



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

**Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
held on Monday 19 November 2012 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Michael Adeyeye

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Bobby Thomas

COUNCILLORS:

Aden	Al-Ebadi
Allie	Arnold
Ashraf	Mrs Bacchus
Baker	Beck
Beswick	Brown
Butt	Cheese
Chohan	S Choudhary
A Choudry	Colwill
Crane	Cummins
Daly	Denselow
Gladbaum	Harrison
Hashmi	Hector
Hirani	Hopkins
Hossain	Hunter
John	Jones
Kabir	Kansagra
Kataria	Leaman
Long	Lorber
Mashari	Matthews
McLennan	J Moher
R Moher	Moloney
Naheerathan	Ogunro
Oladapo	BM Patel
CJ Patel	HB Patel
HM Patel	RS Patel
Pavey	Powney
Ms Shaw	Ketan Sheth
Krupa Sheth	Sneddon
Van Kalwala	

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: Councillors Mitchell Murray

1. Procedural motions

Councillor Butt moved a procedural motion stating that it was with considerable regret and sadness that following advice received from the Director of Legal and Procurement, in order to enable the proper democratic meeting of the Full Council to take place, he had felt it necessary to exclude a number of members of the public who had previously caused such disruption to Council meetings and meetings of the Executive to the extent those meetings had not been able to continue without moving to another room and thereby restricting the rights of the public to observe the proceedings.

Councillor Butt added that he would continue to require officers to work to find a better solution than excluding members of the public from the Town Hall.

RESOLVED:

that the exclusion from this Full Council meeting of members of the public who have caused disruption to the previous Full Council meeting and/or to the previous meeting of the Executive and/or the Budget and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee be endorsed.

Councillor Choudhary moved a procedural motion in respect of discussing summons item 7.

RESOLVED:

that in respect of the item on the 1st reading debate – 2013/14 budget:

the Leader be permitted up to 10 minutes in which to present the reports, the Leaders of the Liberal Democrat Group and the Conservative Group be permitted up to 10 minutes each to debate the item, with a general debate to follow, in accordance with Standing Order 44(b).

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 September 2012 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests

None declared.

4. Mayor's announcements

The Mayor introduced Christine Gilbert to the meeting as the newly appointed interim Chief Executive.

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 referred to his announcement at the last meeting of Full Council that Sir Rhodes Boyson had passed away and invited members to pay tribute.

The Mayor announced with sadness that Shabna Abbasi, a school governor at Oliver Goldsmith primary school, had died at the young age of 39, leaving a husband and three children, all who attended the school. He added that she was a dynamic parent governor who touched the lives of all parents, pupils, teachers and governors she had dealings with. Councillor J Moher paid tribute to the work of Shabna Abbasi.

The Mayor announced that he had decided to choose three chaplains, the Revds Graham Noyce and Felicity Scroggie, and Pastor Olufemi Popoola to be his spiritual mentors, guides and advisers for his mayoral year.

The Mayor was delighted to announce that he would be holding his charity Christmas party on 30 November 2012 and tickets were available from his office.

Members paid tribute to Sir Rhodes Boyson who had passed away on 28 August 2012.

Councillor Lorber paid tribute to the work of Jeff Bartley, Environmental Projects and Policy Manager, who passed away on 12 November 2012.

Members stood for one minute's silence in memory of Jeff Bartley.

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

There were none.

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

The Leader welcomed Christine Gilbert to the meeting as the Council's new interim Chief Executive. He referred to the recently held leadership awaydays and stated that the issues discussed would feature in the First Reading debate. Councillor Butt spoke in support of the White Ribbon Campaign against violence towards women, which was to be launched within the Council on Monday 26 November 2012 and he hoped all members would sign up to it.

Councillor R Moher stated that the recent budget awaydays had not been easy because of the lack of financial detail available to the Council. The local government settlement was due to be announced shortly before Christmas. In the meantime the Government had drip fed proposals affecting the resourcing of local government. Councillor R Moher referred to the localisation of Council Tax support. Preparations for a scheme were progressing as far as possible on the basis of it being at no additional cost to the Council. The proposed scheme would be put before members at a special meeting of Full Council on 10 December 2012. The current level of spend by the Government had been reduced for passing on to Councils. However the Government had recently invited bids for additional

resources which appeared to be on a one-off basis. The short notice of the availability of these funds and the consequent need to change the scheme if a bid was successful presented a high risk to the Council so the Executive had decided to continue with its current plans.

