Sports Club (Sudbury Court Pavillion) for polling station NP3 which it had been confirmed would be available and had been the site previously used for the GLA elections. Members confirmed their support for the alternative site identified.

6. Calculation of Council Tax Base 2022/23

Ravinder Jassar, Deputy Director of Finance introduced the report setting out the Council Tax base for 2022/23 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 identified 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 during 2022/23, the rate of new properties coming on stream slowed, a further adjustment could be made in relation to the rate of growth for 2023/24 in order to ensure the collection fund remained in balance.

In terms of the expected Council Tax collection rate members were advised that as a result of the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on the economy and the limited level of normal debt recovery action, it was too early to be able to estimate the short and long term impact on collection rates. The collection rate in 2021/22 had been lowered to take account of the impact of the pandemic and it had therefore been deemed prudent to further reduce the long term collection rate for 2022/23 to reflect the continued impact of the pandemic on collection with an overall eventual collection level of 97.0% considered reasonable.

In response to a member query it was confirmed that the details provided within the graph in section 3.10 of the report comparing the number of properties within the borough to those included within the tax base over the last five years reflected the difference once reductions for both statutory and local Council Tax support schemes had been applied. This reduction accounted for approx. 15% of the total number of properties in the borough.

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 2022/23 was set at 97%.
- (3) That's subject to (1) and (2) above, a Council Tax Base for 2022/23 of 98,730 Band D equivalent properties (after collection rate allowance deduction) be approved.

7. Severance Approval

Martin Williams, Head of Human Resources introduced the report to seeking approval to make a severance payment to an officer whose post had become redundant as a result of a restructure within the Customer and Digital Service Directorate. Members noted that the severance payment required approval by General Purposes Committee, as the redundancy and severance payment, when added to the pension strain costs which the Council was required to bear under the Pension scheme rules, totalled over £100,000.

In considering the recommendations the Committee noted the details provided within the exempt appendix accompanying the report and **RESOLVED**.

- (1) To agree the severance payment, as detailed within the report.
- (2) To note that the payment in (1) above did not include any element additional to sums calculated in accordance with the council's Managing Change Policy and the requirements of the Local Government Pension Scheme

8. Appointment to Sub Committee/Outside Bodies

None.

9. Exclusion of Press and Public

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

10. Any other urgent business

None.

The meeting closed at 9:38am.

COUNCILLOR MUHAMMED BUTT
Chair