



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
held on Monday, 24 January 2011 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Harbhajan Singh

The Deputy Mayor
Absent

COUNCILLORS:

Aden	Adeyeye
Al-Ebadi	Allie
Arnold	Ashraf
Mrs Bacchus	Baker
Beck	Beckman
Beswick	Brown
Butt	Castle
Cheese	Chohan
S Choudhary	Colwill
Crane	Cummins
Denselow	Gladbaum
Green	Harrison
Hashmi	Hector
Hirani	Hunter
John	Jones
Kabir	Kataria
Leaman	Long
Lorber	Mashari
McLennan	Mistry
J Moher	R Moher
Moloney	Naheerathan
Ogunro	Oladapo
CJ Patel	HB Patel
HM Patel	Powney
Ms Shaw	Sheth
Thomas	Van Kalwala

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: Councillors A Choudry, Clues, Daly, Hossain, Matthews, Mitchell Murray, BM Patel, RS Patel and Sneddon

1. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 November 2010 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

2. **Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests**

Councillor Powney declared an interest in item 5 by virtue of being a member of the West London Waste Authority.

3. **Mayor's announcements**

The Mayor reported with sadness that since the last Full Council meeting the borough's longest serving councillor, Arthur Steel had passed away in St Luke's hospice on 1 January 2011. The Mayor welcomed Mrs Alda Steel and other members of Arthur Steel's family, who were present at the meeting and offered the Council's condolences during a difficult time for them.

The Mayor also reported with sadness that Mr Ray Lorenzato passed away in November last year after over 15 years association with the Council. He had served as a co-opted member representing the Roman Catholic faith on various education related council committees.

The Mayor was sorry to further announce the death of Jayaben Desai in December 2010. Ms Desai was a local resident and a fearless campaigner who was renowned for her role in the Grunwick dispute during the 1970s.

The Mayor was pleased to announce that the Council's entry in the New Year's Day Parade had won 2nd place winning £6,000 towards his charity appeal. He thanked Eileen Sabur who organised the float and all those who took the time to participate and attend the parade which had been a huge success in its 25th year.

The Mayor drew attention to the list of current petitions showing progress on dealing with them which had been circulated around the chamber.

The Council stood in silence for one minute in memory of Arthur Steel.

Members of the Council paid tribute to the life and work of Arthur Steel.

4. **Appointments to committees and outside bodies and appointment of chairs/vice chairs**

RESOLVED:-

that the following appointments be made:

Committee/body	appointment
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Planning Committee	Councillor Gladbaum as second alternate to Councillor RS Patel in place of Councillor Kataria
	Councillor Mitchell Murray as first alternate to Councillor Sheth in place of Councillor Mistry
	Councillor R Moher as second alternate to Councillor Sheth in place of Councillor Mitchell Murray
	Councillor HM Patel as first alternate to Councillor Baker Councillor HB Patel as second alternate to Councillor Baker in place of Councillor HM Patel
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Mrs Shabna Abbasi as co-opted member representing primary parent governors Mrs Hawra Imame as cop-opted member representing the Muslim faith
Call-in Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Gladbaum in place of Councillor Mistry
	Councillor Harrison as first alternate to Councillor Bacchus in place of Councillor Van Kalwala
Employees Joint Consultative Committee	Councillor BM Patel as second alternate to Councillor Colwill
School Admission Forum	Councillor HM Patel as first alternate to Councillor Colwill
Brent Housing Partnership	Councillor Colwill

5. **Procedural motion**

Councillor Moloney moved a procedural motion proposing a change in the order of business.

RESOLVED:-

that the order of business listed on the summons be amended to allow for Item 8 - Discussion on the new civic centre - to be brought forward as the next item for discussion, after which the order shall be as listed on the summons.

6. **Debate - Civic Centre Project**

The Mayor welcomed representatives of Skanska to the meeting. Representing the Skanska civic centre project team were John Crawley (Operations Director), Bill Brock (Project Director), James McKenzie-Boyle (Community Liaison) and David Selby (Hopkins Architects).

