



## **LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT**

**Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL  
held on Monday, 12 September 2011 at 7.00 pm**

### **PRESENT:**

**The Worshipful the Mayor**  
Councillor M Aslam Choudry

**The Deputy Mayor**  
Councillor Michael Adeyeye

### **COUNCILLORS:**

Aden	Al-Ebadi
Allie	Arnold
Mrs Bacchus	Baker
Beck	Beckman
Beswick	Brown
Butt	Cheese
Chohan	S Choudhary
Colwill	Crane
Cummins	Daly
Denselow	Gladbaum
Green	Harrison
Hector	Hirani
Hossain	Hunter
John	Jones
Kabir	Kansagra
Kataria	Leaman
Long	Lorber
Mashari	McLennan
Mistry	Mitchell Murray
J Moher	R Moher
Moloney	Naheerathan
Oladapo	BM Patel
CJ Patel	HB Patel
HM Patel	RS Patel
Powney	Ms Shaw
Sheth	Singh
Sneddon	Thomas

### **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from: Councillors Ashraf, Castle, Clues, Hashmi, Matthews and Van Kalwala

1. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 July 2011 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

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

None declared.

3. **Mayor's announcements (including any petitions received)**

The Mayor announced that he was hosting an Eid Celebration event on 30 September 2011 and asked that members support this event by purchasing tickets.

The Mayor stated that in accordance with Standing Orders, a list of current petitions showing progress on dealing with them had been circulated around the chamber.

The Mayor welcomed Matt Gardner, the Borough Police Commander, to the meeting. He expressed his gratitude to the commander for finding the time to attend.

4. **Appointments to committees and outside bodies and appointment of chairs/vice chairs (if any)**

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that Mr Alloysius Frederick be appointed as a co-opted member of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2011/12, representing the Roman Catholic faith,
- (ii) that Councillor Lorber be appointed first alternate to Councillor Beck on the Standards Committee in place of Councillor Leaman.

5. **Debate**

The Mayor invited Matt Gardner, the Borough Police Commander to address the meeting. Matt Gardner thanked members for inviting him back one year after he had first attended a Full Council meeting. He stated that he would report on the progress of the Brent police partnership and comment on the disorder that had recently occurred on London's streets and elsewhere.

During the last 12 months the emphasis had been on dealing with crime and enforcing law and order. Matt Gardner stated that there was a need to bring discipline to the small number of people in the borough that did not want to live by the rules. He was getting this message across to his force and driving forward a performance culture. There had been a 10% increase in sanction detection rates. Within a peer group including Haringey, Lambeth and out of London authorities the level of detection in Brent represented the second best performance in the UK (measured against Boroughs placed in Brent's most similar group). The level of

offenders brought to justice represented the best performance within the Metropolitan Police. From public opinion surveys undertaken, the confidence in the police within Brent had risen from 34% to 77% taking Brent from the bottom three and putting it within the top five for London.

Matt Gardner referred to the appointment that day of Bernard Hogan-Howe as the new Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police and how his direction would be important in focussing the resources of the police in London. Crime was divided into two categories - victim crime and state crime where persons were found to be carrying drugs or a weapon. State crime had increased by 28% in the year end 2010/11 and was currently sitting at +48% for the current performance year 2011/12. Matt Gardner asked if councillors were aware of the number of arrests in Brent over the last year and informed them that 13183 arrests had taken place making it the third highest arrest rate in London. There were 700 police officers in Brent supported by the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).

The Commander referred to the use of stop and search. He understood that some young people felt aggrieved over the use of this and accepted that the police did not always get it right. But it involved a relatively small number of people and upon analysing a sample of 100 cases of stop and search he found that 84% of those stopped had a criminal record, 77% were stopped in one of the four highest crime rate wards and 60% were stopped between the hours of 14:00 and 23:59. Added to this Brent had the highest judicial outcome from stop and search in London.

Referring to the work of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs), Matt Gardner accepted that there was a role for them to take part in community activities but he stressed not at the expense of being in uniform on the streets. The SNTs had increased their arrest rate by 62% from 567 to 919 cases in the last year and this demonstrated that they were a serious law enforcement unit within the borough. Further to this, SNT sanction detections had risen by 274%.

