



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 13 October 2025 at 9.30 am

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

1. Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lorber.

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 19 May 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) was invited to introduce a report from the Corporate Director Finance & Resources, which sought approval to a number of proposed changes to pay and allowances prior to formal consultation with staff and trade unions.

In presenting the report, Councillor Mili Patel advised that the proposals had been designed to address the principle of fairness within a modern public service organisation. It was emphasised that the proposals recognised the dedication of Council staff, including staff working to deliver key services outside standard hours recognising that whilst the Council's workforce had significantly reduced over the past decade, staff continued to deliver essential services with many employees regularly working beyond contracted hours while balancing personal responsibilities and wellbeing.

It was further stated that fairness in pay and allowances was not solely a human resources matter but a reflection of respect for those who ensured the Borough's operations. The financial implications of the proposals were noted, with current expenditure on allowances and premiums amounting to £1.7 million annually. The Committee heard that the report proposed the introduction of a structured three-tier standby system, ranging from £90 to £180 per week, depending on the level of responsibility. Shift allowances would be standardised at either 5% or 10%, and overtime and call-out payments would be applied in a fair, proportionate and consistent manner across services. It was additionally confirmed that the proposals had been developed in collaboration with trade union representatives, whose constructive engagement had helped shape the final recommendations. It was reiterated that the review was grounded in trust and aimed to ensure that staff were treated with fairness, respect and consistency. The proposals also supported financial discipline and had sought to address current inconsistency in the way policies were being applied between different groups of staff.

In support of the introductory comments made, Pat Chen (Senior HR Business Partner) informed members that approval was now being sought to enable formal consultation with trade unions. The proposed changes introduced three distinct levels of standby, ranging from those required to attend on-site to those expected to respond remotely. It was also noted that while the proposals would result in financial savings due to the removal of inconsistencies, the primary objective was to ensure fairness, transparency and consistency in payment practices.

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:

- As an initial point, members welcomed the proposals, particularly in relation to those staff frequently required to be on standby for homelessness and other emergency situations, and commended the introduction of consistency and fairness across different roles.
- Members also expressed support for the continued review of systems and processes, noting the importance of aligning practices with good governance and ensuring that staff were reassured by the rationale behind operational decisions.
- In response to details being sought around how adjustments would be managed for individuals who had been working under existing arrangements for an extended period Pat Chen (Senior HR Business Partner) confirmed that consultation would take place not only with trade unions but also with individual staff members affected by the changes. Transitional arrangements would be discussed to ensure that staff did not experience significant financial detriment and were given adequate time to adjust.
- Views were then sought regarding whether it was felt that employees and trade unions would be receptive to the proposed changes. In response, Pat Chen (Senior HR Business Partner) conveyed that initial discussions with trade unions had indicated general support for the proposals, particularly the move towards transparency and consistency. While full details had not yet been shared, formal

consultation would begin shortly. It was acknowledged that whilst some concern might arise from individuals adversely affected by the changes, the intention would be to address these issues through the consultation process.

- As a final matter raised, members welcomed the consideration of mitigation measures and reiterated the importance of ensuring that staff were treated fairly and with respect throughout the implementation of the revised policies.

Having thanked officers for the responses provided and members for their contributions to the proposed changes to pay and allowances, it was **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To approve the amendments to the Standby and Callout Policy, as detailed in the report.
- (2) To approve the amendments to the calculation and payment of shift allowances, as detailed in the report.
- (3) To approve the amendments to the core working hours of the Council, as detailed in the report.
- (4) To approve the amendments to the Planned Overtime Rate to pay overtime at plain time to staff graded SO1 – PO6, as detailed in the report.
- (5) On the basis of (1) – (4) above, to approve the commencement of formal consultation with staff and trade union representatives with a view to seeking a local agreement for the changes.

7. Exclusion of Press and Public

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

8. Any other urgent business

No items of urgent business were raised at the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.40 am

COUNCILLOR MUHAMMED BUTT
Chair