Councillor Hirani referred to the partial transfer of the public health function to local government as from 1 April 2013. The Executive had agreed an integrated model of work headed by a full time director. Three public health areas would focus on – health intelligence, public health commissioning and health improvement. Councillor Hirani reported that the Executive had agreed the establishment of a carer services hub advice and support service. A consultation exercise had identified what carers thought was important resulting in the following seven priorities being mandatory priorities to be delivered as part of the contract:

- Information and advice
- Access to health and wellbeing services
- Whole family support
- Money and benefits advice
- Access to work and training
- Caring support and training
- Emergency support.

Councillor Hirani stated that Supporting People was a national preventative programme administered by local government. In Brent this programme also extended to provide a range of non-statutory welfare services. The Executive had agreed a contractual arrangement with providers that had led to an improved service and saved £1.6M.

Councillor Arnold reported that the Executive had agreed a Plan for Children and Families in Brent which underpinned the Council's ambition to improve outcomes for children and their families. She urged members to look at the plan and note the priorities set out in it. Councillor Arnold reported that the £5M redeveloped Roundwood Youth Centre had been launched on 1 November 2012. She recommended that members watch the video of the opening on the *b my voice* web-site. Councillor Arnold reminded members of the successful work undertaken to attract *myplacefunding* for the project and referred to some of the out of school activities that would take place at the centre. Councillor Arnold stated that the Executive had endorsed an action plan for adoption which focused on addressing drift in the placement of children largely through better data collection, more robust performance management systems and an increased focus on the quality of planning. A recent inspection had shown the service provided good support to children and families in Brent but there was an issue around the time it took to secure a placement.

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

Councillor Brown stated that it should not surprise anyone that every Autumn leaves fell off deciduous trees and that most Autumns experienced wet weather. The combination of wet leaves on damp pavements was dangerous. Councillor Brown asked if, given the length of time it had taken the Council to sweep some roads, it was a mistake to abandon the special leaf-fall collections. Councillor J Moher (Lead Member for Highways and Transportation) replied by agreeing that

fallen leaves could be a nuisance but that the Council was faced with having to prioritise the allocation of scarce resources. He added that there was some existing provision and that residents could help themselves by clearing leaves from outside their houses. Councillor Brown responded by criticising the excuse that it was all down to money and felt residents would not be pleased with the suggestion that they sweep the leaves themselves. He referred to the previous Council Administration which had ensured adequate resources were available to properly sweep the streets and the risk now of increased insurance claims from people slipping on the leaves.

Councillor Pavey referred to details from the Government of its plans to slash Early Intervention services. He asked for an outline of what impact this would have on the most vulnerable residents in Brent, and whether the Council would write to the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for an urgent rethink on this decision. Councillor Arnold (Lead Member for Children and Families) replied that the Government had moved the goal posts on early intervention work and was top slicing the budget to retain the money centrally to develop initiatives. Some money was being passed on but other funding remained unaccounted for leaving a 33% cut in the level of funding to the Council. Councillor Arnold outlined some of the areas that would suffer from this funding shortfall and expressed her concern at why this situation was being allowed to happen. Councillor Pavey referred to a situation known to him where the introduction to a sure start centre had provided the required support and how this change in funding jeopardised the provision of such support. He regarded the cut as vicious and heartless.

Councillor Cheese asked why local residents were being charged for the disposal of bulky waste at Abbey Road Re-use and Recycling Centre despite the assurances previously received that the charges were targeted at trade waste customers such as builders. Councillor Powney (Lead Member for Environment and Neighbourhoods) replied that any genuine resident of the borough could arrange to have their bulky rubbish removed free of charge. There was no reason for them to have to drive to the re-use and recycling centre. The purpose behind the charge for DIY related disposal was to bring it into line with neighbouring sites and reduce demand for this type of disposal. The income to West London Waste from such charges was substantial and amounted to £250,000 per annum. Councillor Cheese responded that it had been his understanding that West London Waste would take a pragmatic view on very small quantities of waste, and that the average householder delivering small quantities of waste in their own car would be largely unaffected. This was clearly not happening as he had received reports of intransigent staff and of residents being charged. He felt that this was not about tackling abuse of the waste disposal system but more about supporting Waste London Waste's finances. He suggested Brent taxpayers were having to contribute up to £609,000 in order to keep West London Waste solvent and this should have been reported to the Budget and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor HB Patel referred to the provision of alley gates which were popular with local residents because they helped prevent fly tipping, burglaries etc. About 200 gates had been installed across the borough. He asked, given that residents wanted alley gates, why a decision had been made not to allow the use of ward working funding for this. Councillor Jones (Lead Member for Customers and Citizens) replied that she was proud of the alley-gating scheme but it had been disbanded because cuts in funding meant there was now no-one to maintain the

gates and protect the Council's interests. Ward working funding did not cover such ongoing costs. However, the issue was still under discussion and a solution was being sought. Councillor Patel responded that he was surprised at the answer because it did not appear to be a problem in the past and wondered what the potential liability was. Such concerns did not appear to be taken into account when distributing money for other projects. He hoped a solution would be found because alley-gating helped residents, the Council and the police to improve safety and security in the borough.