Matt Gardner reported that there had been a doubling of the level of resources pulled in to cover London wide events meaning less resources locally. His inspectors were held to account within a strong performance culture and there had been a drive to improve sickness rates resulting in 2,400 officer/staff days being gained and the sickness rate being the lowest in London for police officers, PCSO's and police staff. An award and recognition event had been held where 83 police officers and staff had been recognised for their work. Other issues mentioned by the Commander included the partnership work carried out with the senior officers of the Council, identifying the top 100 families in the borough causing the greatest concerns, anti-social behaviour issues and stepping up work with the Council to deal with brothels operating in the borough. This was 'work in progress'. The Commander said that he would continue with stop and search where necessary and expressed concern over the rise in the number of robberies being committed in the borough. Budget cutbacks of 20% had nearly been achieved but future funding remained uncertain.

Matt Gardner went on to refer to the civil disorder that had happened in August. He asked why there had not been riots on the streets of Brent. His view was that this was because of the unbelievably strong community spirit within Brent and because of the very effective partnership working with the Council which had been able to provide the police with additional vehicles, lift parking restrictions where needed

and maintain a 24 hour response to providing clean-up operations. There had been constant communications maintained between the police, council and other agencies and councillors had made themselves visible to reassure local people about the situation. Another factor had been the use of police intelligence with 80 search warrants being executed and 35 Brent residents identified as committing public disorder offences. The message put out to would be trouble makers had been that Brent was not the place to cause trouble because there were too many police officers on the streets.

Matt Gardner finished by particularly thanking the Leader of the Council, the Lead Member for Crime and Public Safety, the Chief Executive, the Director of Strategy, Partnership and Improvement and the Head of Community Safety. He stressed the importance of maintaining the level of partnership working seen during the disturbances.

The Mayor invited councillors to raise issues and ask questions of the Borough Commander. A point was made that many trials had to be stopped when witnesses did not attend, thereby wasting a lot of police time. It was asked if the 700 police officers in Brent referred to was a reduction from last year. Concern was expressed over the level of sanction crime, dispersal rates and the increase in robberies. The effect of partnership working and engagement with young people was recognised but it was asked if there was anything else the Council could do. A question was asked about how data on satisfaction levels was obtained and how sickness rates had been brought down. The Commander replied that wasted time at trials was an issue which he discussed with the Borough Prosecutor, there had been no decrease in the numbers of police officers and financial savings had been made by other means. He stated that sanction detection was necessary at the level indicated in a borough like Brent and dispersal zones were an effective tool in which the SNTs played a critical role. On a quarterly basis, 500 victims of crime were surveyed to gain a view on the confidence local people had in the police. Sickness rates had been brought down to an average of 5.2 days for police officers which was substantially less than the Metropolitan Police average.

It was asked if reconsideration would be given to extending the Notting Hill carnival footprint into Kensal Green. A question was asked around the release of DNA figures for those not subject to section 5 public order charges. The hope was expressed that the disturbances would be assessed over a period of time to allow a more considered analysis of what happened. It was suggested that past assurances had been given that SNTs would remain within their areas at all times but on a number of occasions they had been deployed away from their areas. The Commander replied that the carnival would not be extended into Kensal Green unless intelligence indicated a need - an issue that would be addressed centrally at New Scotland Yard. There were currently six outstanding cases where suspects were being traced through their DNA. He would be able to supply figures regarding section 5 arrests outside the meeting. He explained that it was only under exceptional circumstances when SNTs would be taken away from their area and all officers had to be mobilised during the disturbances. However it was important to allow some flexibility across neighbouring ward boundaries. The Commander stressed that he agreed 'flexing' of SNT officers across the borough into neighbouring wards. To be unable to put police and PCSO's where intelligence and crime demanded was not an effective use of his people.

