



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

**Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 27 July 2026 at
11:15 am**

PRESENT: Councillor M Butt (Chair), Councillor Grahl (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Georgiou, Johnson, Knight, Perrin and Unger

1. Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members

No apologies for absence were received.

An absence from Councillor Kansagra was noted during the meeting.

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 22 June 2026 be approved as a correct record.

5. Matters arising (if any)

There were no matters arising.

6. Recruitment and Retention Payments for Adult Social Care Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Visual Impairment Rehabilitation Officers Report

Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy) followed by Councillor Grahl (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources) introduced a report seeking approval to continue with the recruitment and retention payments for social workers, occupational therapists and visual impairment rehabilitation officers in Adult Social Care (ASC), to improve the recruitment and retention of permanent staff, following on from approval of the previous payments in November 2023.

In presenting the report, it was highlighted that the payments had been introduced in response to significant recruitment and retention challenges affecting Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Visual Impairment Rehabilitation Officers. The payments

to the Adult and Social Care workforce aimed to reduce reliance on agency staff and increase the number of permanent staff in harder to recruit areas. It was noted that these professional areas continued to experience recruitment difficulties, reflecting wider national pressures. It was further mentioned that the recruitment and retention payments had been in place for almost 3 years and had played an important role in reducing agency reliance and progressing agency staff into permanent roles.

In reviewing the arrangements, the importance of ensuring that the Council continued to attract and retain suitably qualified and experienced staff was emphasised. It was stated that it was essential to ensure that the Council remained competitive within the employment market and continued to attract the right people into the right roles.

It was further highlighted that reducing the use of agency staff and increasing the proportion of permanent employees brought both practical and moral benefits. It was stressed that the report was not solely focused on workforce resources, but also reflected the Council's commitment to securing high quality social care provision through the employment of reliable, committed and appropriately compensated professionals.

Having thanked Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy) and Councillor Grahl (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources) for introducing the report, the Chair then moved on to invite questions and comments from the Committee, with the following comments highlighted:

- The Chair noted the challenging labour market conditions affecting Adult Social Care services. It was highlighted that the recruitment and retention payments for Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Visual Impairment Rehabilitation Officers had proven effective in supporting both recruitment and retention efforts. It was further observed that the payments had assisted the Council in converting a number of temporary and agency workers into permanent members of staff, strengthening the Council's workforce and reducing dependency on agency provision.

Having thanked all those involved for their contributions to the discussion and consideration of the item, it was **RESOLVED**:

- (1) That the Committee agree to the continuation of the use of recruitment and retention initiatives, as follows:
 - (a) To make a one-off payment of £5,000 to newly recruited permanent qualified social workers, occupational therapists and visual impairment rehabilitation officers on grades PO2 - PO7, on satisfactory completion of their probationary period and repayable where an employee leaves the council within 12 months of receiving the payment.
 - (b) To make annual retention payments of £3,000 to all qualified social workers, occupational therapists and visual impairment rehabilitation officers on grades PO2 to PO7 to be paid annually after completion of a full year's service.

- (c) To make retention payments for Best Interest Assessors of £2,000 a year for being on the rota to carry out statutory duties commensurate with the role.
- (d) To make retention payments of £1,000 a year for qualified Practice Educators to take two students a year.

7. **Recruitment and Retention Payments for Early Help and Social Care staff and Occupational Therapists Report**

Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) was invited to introduce a report seeking approval to continue with the recruitment and retention payments for social workers in Children's Early Help and Social Care roles to improve the recruitment and retention of permanent staff.

In presenting, it was highlighted that that the report sought to maintain consistency with the arrangements already in place for Adult Social Care staff and reflected the ongoing need to attract and retain skilled professionals within Children's Early Help and Social Care roles.

It was explained that the recruitment and retention payments had been successfully implemented for children's social workers over recent years and had delivered positive workforce outcomes. It was reported that the permanent children's social care workforce had reached close to 90%, representing the highest level of permanent staffing achieved within the service for over a decade.

The Committee heard that the payments had contributed significantly to improving workforce stability and reducing reliance on agency staff. It was advised that agency expenditure had fallen substantially and had reduced by more than half during the previous 3 years. It was stated that this had enabled the service to benefit from reduced staffing costs associated with agency recruitment.

It was further noted that the recruitment and retention offer had been well received by staff. It was highlighted that the arrangements had encouraged staff to remain working in Brent.

Having thanked Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) for introducing the report, the Chair then moved on to invite questions and comments from the Committee, with the following comments noted:

- The Chair emphasised the importance of ensuring that the Council remained able to recruit and retain suitably qualified social workers within Children's Early Help and Social Care services. It was noted that maintaining a stable and experienced workforce was essential to delivering effective support and positive outcomes for children, young people and families across the borough. It was highlighted that the continuation of the recruitment and retention payments would assist the Council in sustaining the workforce necessary to meet residents' needs and maintain high quality service provision.