Councillor Hunter stated that she and the Liberal Democrat Group welcomed the Executive's decision to appoint a full-time Director of Public Health, which followed the Health Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendation to do so, rather than have a post shared with Hounslow. However, she was concerned that the appointment was initially only for one year and so asked how the position would be monitored and evaluated to ensure that it was not merely a postponement of what was proposed in the first place, but a genuine desire to see whether it really did need a full-time post for the foreseeable future, particularly at a time of such major change with public health being brought back into the local council arena. Councillor Hirani replied that the report to the Executive made it clear that the director post would be full-time for Brent and he personally did not envisage this changing. However, he could not say what might happen in years to come. Councillor Hirani explained the role of the new director and stressed the importance of the work to be done. Councillor Hunter welcomed the Executive's recognition that members of all parties on the Health Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee usually had an on-going, in-depth understanding of the health issues they were asked to scrutinise. She referred to locally sensitive issues such as the closure of Accident and Emergency Units, where committee members focused on the clinical evidence such as the fact that 85% of visits to the local A & Es were already being handled by the 24/7 urgent care centres and the success of the reconfiguration of the stroke service, where, despite opposition, 32 units, London-wide, had been replaced by eight specialist centres, resulting in the fact that 400 extra lives were being saved yearly, 100 of them in North West London. The patterns of NHS healthcare were changing and Councillor Hunter submitted that it would take continued cross party work to ensure Brent residents got first class health provision both from inside the NHS and, from next April, the public health services provided by Brent Council. She ended by referring to comments made at the London Councils Summit by the London Mayor, which she supported, concerning not being too concerned about buildings over services and getting cross party buy-in.

Councillor Van Kalwala asked if it was agreed that unemployment was divisive and immoral and what was the Council doing to help residents to find work in such difficult times. Councillor Crane (Lead Member for Regeneration and Major Projects) agreed that unemployment was extremely divisive. He outlined a range of measures the Council was looking to provide in order to get people into work. BACES was seeking to help fill the gap between training and getting into employment. The Council was working with an organisation called *Rocket Science* and other partner agencies to try to expand the job opportunities available. A team of six 'navigators' had been recruited to work with the most excluded individuals hardest hit by the benefit caps to try to get them into work to enable them to stay in their homes. Councillor Crane added that a briefing paper on these initiatives had been sent to all councillors. Councillor Van Kalwala congratulated the Council on

the work it was doing and criticised the Brent Central MP, Sarah Teather, for not standing up for local people.

Councillor Hopkins asked if the Leader would apologise to the library campaigners who put faith in him, and believed his warm words following his appointment as Leader and who now felt let down by the obstacles his administration had continually put in their way, from the triggering of the reverter clause of the All Souls libraries to blocking the use of ward working funding for library-related projects. Councillor Butt (Leader) replied that he had nothing to apologise for because it was the Government's fault that the Council's grant had been cut requiring cuts in services to be made and he pointed out that further cuts were having to be made that would heavily impact on local residents. Councillor Hopkins pointed out that the closure of the libraries had previously been called a transformation programme, not cuts so the Leader's reply did not mean much to the campaigners who felt let down. The Cricklewood and Kensal Rise library volunteers now had to negotiate with an Oxford college for use of the buildings instead of their local council and although the negotiations were proving difficult they were less difficult than had been the case with the Council.

Councillor Naheerathan asked what the Council could do to help residents with rising energy prices. Councillor Butt (Leader) replied that this issue was one of the most important issues faced by local residents because of the recession they faced. They were being charged more for energy at the same time as energy companies were making record profits. He announced that plans would be brought forward to establish an energy co-operative whereby collective buying power could help reduce prices. Councillor Butt also reported that £160,000 had been secured from the Department of Health to support a programme sponsored by the council and NHS Brent and run by Energy Solutions aimed at lowering the number of preventable deaths in the borough in the event of a sudden cold snap by providing expertise and practical help to those who needed it most. Councillor Naheerathan responded by saying that, as residents faced more benefit cuts and higher energy bills, it was good to know that the Council was working hard to protect local residents from the cuts imposed by the Government.