Reference was made to the large number of arrests made in the borough and further explanation sought over the reasons for this. It was asked if the police felt well equipped to cover the Olympics in 2012. The comment was made that apart from the demonisation of young people another unedifying aspect of the disturbances was the public disagreement between the Home Office and the Metropolitan Police. The Commander replied that reasons for arrest ranged from shoplifting to murder and that the number of arrests was high because his police force worked hard to achieve this. He could supply a breakdown of all the arrests outside the meeting. All police leave had been cancelled for the period of the Olympics and changes to shifts would mean police officers working 12 hour days. He wanted to re-assure everyone that the event would be there to enjoy and that police resources would allow this. However, the Commander asked for it to be remembered that police resources would be stretched and that if a police presence was requested for any local events taking place during the period of the Olympics this needed to be borne in mind.

A question was asked as to how many youth gangs there were and what was done to engage with the young people involved in them. It was said that some residents' confidence in the police was undermined by their experience of receiving a poor service in response to dialling 999 and that using the 101 number had not helped. Reference was made to three muggings in Gladstone Park and the police comment that people should not go to the park alone. This seemed to be unfair advice to people who wanted to visit the park. With reference to the SNT's, it was requested that there be more effective engagement between the teams and ward councillors. The Commander replied that he did not know the exact number of gangs operating but suggested it could be 20 or more. He could not comment on what intervention might be available. Many people received a good service from dialling 999 or 101 but as he had said earlier it was not possible to deliver a perfect service. Nevertheless he felt the 101 service would get better and relieve pressure on the 999 service. The Commander added that the councillor who asked the question had asked the same question at a previous public meeting where a large majority of the audience had expressed great satisfaction with the option the '101' number offered. An arrest had recently been made in connection with the incidents at Gladstone Park. Before then it had been important to send out the right message to people before a grip on the situation had been taken. There were arrangements in place for communication from the SNTs to be channelled through the appropriate Executive Lead Member. He did not know if this had happened but there would continue to be efforts made to improve communication.

Councillor John (Leader) concluded the debate by congratulating the Borough Commander on doing a first class job during very difficult times. She referred to motions to be debated later in the meeting which showed the confidence councillors had in the local police service. Councillor John reminded members that partnership working with the police was nothing new in Brent. She expressed irritation over the number of times she heard it suggested that trouble would break out in Brent during the period of the recent disturbances. It was a measure of the community strength along with the joint action taken that meant little trouble occurred. The sharing of information had been excellent. She had attended the cctv control room to see it in operation. Feedback from a meeting of London borough leaders at the House of Commons revealed that the community action taken on the St Raphael's estate had been recognised at a London level. The police had been effective in dispelling rumours that circulated about possible trouble spots and she thanked Councillor

Beswick (Lead Member for Crime and Public Safety) for ensuring a good level of communication was maintained. Councillor John agreed that time was necessary to analyse what had happened to cause the disturbances but in the meantime she thanked all those involved in minimising the impact it had on Brent.

The Mayor thanked councillors for their contributions and thanked Matt Gardner for his attendance.

## 6. **Report from the Leader or members of the Executive**

### **(a) Items reported by the Executive**

#### *Civil disturbances - Council and partner response*

The Leader referred to the earlier debate on crime and community safety and the motions to be discussed later in the meeting regarding the civil disturbances.

#### *Schools contracts - joint procurement of school services*

Councillor Arnold (Lead Member for Children and Families) reported that the Executive had approved a framework agreement for providing cleaning services to schools which would offer schools greater choice and increase efficiency.

#### *Consultation on schools for the future and schools places strategy*

Councillor Arnold (Lead Member for Children and Families) reported that demand for school places was forecast to exceed supply over the next four years. Schools and governing bodies had been consulted on the types of schools that should be developed and their views had been fed in to the strategy to provide primary school places up to 2014/15 considered by the Executive at its last meeting.

#### *Town centre improvement - Willesden Green*

Councillor Crane (Lead Member for Regeneration and Major Projects) reported that the Council had successfully bid to the Mayor of London's 'out of London fund' and had received £1/2M. A number of projects focussed on current strategic areas had been considered for spending the money on and it had been decided to put it towards the Willesden Green project which aimed to bring back into use 20 shops and redevelop the library building to include the provision of commercial studios. It was hoped this would kick start regeneration of the area and create additional local jobs.

#### *Park Royal business improvement district status*

Councillor Crane (Lead Member for Regeneration and Major Projects) reported on the support given by the Council to the Park Royal partnership to achieve Business Improvement District (BID) status. This would result in inward investment of around £1M per annum for 5 years. The BID company was in the process of being established.