Having thanked all those involved for their contributions to the discussion and consideration of the item, it was **RESOLVED**:

- (1) That the Committee agree to the continuation of the use of recruitment and retention initiatives, as follows:
 - (a) To make a one-off payment of £5,000 to newly recruited permanent qualified social work staff on grades PO1 - PO7 and to occupational therapists' grades PO2 - PO5, on satisfactory completion of their probationary period and repayable where an employee leaves the council within 12 months of receiving the payment.
 - (b) To make retention payments of either £2500 or £4,500 for qualified social work staff on grades PO1 - PO7 as set out in the accompanying policy (Recruitment and Retention Payments Policy for Social Work Staff), to be paid annually after completion of a full year's service.
 - (c) To make retention payments of £3,000 to occupational therapists' grades PO2 - PO5 to be paid annually after completion of a full year's service.

8. **Extension of Fixed-Term Director of Resident Services Appointment and Interim Director of Public Health Arrangement Report**

Thomas Cattermole (Corporate Director Residents and Housing Services) introduced a report seeking approval from the General Purposes Committee to extend the fixed-term appointment of the Director of Resident Services until 31 March 2027. The proposed extension exceeded the period that may be authorised under the Chief Executive's delegated powers and therefore required approval by the General Purposes Committee.

In continuing, Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy) added that the report also sought approval to extend the current interim appointment to the post of Director of Public Health and Leisure. It was noted that the existing arrangement was due to end in September 2026. Whilst recruitment to the substantive post was underway, it was anticipated that any successful candidate may not be able to commence until December 2026 at the earliest and potentially later. It was further stated that an extension to the interim arrangement was therefore required to ensure continuity of statutory public health leadership and the discharge of the Council's public health duties pending a substantive appointment, for which the Senior Staff Appointments Sub Committee had been scheduled on 17 September 2026. As the proposed extension exceeded the period that may be authorised under delegated powers, approval was sought from the General Purposes Committee.

Having thanked Tom Cattermole (Corporate Director Residents and Housing Services) and Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy) for introducing the report, the Chair then moved on to invite questions and comments from the Committee, with the following comments noted:

- Further details were sought regarding whether recruitment to the Director of Resident Services post would be completed within the proposed timescales,

thereby avoiding the need for a further extension of the interim arrangement. In response, Thomas Cattermole (Corporate Director Residents and Housing Services) provided an update on the recruitment process and advised that the intention was to commence recruitment to the substantive post in September 2026. It was explained that this timeline would allow sufficient time for the full recruitment process to be undertaken, including interview stages and other recruitment procedures. The Committee was informed that the aim was for the recruitment process to be completed by 31 March 2027.

Having thanked all those involved for their contributions to the discussion and consideration of the item, it was **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To approve the extension of the Director of Resident Services until 31 March 2027.
- (2) To authorise the Corporate Director of Residents and Housing Services, in consultation with the Director of HR &OD, to complete all necessary contractual and employment arrangements associated with the extension.
- (3) To approve the extension of the interim Director of Public Health and Leisure until 31 January 2027 or until the substantive postholder takes up appointment, whichever is sooner; and
- (4) To authorise the Corporate Director for Service Reform and Strategy, in consultation with the Director of HR &OD, to complete all necessary contractual and employment arrangements associated with the extension.

9. **Appointments to the General Purposes Sub-Committees**

Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Chair) introduced an item seeking approval to changes in membership appointments notified in respect of Sub Committees appointed by the General Purposes Sub Committee.

As a result, it **RESOLVED** to agree the following change in appointments to the General Purposes Sub-Committees as detailed below for the 2026 - 2027 Municipal Year:

BRENT PENSION FUND SUB-COMMITTEE

- (1) Councillors Kansagra and HB Patel to be replaced by Councillors A.Patel and Mishra as the Conservative Group nominations as full members on the Pension Fund Sub Committee
- (2) Councillors Chowdhury and Do Rosario to be replaced as the Conservative Group substitute members on the Pension Fund Sub Committee by Councillors Kansagra and HB Patel
- (3) Councillor Mishra to be appointed as Vice Chair of the Pension Fund Sub Committee

- (4) On the basis of the above changes that the revised membership of the Pension Fund Sub Committee be confirmed as follows:

BURN (C)	LABOUR
ANDERSON	LABOUR
I.AHMED	LABOUR
A.PATEL	CONSERVATIVE
MISHRA (VC)	CONSERVATIVE
BROWN	LIBERAL DEMOCRATS
RYAN	GREEN

CO-OPTED NON-VOTING:

ELIZABETH BANKOLE (UNISON)

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS:

LABOUR: AGHA, BAJWA, CHOUDRY, THOAMS
CONSERVATIVE: KANSAGRA & HB PATEL
LIBERAL DEMOCRATS: LORBER & UNGER
GREEN: GALLAGHER & PERRIN

10. Exclusion of Press and Public

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

11. Any other urgent business

No items of urgent business were raised at the meeting.

The meeting closed at 11:30 am

COUNCILLOR MUHAMMED BUTT
Chair