John Crawley opened the presentation by outlining the aspirations for the civic centre project. The aim was to provide a new civic headquarters that would be at

the centre of the community and a beacon of sustainability. It was intended that it would be the first public building to achieve an outstanding BREEAM rating. It was explained later in the discussion that BREEAM stood for Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method and was the leading and most widely used environmental assessment method used to measure the sustainability of new non-domestic buildings in the UK. The project would also seek to promote the diversity of the borough and blur the boundaries between the public and private space. John Crawley gave a brief introduction to Skanska the company, including reference to its vision to be the leading green project developer and contractor. Bill Brock named the rest of the civic centre project team. He then provided an overview of the scheme. The building would comprise nine storeys, set over 2.5 hectares. The project had a planned duration of 108 weeks with handover due in December 2012. Occupation was planned for mid 2013 and would accommodate up to 2000 staff and councillors. The public area functions of the building would include a multipurpose foyer with exhibition space, meeting and conference rooms, a state of the art library and resource centre and the registrar's service. The democratic function would be served by mayoral and members' accommodation, a multi functional civic hall and committee rooms. The Council's administrative functions would be served by providing flexible office space, meeting rooms, a training suite and breakout space. Bill Brock outlined the key stages of the project, beginning with the ground breaking ceremony to be held on 26 January 2011. James McKenzie-Boyle presented the company's community action plan which included opportunities for local business and local employment, training initiatives and engagement with schools and voluntary projects. This activity would be undertaken working with the Council's Regeneration and Major Projects Department. There was a Brent business event planned for 15 February to which over 400 local companies had been invited. Members then viewed a computer generated presentation of how the construction of the civic centre might look.

Councillor John responded to the presentation on behalf of the Executive and the Council. She thanked the representatives from Skanska for their presentation and particularly the presentation of the construction. She stated that there were many buildings of special interest in the borough and it was certain that the new civic centre would be another one. Councillor John reported that she had attended most of the area consultative forums at which the Council's budget was discussed and the same question was asked at all of them regarding how the Council could afford to build a new civic centre when it was having to find savings on such a large scale. However the question was easy to answer because it was a cost saving project. Councillor John was pleased that the project had all party support but expressed surprise that the Green Party did not support it given the environmental credentials associated with it.

The Mayor invited members to comment or ask questions. He explained that any questions that were not answered at the meeting would be answered in writing after the meeting. Councillor Allie asked what the difference was between a library and a resource centre. Councillor HB Patel referred to the budgetary savings of £36M being sought and wondered what efficiencies were being made on the project. Councillor Thomas referred to apprenticeship schemes associated with many large projects and hoped the civic centre project would provide the scope to work with the Council to give young people opportunities. Councillor Al-Ebadi added that special skills were needed to contribute to the project and the borough had a high level of unemployment. He wondered how local people could be trained in the short

timescale available to be able to take up some of these jobs. Councillor Lorber stated that the project had spanned three administrations and that when he was Leader of the Council he had set the challenge of making it the most environmentally friendly building possible and he felt this would be achieved. He also agreed that the building would be cost effective. The new civic centre was an important element in improving the way the Council conducted business and was key to the One Council programme. He added that it was a challenge to convince people of the business case behind building the civic centre.

James McKenzie-Boyle explained that there had already been meetings with the Council, Brent in2 Work and the College of North West London in order to ensure the project would offer opportunities for locally trained people. Aktar Choudhury (Assistant Director - Civic Centre programme) responded that the business case for the civic centre had got stronger with the procurement of the building coming in at less than budgeted for. He stated there would be £2.6m in efficiency savings and £2.4m savings achieved by moving out of inefficient existing properties. An explanation had been given by the Skanska team of how the project would provide local jobs and further details could be sent to any members who wanted it. He was pleased to say that the project remained ahead of schedule.

The Mayor thanked the representatives of Skanska for their presentation and Aktar Choudhury for his contribution.