#### *Village school temporary building*

Councillor Crane (Lead Member for Regeneration and Major Projects) reported that the temporary school building had been completed on time and within budget and so was now being occupied for the start of the new school year. Rebuilding of the main school building had begun in July and was on programme.

#### *School crossing patrols*

Councillor J Moher (Lead Member for Highways and Transportation) reported that following consultation, a proposal would be put to the Executive not to withdraw any patrols at the present time. Instead, a voluntary approach would be adopted whereby discussions would be held with schools to encourage them to meet the costs in locations where it was considered a patrol was still necessary. In other areas natural wastage would be allowed to reduce the number of patrols where these were no longer needed because of improvements in road safety. He confirmed that the Council would continue to use the risk evaluation model in order to take decisions on where patrols were needed.

**b. Decisions taken by the Executive under the Council's urgency provisions**

RESOLVED:-

that the decisions taken by the Executive under the Council's urgency provisions relating to the following be noted:

Consideration of representations to proposals to introduce pay and display parking controls in Preston Road and Bridge Road

Removal and replacement of contaminated soil from St Raphael's and Brentfield estates

**7. Questions from the Opposition and other Non- Executive Members**

Councillor Kabir asked how many families were on the waiting list for social housing. Councillor Long (Lead Member for Housing) replied that there were 17289 now on the waiting list. This had recently risen from 15500 so it could be assumed there were already more than this. Councillor Kabir responded by saying that the report to the Executive in July on South Kilburn regeneration showed the impact the new 'affordable rent' model had on rents in South Kilburn. A current rent of around £88 for a 2 bedroom property increased to between £250 and £260 per week and an even greater difference for a 4 bedroom property rising from £106 to £450 per week.

Councillor Cummins suggested that a degree of localism should be applied to the allocation of section 106 planning gain monies. He felt many of the areas in which these funds were generated did not benefit from them. He asked if a review would be carried out. Councillor Powney (Lead Member for Environment and Neighbourhoods) replied that a report to be submitted to the Executive in a few months' time would cover this point. In the meantime he pointed out that the use of section 106 monies was not restricted to environment and transport schemes but could also be used on sports and arts projects. However its use was subject to legal constraints. Councillor Cummins added that he hoped to have the opportunity to have an input into the report to the Executive.

Councillor Colwill asked for an explanation on what was happening at the John Billam centre. Councillor R Moher (Lead Member for Adults and Health) explained that the intentions for the John Billam centre had not changed but fewer past residents of the Albert Road day centre would now be going to go to John Billam. This was as a result of the personalisation budget which had resulted in more

people purchasing services outside the centre. A similar thing was happening at Strathcona. This therefore presented an opportunity to look at more creative ways of using the remaining space, with one idea being the creation of a meeting hub for older people. Councillor Colwill noted the answer given.

Councillor Hunter referred to the ambition for the new Civic Centre to be the greenest building in the UK and asked what scope existed to improve the green credentials of the remaining Council stock. Councillor Powney (Lead Member for Environment and Neighbourhoods) replied that the Civic Centre was a very important component towards the Council achieving its carbon emissions target. Schools were another important element but this depended on getting the co-operation of the head teachers. The climate change steering group had already begun looking at this. Councillor Hunter felt there were other things that could be done and expressed the hope that the pressure on head teachers to improve schools would be maintained. She referred to the Council's Green Charter and felt there needed to be a clearer indication of who was responsible for the various actions and when these would be implemented. She challenged colleagues in the chamber to sign up to the green climate change pledge.

Councillor Gladbaum asked how much budget had been lost to assist with Free Schools opening. Councillor Arnold (Lead Member for Children and Families) replied that the general fund had been top sliced by £1m which had drained funding for Brent schools. The Council had challenged this action and the Minister was having to reconsider the matter. Councillor Gladbaum noted the answer she had received.

Councillor Brown asked if, under the Council's new waste collection arrangements, fallen leaves would continue to be collected for composting. Councillor Powney (Lead Member for Environment and Neighbourhoods) replied that they would not and that this matter had been discussed at a recent meeting of the Call-in Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Fallen leaves amounted to only a small percentage of the total tonnage collected and would be covered by the general waste collection arrangements. Councillor Brown felt the Council was missing out on utilising leaves for composting and if they remained on the streets they would constitute a health and safety hazard as well as look unsightly. He felt the decision not to collect them was a disproportionate action and a false economy.