7. Report from the Leader or members of the Executive

Comprehensive Spending Review

Councillor John stated that when Labour was in opposition on the Council, the administration often claimed it did not have enough to spend but now the Council had received the worst ever financial settlement from the Government. Despite this £40m had been gained by joining with Sarah Teather, MP in making representations to the Secretary of State for Education for continued funding of the Crest academies.

Libraries consultation

Councillor Powney pointed out that the Council's consultation on the Libraries Transformation Project would extend to 4 March after which the results would be reported to the Executive on 11 April 2011.

Area Consultative Forums

Councillor Jones reported that people were attending the current round of forums in large numbers to hear from the Leader of the Council about the cuts faced by the Council. Many had expressed their shock at the scale of the cuts to the Council's budget.

Adult social care review

Councillor R Moher reported that the Executive had recently noted the outcome of the Care Quality Commission's visit which had found the Council's adult social care services continuing to provide an improving service despite the challenges it faced.

Household waste collection consultation

Councillor Powney reported that consultation on the Council's household waste collection strategy had now been completed and the Executive had agreed to implement the strategy largely unchanged which he expected would not only achieve substantial savings but also lead to an improved service.

Quintain 'North West Lands – Wembley' planning application

Councillor Crane invited members to join him in welcoming the news that a planning application had been submitted for the 'North West Lands' covering approximately 14 acres and including 1300 new residencies, 30 shops, a new road, a car park for 800 cars and new open space. It was anticipated that in partnership with Wembley Works, this would lead to the provision of many new jobs. Councillor Crane added that the proposals were in accordance with the Wembley Master Plan, would provide additional much needed housing and enhance the area to be occupied by the new civic centre.

8. Questions from the Opposition and other Non Executive Members

Councillor Brown asked why the Executive considered it acceptable to charge pensioners, those on benefits and everyone else £95 to deal with the problem of rats, while spending £400,000 a year removing the bulky waste charge of just £25 which was only ever paid by those who could afford to, with pensioners and those on benefits getting it free. Councillor Powney replied that the financial position facing the Council meant that it was forced to raise charges. He added that very often the Council was called upon to deal with a rat problem when in fact it was mice and so there was also an operational reason for making the charge. Councillor Powney stated that the charge of £25 for the removal of bulky waste led to more fly tipping and so was counterproductive. Councillor Brown responded that it was a disgrace that the Executive was not committed to cleaning up the borough as evidenced by the £12m savings being made from the street cleansing and waste collection services. He again questioned how the Executive could justify charging the less well off for dealing with the removal of rats.

Councillor Lorber asked if the Executive would support the campaign to save Kensal Rise library. Councillor Powney replied that it would be wrong to speculate on the future of the library before the public consultation was completed. The Executive in April would be making a decision. Councillor Lorber referred to a document produced by consultants in 2004 advising the then Labour administration on the closure of libraries. He then referred to the refurbished libraries at Preston and Neasden which were now faced with closure. Councillor Lorber claimed that people were only talked to by the Council and were not allowed to comment. He contrasted this with the 2008/12 library strategy produced by the last administration which outlined a commitment to the library service. He added that the proposals were destroying the principle that libraries should be local facilities.

Councillor Colwill stated that he had asked for certain streets to be cleaned of the paan spitting residue only to be told that the Council had stopped using the machine that had been in operation to deal with this. He asked why this was when if anything the cleaning operation needed to be extended to street railings.

Councillor Colwill also said that he had noticed many young people smoking in shisha bars which he claimed was equivalent to heavy cigarette smoking. Councillor John agreed that paan spitting was disgusting and noted that it was predominantly a male habit. She agreed it needed cleaning up and urged that people were asked to stop doing it. Regarding smoking in shisha bars, Councillor John replied that she was not aware of the degree to which it could be compared to cigarette smoking and suggested that overview and scrutiny might want to look into the issue.

Councillor Hunter stated that in the final draft of the Brent Placemaking Guide, due to be published in March, it said that it aimed to achieve a "safe, attractive, accessible and inclusive environment". However she felt there were two sections which seemed to do the opposite. It said on page 33 that shared surfaces "embraces the principle of ambiguity by blurring the traditional division between pedestrians and vehicles", and similarly on page 54 with reference to informal crossings. Councillor Hunter referred to the opposition from the RNIB and many other organisations to such shared spaces/informal crossings because of the dangers they posed for anyone with impaired vision. Councillor Hunter asked why these proposals had been included without any caveats or consideration of the evidence-based concerns expressed. Councillor Powney replied that the placemaking guide did indeed contain the sort of caveats referred to and mentioned the concerns expressed by groups representing people with disabilities. He explained that such an approach was a common design concept and there were examples of award winning schemes so it would be strange to exclude such approaches to street design. Councillor Hunter explained that the issue had been raised with her by a blind person. She referred to the design of Sloane Square which she felt showed an award winning scheme was not always right and expressed the hope that the Council would continue to consult over this issue.

Councillor Hirani asked if a risk assessment had been carried out on the potential need to provide additional school places for the children of families moving into the borough due to the housing benefit changes. Councillor Arnold replied that the notice of the change and its timing made it very difficult to make a meaningful projection of the potential pupil movement this might cause. She admitted to being very concerned about the issue because the proposed changes were so extreme and ill thought out. Nobody was able to predict the scale of the movement around London that the changes would cause. This would be in addition to an already existing shortage of school places. Large families would face particular issues and the fear was that Brent would become a destination borough for these families placing even more demand for school places. Councillor Hirani agreed that the proposals were ill thought out and referred to the impact they would also have on people's ability to hold on to their jobs. He commended the work carried out by the Director of Housing and Community Care and his team in trying to prepare for the changes that were to take place.

Councillor McLennan asked if, given the imminent changes to housing benefit entitlement, details could be provided on the current number of households in Brent that would be impacted by the change and whether a cost impact assessment had been carried out on potential numbers moving into the borough from neighbouring high rental cost boroughs such as Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea. Councillor Thomas replied that the changes were likely to have a disproportionate affect on London than on areas outside London. He outlined the estimated effect

but warned the situation would change over time. Councillor Thomas stated that the changes had been instigated by Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea politicians. Councillor McLennan asked to be informed of when detailed figures were known.

Councillor Al-Ebadi asked how many units of social housing would be built within the Wembley regeneration area. Councillor Crane replied that this was a matter which officers were considering and offered to supply Councillor Al-Ebadi with this information. Councillor Al-Ebadi stated that the units currently available in the area were out of the reach of and, therefore, no good to local people.

Councillor Green asked why the Executive had decided to scrap the funding for the Navrati, Eid and St Patrick's Day festivals which were community festivals enjoyed by tens of thousands of Brent residents and organised mostly by the local community while retaining corporate events organised by the Council. Councillor Powney referred to the £37.5m savings having to be made by the Council and to the fact further savings would have to be made for the following two years. This would mean having to consult on further measures to reduce spending. In such circumstances all areas of spending had to be considered. Councillor Powney pointed out that a final decision had yet to be made on the festivals programme. Councillor Green submitted that the Council was safeguarding the events it organised at the expense of those organised by the local community.

Councillor Allie referred to repeated requests to the housing service for a list of the housing associations who have provided the Tenants Services Authority (TSA) with their local standard plans. He asked if the failure of the housing service to provide this information was symptomatic of the administration's failure to protect the housing rights and housing voice of residents of housing associations in Brent. Councillor Thomas replied that the TSA was to be abolished and therefore the focus had changed and there would be different requirements. There would be a move to greater self regulation by housing associations and a requirement for them to submit returns. Tenant representation at board level would ensure that tenants had a say within the new arrangements. Councillor Allie stated that the TSA still existed and that until it was abolished it continued to hold a regulatory role and local standard plans needed to be submitted. The least the housing service could do was to ask which housing associations had submitted their plans.