Councillor Denselow asked for assurance that residents' concerns were being addressed with regard to the High Speed 2 plans. Councillor Crane (Lead Member for Regeneration and Major Projects) replied that the Executive was soon to receive a report seeking endorsement of the response to the consultation submitted to the Secretary of State. It expressed broad support for the project but with caveats. A number of concerns expressed by residents and amenity groups including concerns regarding the proposed vent shaft in Queens Park had not so far been addressed and the Council was also asking for that to happen. In addition Members had received a briefing on the project in June. Councillor Denselow noted the reply he had received.

Councillor Beck referred to the planning applications submitted for the Crest Academies and the meeting the Leader had had with those residents who had expressed concerns about the development. He asked for feedback from that meeting. Councillor John (Leader) replied that residents had attended the meeting



with a long list of concerns. It was a difficult site to develop and she felt it was a shame that an adjacent site had not been purchased which would have made the development easier. A lot of information had been given to residents and there was still time for a further meeting if necessary. The application was due to be submitted to the Planning Committee at the end of September. It was obviously not possible to pre-empt the committee's decision but Councillor John stated that she had some sympathy with some of the concerns raised. Councillor Beck noted the answer he had received.

Councillor McLennan raised concerns she had on the Taxicard scheme and asked for an update. Councillor R Moher (Lead Member for Adults and Health) replied by reminding members that there had been a moratorium placed on new Taxicard applications because London Councils had been over budget on the scheme. A review of the scheme had recommended lifting the moratorium but with those users not automatically qualifying having to undergo a mobility test and restoration of the double swipe provision. Efforts were also being made to reduce demand on the scheme. For instance, it had been found that people used it to get to hospital rather than use the hospital transport available so it was necessary to discuss with hospitals how they could improve their service. A report on the scheme would be submitted to the next meeting of the Executive. Councillor McLennan noted the reply she had received.

## **8. Reports from the Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

Councillor Kabir (Chair of Health Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee) reported on behalf of the chairs of the overview and scrutiny committees. She first reported from her own committee which had considered the results of the Brent GP patient survey for the final quarter of 2010/11. Councillor Kabir stated that this had been an important issue for the committee, as members were not convinced that Brent residents were getting the service from GPs they deserved. Satisfaction with GP access remained below both the London and national average and the emerging GP commissioning consortia in Brent had been asked to attend the next meeting of the committee to discuss the matter. The committee had received a presentation from North West London Hospitals and NHS Brent on plans to close the paediatric assessment unit at Central Middlesex Hospital. The unit had only been open since October 2010, but the majority of cases were seen at the Urgent Care Centre at the hospital, meaning that it was an underused service. Although the case for closing it appeared strong, the committee was concerned that this would result in no paediatric consultant cover at the hospital. As a result, members asked that the trust consult informally with service users, especially sickle cell patients, before a decision was made whether to go out to formal consultation on the proposal.

Councillor Kabir reported that she and the vice-chair of the committee had met with members of Brent's Local Medical Committee (LMC). The LMC represents local GPs in discussions with NHS Brent and on issues connected to their services in the borough. She stated that she was keen for the Health Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be informed by as many relevant groups as possible and so was pleased to have formed a relationship with a group like the Brent LMC.

The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee had discussed a number of issues including services for children with learning and physical

disabilities (which would be a standing item for the committee), the implications of the Government's policy on academies, which included contributions from members of Brent's Youth Parliament. Their views on this issue, based on their experiences in their own schools, had been extremely useful for the committee. The committee also discussed the final report of the Youth Offending Task Group, which was approved and would be submitted to the Executive.

The Partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee had focussed on the performance of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in Brent and the impact of the Localism Bill on registered providers. Representatives from Stadium Housing and Octavia housing had engaged with members on a number of issues including developing further family size housing provision, the impact of changes to housing benefit, the level of rent RSLs were able to charge, changes to tenancies and housing maintenance. The Committee had received a report on Ward Working May 2010–May 2011. Discussion had covered work undertaken on outreach, communications, partnerships, consultations and the projects on which ward budgets were spent. The Committee also received a presentation on partnership working in Brent. Members were keen to focus on recent partnership projects, in particular the intelligence hub, which would enable intelligence sharing with partners and Community Based Budgeting.