Councillor Mashari asked if, in light of the Government's devastating 28% cuts to local government which made it impossible for the Council to continue to provide all of its current services, would the Executive consider implementing formal mechanisms to allow for a structured and active approach to engaging with the voluntary and private sectors in order to facilitate the successful take-over of certain services. Councillor Butt replied that the Council was working with the voluntary sector to see what could be supported in light of the Council having to make such cuts. There were already volunteers working in some sectors to support local services. Councillor Butt referred to Local Enterprise Partnerships that were being created to play a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and the creation of local jobs. He was also looking forward to what the forthcoming Localism Bill would have to help the Council in this regard. Councillor Mashari stressed her view that the Council should be willing to listen and engage with other providers to take over certain

services facing closure. The administration needed to show it was trying to protect services by considering every possible alternative to closure.

9. Reports from the Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Councillor Van Kalwala reported on the work of overview and scrutiny since the last meeting of Council. He stated that all the overview and scrutiny committees had met at least once since the last such report.

The Budget and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee had met twice and taken evidence on:

- The council's capital budget
- The projected impact on the council of changes to Housing Benefit
- The emerging draft budget
- Departmental overspends

One of the committee's main roles was to produce a report and recommendations based on the evidence it had received. The first stage of this report – the First Interim Report had been finalised and sent to Executive members with the aim of influencing the development of the draft budget. The report had also been sent to all members as a source of information. At its next meeting on 9 February 2011, the committee would receive the Executive's draft budget and all members of the Council were encouraged to attend. The committee would then send its views to the Executive's budget meeting.

Councillor Van Kalwala referred to the the last meeting the Health Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee which heard from the North West Hospital Trust on 'We Care' Patients experience programme – an initiative designed to ensure a positive patient experience. Following concerns raised at the committee's October meeting members received an update on Brent Community Services. As part of the update the Chief Executive of NHS Brent proposed a number of ideas aimed at dealing with these concerns. A report on the application for GP commissioning pathfinder status was also submitted. Although not successful in the first wave of applications the submission would be improved and resubmitted. The Fuel Poverty Task Group had completed its work and would be reporting to the next meeting of the Committee. The task group recommendations would focus on fuel poverty services in Brent, income maximisation, grant funding, energy efficiency and working with landlords.

The main focus of the One Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee's December meeting was to scrutinise the Direct Services Transformation project proposals prior to them being discussed by the Executive. Councillor Van Kalwala reported that a number of carers attended and were provided with an opportunity to address members. The committee's two recommendations were forwarded to the Executive, one of which was agreed. The committee had also received the Council's annual complaints report and an update on the Carbon Management Programme. This committee now regularly receives an update on the One Council Programme which provides outline information on each of the projects including their status and timescales. This enables the committee to select projects to review in more depth. The car repair and spray painting task group had received evidence

from Street Care and Environmental Health. It would be taking evidence from the Legal and Planning services and undertaking site visits in early February.

Councillor Van Kalwala informed members that the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee spent some time focusing on the primary school expansion strategy. The discussion included information on pressure points, the cost on temporary school places and the use of the Basic Needs Safety Valve funding. The Council's responsibility for the 16-19 agenda, the national policy changes that have taken place since July 2010 and the new guidance on the role of local authorities were also reviewed. The committee has continued its interest in the Special Educational Needs One Council Project, which aimed to increase in borough provision, by reviewing the project concept paper. The task group on prevention of youth offending was focusing on the importance of early intervention and a whole-family approach in preventing offending. Having visited a Youth Inclusion Project hosted by Youth Offending Team staff in November, evidence-gathering from witnesses commenced in January, and had so far included contributions from relevant service managers within the Council and voluntary and community sector partners such as Brent Centre for Young People.

Finally, as chair of the Partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Van Kalwala was able to report that progress on the development of a Voluntary Sector Strategy was discussed at the last meeting. The committee also received a response to a number of issues raised relating to the voluntary sector at the One Community Many Voices scrutiny engagement event. The committee had received a presentation on the Local Economic Assessment and Members had identified issues around employment, skills and transport which the committee would be investigating further. An update on policing priorities, the work of the Crime Prevention Strategy Group and changes to Safer Neighbourhood Teams had been received. He stated that the committee's interest in the implication of how changes to national policy and funding are worked out locally would continue and the committee had received an update on the implementation of the Services for Women in and Exiting Prostitution task group.

10. **2010/11 Mid Year Treasury Management Report**

The 2009 CIPFA Revised Code of Practice for Treasury Management established that the Council should receive a mid-year report on treasury management activity as part of the effort to improve scrutiny and transparency and the report before Council provided this.

RESOLVED:

that the 2010 Treasury Mid Year report be noted.

11. **Motions**

Stonebridge and Strathcona Day Centres

Councillor HB Patel moved the motion circulated in his name which deplored the decision of the Executive to close Stonebridge and Strathcona Day Centres against the wishes of the service users and carers. It asked that the Executive reconsider its decision and stop making excuses for closing adult social care day centres.

Councillor Patel stated that despite the clear views expressed during the consultation exercise in support of retaining building based services the decision had been made on the basis of making improvements to the service when in fact it had been made to save money.

Councillor R Moher felt it was misleading to raise the item now as if the decision was a surprise when the matter had been under consideration for some three years. She stated that it was much better to offer direct personalised services that gave the users options than provide services at run down day centres. She accepted that some users would continue to need day centre care and this would be provided from suitable buildings and not run down premises that the Council could not afford to repair.

Councillor Hunter supported the motion. She felt that the people consulted had not been listened to. Whilst supporting the personalisation of services, she felt the day centres needed to be kept open longer in order to prepare people for the transition.

Following a vote the motion was declared LOST.

Protecting Supporting People funding

Councillor Allie moved the motion circulated in his name which welcomed the removal of ring fencing for much of the Council's funding, noted the important services that Supporting People funding provided and sought the Council's support in calling on the Executive to ensure that funding for Supporting People schemes was protected. He stated that such an assurance would demonstrate the Council's commitment to protecting the most vulnerable people in the borough. It would also reassure those housing associations who were unsure about the future and felt that most councils wanted to abolish supported people teams.

Councillor Thomas referred to the £37m of cuts the Council had to make. Although there was no suggestion that the Council was cutting the Supporting People budget it would have to look for savings to be made whilst continuing to provide the service. Councillor Thomas stated that at this stage he could give no guarantees.

Following a vote the motion was declared LOST.

Save Brent Libraries

Councillor Lorber moved the motion circulated in his name which sought to note that the Liberal Democrats in 2006 scrapped plans to close libraries, believed that a local library was an important community asset and calling on the Executive not to close six libraries.

Following a vote the motion was declared LOST.

Council funding

Councillor Butt moved the motion circulated in his name. He stated that the Government announcements meant that the council was going to have to make £100m of cuts. He added that there would be painful decisions that would have to be taken but everything would be done to minimise the impact of the cuts on front

line services. He also referred to the £85m the Council had lost by the abolition of the Building Schools for the Future programme and the £7m in year withdrawal of grant monies. He stated that despite this the indications were that the amount of Government borrowing was still rising and the Government had been forced to introduce rises in VAT and fares with the result that inflation continued to rise.

Councillor Lorber felt all councils were having to get through difficult times and referred to past cuts made to the health budgets. He said that the previous council administration had managed to freeze Council Tax and still improve services. He submitted it was time for the present administration to take responsibility for what needed to be done as a result of the incompetence of the previous government in managing the economy. He reminded council that the One Council programme had begun under the previous administration.

Councillor HB Patel stated that when the Conservatives were in control of the Council they had managed to reduce the Council Tax every year in contrast to when Labour were in control and increased it every year. He submitted that the present Government had done very well in recovering from the inefficiency of the last Government.