The Budget and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee had reviewed the budget strategy 2012/13 to 2015/16. Members had explored issues relating to spending and resource assumptions, pensions and the capital programme. Members were also informed on the proposals in the local government resources review.

The One Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee had not met since the last Council meeting but was due to discuss the delivery of the Waste and Street Cleansing Review, council performance and receive an update on the Localism Bill.

Finally, Councillor Kabir reported on the 'One Community Many Voices' event the overview and scrutiny committee chairs would be hosting as part of Local Democracy Week. It was to take place on 10 October at 6.30pm at the Town Hall and would be an informal café style 'speed dating' event to allow participants to raise issues they would like overview and scrutiny to look at. All members were invited to join the event.

## **9. The Treasury Management Annual Report 2010/11**

Members received the report on borrowing and investment activity, and performance compared to prudential indicators during 2010/11.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the Treasury Management annual Report set out in section 3 of the report and the Annual Investment Strategy Report set out in section 4 of the report be approved;
- (ii) that the outturn for prudential indicators set out in section 5 of the report be noted;

- (iii) that the updated position in 2011/12 set out in the report under the heading *Developments since the end of the year* be noted.

## 10. **Proposed changes to Area Housing Boards**

Members considered the report which proposed to move from the current area housing board structure to a model based on a more open style consultation approach which would continue to focus on scrutiny and monitoring by residents of housing service delivery but would aim to significantly increase the numbers of council tenants participating in such events.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the four existing Area Housing Boards (“AHBs”) be dissolved and replaced with a new structure, as outlined in the report circulated, as a forum for consultation with council tenants;
- (ii) that the new open forum structure be established with no geographical boundaries within the borough of Brent;
- (iii) that four meetings be held each year on a rotating basis in the same geographical areas as the current AHBs, e.g. Wembley at the Town Hall, Harlesden and Brentfield/St Raphael’s at Gwyneth Rickus building, South Kilburn at a new venue to be found and North Kilburn (East Brent) at Willesden Library Centre;
- (iv) that the Aims of the new structure be:
  - a) to involve customers in the provision of housing services,
  - b) to monitor the performance of housing management and contractors of BHP/Council’s housing management service and other parts of housing services,
  - c) to develop new ideas and methods for solving council housing problems,
  - d) to influence the practices and policies that determine the provision of housing services,
  - e) to consider the wider community problems and find solutions to them,
  - f) to advise BHP/council’s housing management service on local priorities for the provision of housing services and the allocation of resources,
  - g) to advise BHP/council’s housing management service in the development of its business strategy/area strategy,
  - h) to liaise with other groups and organisations.
- (v) that there be open membership to the new structure for monitoring, consultation and debate on housing issues, i.e. membership to be open to all residents in tenant or leasehold properties that are managed by BHP on behalf of the council;
- (vi) that councillors be invited to attend the open forum;
- (vii) that there be no voting rights for any attendees at the open forum;

- (viii) that the purpose of the new structure be to consult, inform and empower tenants and leaseholders in the management of their homes;
- (ix) that each year in June one representative from each registered tenants' and residents' association be put forward to join a forum organising team established by BHP/council's housing management service to seek advice on the composition of agendas, the format of the open forums and shaping outcomes from open forum sessions; the forum organising team to meet at least eight times a year and there be no voting rights for any attendees;
- (x) that meetings be organised and led by officers from BHP/council's housing management service with any person being allowed to speak during open discussions and workshops (BHP officers, BHP board members, officers from the council's housing management service and members of the forum organising team may introduce individual agenda items and may lead workshops);
- (xi) that invitations to attend the open forum be publicised in the residents' quarterly newsletters 'Partnership News'; BHP's web site; flyers; at residents association meetings; by email; personal invitations to all councillors; and by other appropriate means of communication;
- (xii) that the proposed new forum structure be called "*Talkback*";
- (xiii) that paragraphs 10.12 to 10.20 of Article 10 of Part 2 of the Council's Constitution be amended on the terms set out in Appendix 1 to the report circulated.