Following a vote the motion submitted was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) to note that prior to the last general election, both the Liberal Democrat and Conservative parties promised to protect front line services;
- (ii) that this Council regrets that this promise to residents of Brent has been broken, and notes that the Council delivers many of the cherished frontline services on which people rely; notes further that Government cuts to this Council's grant amount to 20% of the Council's budget over the next two years; that this level of cut shows the Government's determination to stop councils delivering the services currently on offer; that the politically motivated frontloading of cuts has worsened their impact on services and council employees; and that attempts by Government ministers to attack councils over their implementation of the cuts are as disingenuous as they are counterproductive;
- (iii) to further note that under the previous administration, this Council often heard the leadership bemoan the Government grant as inadequate, and regrets that the opposition have failed to secure a better deal for Brent from their own Government;
- (iv) that this Council resolves to manage the impact of Government cuts for the benefit of all Brent residents, and to focus in particular on protecting the most vulnerable in the community.

North West London Light Railway

Councillor Choudhary moved the motion circulated in his name.

Following a vote the motion submitted was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) to note that:
the North West London Light Railway is a proposal for the construction of a light rail system providing direct links from Brent Cross to Park Royal, Ealing Broadway and Finchley Road, via West Hampstead, and it would largely make use of existing freight lines or abandoned track beds.
- (ii) that Transport for London be called upon to look into the advantages and feasibility of the North West London Light Railway and to engage in discussions with the London Boroughs of Barnet, Brent, Camden, Harrow and Ealing on its strategic potential for supporting new developments and orbital travel.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Councillor Van Kalwala moved the motion circulated in his name.

Following a vote the motion submitted was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) to note that prior to the last general election, both the Liberal Democrat and Conservative Parties pledged to maintain the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA);
- (ii) to also note that:
 - EMA was paid to over 4,000 young people in Brent last year;
 - Brent had the third highest take-up of EMA of any London Borough;
 - that scrapping the EMA will leave thousands of young people with the talent, but not the financial means, to stay in education and fulfil their life dreams;
 - that EMA has been shown to be particularly beneficial among ethnic minority groups; and
 - that together with the trebling of tuition fees, the Government is sending a message to low-income families that talent will not be enough to entitle them to education;
- (iii) that this Council therefore regrets that the parties of coalition government have broken their promises to Brent's young people and their families and calls on the coalition to reinstate the EMA, and to support access to education for all Brent's young people, regardless of their wealth or ethnic background.

12. London Councils Grant Scheme 2011/12

The Mayor submitted that the report before Council, which had been circulated late to members, was urgent because London Councils had requested a response before 1 February 2011 and indicated that later responses would not be accepted.

Councillor R Moher introduced the report which informed members of the proposed level of contribution the Council was being asked to make to the London Councils Grant Scheme in 2011/12.

Councillor Beck moved an amendment that sought to delete the recommendations included in the report and instead asked members to note the findings of the Equalities Impact Assessment, the economies of scale achieved by London boroughs commissioning together and that ending commissions before their natural end was a breach of trust that could cause harm to those organisations. It therefore sought not to approve the proposals to reduce the Council's contribution and to ring fence the £498,705 for the voluntary sector until a review had been completed.

In response to the proposed amendment, Councillor John explained the history to the subject and reminded members of the £37m saving the Council had to make. She stated that the voluntary sector was aware of the effects of taking the decisions proposed but the Council could give no guarantees on final decisions to be taken regarding funding.

The view was expressed that many of the funded organisations provided pan London services but the proposals were being driven by a few boroughs who did not support these services which in turn undermined achieving the two thirds agreement of all London boroughs needed. However, another view expressed was that many of the organisations were not known in Brent and it would be better to get the money to ensure it was spent for the benefit of the borough.

The amendment was put to the vote and declared LOST.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the contribution recommended by London Councils to the grant scheme for 2011/12 be accepted and notified to London Councils by 31 January 2010;
- (ii) to note that the contribution of £436,346 in 2011/12 is a reduction of £498,705;
- (iii) that a review of the funding of affected organisations be carried out to identify recommended criteria for applying for future funding should the Council wish to reinvest any or all of the £498,705 back into the voluntary sector.

The meeting closed at 9.45 pm

COUNCILLOR HARBHAJAN SINGH
Mayor