## 11. **Motions**

### 11.1 **Democratic decision making in Brent**

Councillor Hunter moved the motion circulated in her and Councillors Lorber, Brown and Beck's names. She submitted that the present decision making structure of the Council provided no opportunity for debate and concentrated power into the hands of ten councillors and the Chief Whip. There was now a chance to change things under the Localism Bill. Whilst the strength of the present system was the speed of decision making, Councillor Hunter felt it distanced other councillors from those decisions and that overview and scrutiny often only took place after the event. She felt there was a need for a healthy debate on issues before decisions were taken and in this way it would engage the expertise of all members of the Council.

Councillor John felt there was an assumption that the old committee system was better when in fact power was concentrated in the hands of the chairs of committees, who now effectively formed the Executive. Other councillors had little influence and were locked into attending many meetings instead of being out in their communities meeting with local residents. Councillor John felt backbench members had ample opportunity to influence Council policy and decision making especially through their involvement in scrutiny task groups. She feared a return to the committee system would incur extra costs and in any case pointed out that the final form of the Localism Bill was far from clear.

Councillor Kansagra submitted that the old committee system was more democratic and that those in opposition had no power or authority to change decisions. His view was that opposition and backbench councillors were reduced to being advocates for local residents. Councillor Kansagra felt that decision making needed to be taken at the lowest level possible.

The motion was put to the vote and declared LOST.

### 11.2 **Supporting Cricklewood and its residents (Outer London Fund)**

Councillor Lorber moved the motion circulated in his and Councillors Leaman, Matthews and Brown's names which was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the Council welcomes the award of £500,000 to Willesden Town Centre from the Outer London Fund (first round) and thanks and congratulates all those who played a part in securing this funding which would benefit Willesden residents;
- (ii) that it be noted that the Cricklewood Improvement Programme has developed a bid to the Outer London Fund (second round) which if successful, would deliver funding to improve the environment and benefit the local economy in Cricklewood;
- (iii) that the fact that this bid received support from Barnet Council and Camden Council, which along with Brent Council serve the Cricklewood area, be welcomed;
- (iv) that the members of the Cricklewood Improvement Project be thanked for the voluntary effort that they have contributed in order to improve and enhance the area and congratulates them on their hard work;
- (v) that the Cricklewood Outer London Fund bid be given the full backing of the Council.

### 11.3 **August riots**

Councillor Lorber moved the motion circulated in his and Councillors Allie, Brown and Beck's names which was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the events of 6 to 10 August 2011 be noted with concern and distress, including the death of Richard Mannington Bowes in Ealing following an assault; the injuries to two police officers hit by a car in Fulton Road, Wembley and the damage to property and disorder in Kilburn and Harlesden;
- (ii) that the actions of all those who participated in disorder, looting and other illegal activity be condemned;

- (iii) that it be noted that the disorder in Brent was less than that in many other areas and welcomes the restraint, responsibility and community spirit demonstrated by most Brent citizens;
- (iv) that tribute be paid to the police, emergency services, council staff and members of other organisations who worked to stop and prevent violence and disorder on Brent streets, often at personal risk and for long hours.

#### **11.4 Stop and search**

Councillor Lorber moved the motion circulated in his and Councillors Allie, Brown and Beck's names which was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

that good relations between the police and the community they serve are important; the legitimate concerns some members of the community have about the use of stop and search powers be recognised; the work of the Youth Parliament and others to improve communication between the police and young people be welcomed and the commitment of the Borough Commander to treat this issue seriously be welcomed.

#### **11.5 Libraries - working with the community**

Councillor Lorber moved the motion circulated in his and Councillors Brown, Beck and Castle's names which called for the Council to suspend the library closure programme and work with interested local groups to secure the future of the six libraries under threat. The motion was put to the vote and declared LOST.

#### **11.6 Civil disorder**

Councillor HB Patel moved the motion circulated in his name. He expressed his regret that the riots took place and resulted in people dying and getting injured. The outcome had presented the country with a huge financial cost and he felt that it had shown the difference between what people needed and what they wanted. Most looting had been driven by people wanting more and not by any need. Councillor Beswick stated that everyone had a right to be free from crime and free from the risk of crime. He referred to the absence of both the Prime Minister and the London Mayor, both away on holiday, when the disturbances broke out and criticised their slowness to return. He referred to the Justice Secretary, Kenneth Clark's comments that the youth element were a feral underclass. Councillor Beswick questioned where the leadership had been during the crisis. He stated that misinformation had been given out that there was trouble in Brent and it took the council working with community leaders to correct this. He felt that there was a lack of morality typified by MPs fiddling their expenses while London burned. Councillor Lorber felt a moment of reflection was needed so that findings of fact could be considered. It was clear that the police had misjudged the situation in Tottenham that had led up to the riots and he felt that unfortunately it could not be assumed that such rioting would not happen again. History showed that rioting was a frequent event in relatively recent times. All that could be done was to work in partnership with the other agencies to try to prevent it happening. Councillor Lorber

felt one aspect the troubles had highlighted was the need for a responsible press which did not mislead people in the hunt for a good story.

The motion was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that this country has epitomized freedom under the rule of law and sets a raw model for much of the rest of the world; unfortunately, the riots of last month were a blemish and traumatized the country, as lawless thugs roamed the streets, looting and burning shops, businesses and houses in several parts of London and other cities instilling fear and a feeling of insecurity in all;
- (ii) that praise be given to the resilience, calm and community spirit exhibited by the residents of this borough in such atrocious circumstances;
- (iii) that congratulations and sincere thanks be expressed to the police and fire authorities in Brent and throughout the country for handling the horrific events effectively and with speed; the council also notes and expresses thanks to the Courts for the subsequent swiftness of the justice dispensed;
- (iv) that everyone be assured that adequate measures will be in place for dealing with any such criminal acts in the future, as these acts are deplored, inexcusable and totally intolerable and this council deplores the criminality of the rioting thugs.

#### **11.7 Response to civil disorder**

Councillor Beswick moved the motion circulated in his name. He referred to part of the Borough Commander's presentation which referred to partnership working and stated that the police could not deal with crime on their own. This included councillors standing up for their communities and this was demonstrated by the leadership shown by the Leader of the Council. Relevant councillors and officers were called on and the Chief Executive made contact with partner agencies. Councillor Beswick wanted it put on record the Council's appreciation of the efforts of all those involved which included contributing to the efforts of other boroughs and other police forces from outside London coming to help. Councillor Kansagra added his congratulations to the efforts of the police, council officers and fellow councillors who had all worked to keep Brent safe. However, he felt councillors needed to be kept better informed of what was happening and he felt that he had not been kept as informed as he would have liked.

RESOLVED:-

that the deepest gratitude be expressed to the many staff and partners whose timely, coordinated and dedicated approach to public service ensured that residents of this borough were protected from the terror of civil disorder suffered elsewhere in London during August 2011, including Brent's police, safer neighbourhood teams, fire service, health service, cleaning contractors and council staff.

#### **11.8 Cuts to police budgets**

Councillor Hirani moved the motion circulated in his name which was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

that, despite pre-election promises to protect frontline services, it be noted that irresponsible Government cuts to police budgets will mean the loss of police officers, SNT sergeants, and the end of the safer neighbourhoods ward guarantee; in light of recent civil disturbance these cuts which threaten the safety of Brent residents be condemned; and to note that Ken Livingstone has promised to preserve police numbers in Brent and across London when he is re-elected Mayor of London.

#### 11.9 **School places**

Councillor Gladbaum moved the motion circulated in her name which was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

that it be noted with concern that the supply of school places in the borough is insufficient to meet demand, meaning that over the next four years there will be a deficit equivalent to 15 forms of entry; to further note that it will cost over £50million to meet demand in the short term, so that Government funding of £500million for the whole of London is woefully insufficient; to note that at the August meeting of the Executive a commitment was made to actively lobby for adequate funding, and as a first step in achieving this calls on Brent Central's government minister to stand up for this borough's children so that every one of them has a place to go to school.

#### 12. **Urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 9.27 pm

COUNCILLOR M ASLAM CHOUDRY  
Mayor