Councillor Shaw asked if it was the Government that had asked the Council to close six libraries and referred to the Willesden library as the seventh casualty. She referred to the provision of IT for members, expenditure on hotels and the building of the civic centre and asked if the sustainable regeneration of the Willesden High Road had been considered. Whilst going some way to meeting residents' concerns by agreeing to retain some of the old library building, Councillor Shaw asked why the Council was giving away the land associated with the Willesden Library centre and why the consultation had been shambolic. Councillor Butt (Leader) replied that consideration had been given to all the responses received expressing concern in an effort to provide a better development. The outcome had been the design of a building that would provide better space for the library and provide community space all at no cost to the Council. The planning application for the development was now subject to consideration by the Planning Committee. Councillor Shaw responded that there was concern that some decisions were being taken for the convenience of the developer rather than the needs of local residents. The provision of 90 luxury flats did not provide the facilities needed in the area. The High Road offered plenty of eating and drinking but little else. Councillor Shaw stated that a specialist retail shop like the bookshop should be supported because it

added real value to the area; and play space was needed for young people and families. She did not consider that the scheme contributed towards sustainable regeneration of the area.

Councillor Harrison asked what the likely impact was for Brent residents of the coalition Government and Conservative Mayor of London's plans to cut emergency services. Councillor Beswick (Lead Member for Crime and Public Safety) replied that the situation concerned life and limb. He stated that Willesden police station was closing and Willesden fire station was facing a similar situation. Services at Central Middlesex Hospital had been closed and the counter service at Harlesden police station had been closed. He regarded this as a slash and burn approach by the Government. He felt everyone needed to lobby the Government against further cuts and condemn those already made. Councillor Harrison referred to the White Ribbon Campaign and the increase in domestic violence. She stated that cuts made to the community safety fund would impact on local residents and expressed the hope that lobbying the Government would persuade it to change its mind over this.

8. First reading debate on the 2013/14 - 2016/17 budget

Councillor Butt stated that the budget marked a vital turning point for Brent. He suggested that two years ago few predicted the recession would last so long or how vindictive the Government's welfare cuts would be towards the most vulnerable people in the community; few predicted the Government would target local government to take the brunt of the cuts and he felt this was a recipe for social damage on a scale not seen since the Second World War and would leave a generation of young people permanently scarred by unemployment. Councillor Butt felt this was an ideological experiment designed by the coalition parties but one which would fail. He stated that in Brent there was a strong community focus and that the residents of the borough would not forgive the coalition government for the damage inflicted on the community. However, he stated that he had a personal commitment to improve the lives of the residents of the borough and that was what the Labour Party was doing in Brent. A package of reforms would be brought forward that would help protect the most vulnerable residents based on the fundamental idea that local people could only weather the storm if they were united and given the resilience and protection that only a community could create. The package would put fairness, jobs, growth and community at the heart of everything the Council did. It would increase the pay of the lowest paid workers, and campaign for the private sector to do the same, bring forward plans to reduce the cost of energy for all residents, tackle the problem of slum housing in Brent and focus on jobs and growth. The Council would bring forward a coherent strategy to support the high streets and local businesses and strengthen the relationships with businesses. A new deal for the voluntary and community sector would be developed to transform the lives of the most troubled families and begin the task of tackling health inequality in the Borough. The biggest school building program was underway in the borough. It would be through all these measures that the Council would act as the last line of defence for residents by protecting local schools, business and services.

Councillor Butt pointed out that between 2010 and 2014 the budget had been reduced by 28% and the Government's failed austerity policies would mean the cuts would continue after 2015 with a predicted 7% cut every year until 2020 at

least. He stated that more residents would find themselves relying on Council services as they struggled to find work and inflation eroded their living standards. The ageing population and high birth rate in the borough meant spending on children's and adults' social care was increasing dramatically. Resolving this would require the complete transformation of the Council as an organisation and the way in which it delivered services to residents. Resources would be shifted from treating problems to preventing them happening, savings would be sought from contractors and providers, inefficiency, duplication and waste would be dealt with and the levels of charges and the frequency of services would be reviewed. Councillor Butt commended the strategy he had outlined and as detailed in the reports before members.

Councillor Lorber responded saying that people were fed up hearing the messages the Leader had delivered. He reminded the meeting that the previous Labour chancellor had said that whoever won the general election would have to make the biggest cuts ever and that the previous Labour government had used £60B to bail out the banks, much of which would never be returned. More recently Labour politicians had said they would be ruthless about controlling public spending and had spoken of cutting benefits as a way of getting people into work, so he felt there should be no surprise that the government was following this course of action. The aim was to promote fairness and this could not be done if people were locked into a culture of dependency. People in the lowest income bands had been taken out of the tax net and Councillor Lorber contrasted this with the cuts imposed on grants to voluntary organisations at a time when the voluntary sector should be empowered to support local communities. He referred to people being unable to park close to local traders without being fined and to the condition of the streets following the decisions taken to reduce the street sweeping service. Councillor Lorber pointed out that the Leader's speech had made no reference to improving the performance of the Council and making positive proposals to support local businesses and communities.

Councillor Kansagra stated that the cuts had been made necessary by the previous Labour government's excessive spending. Nevertheless he stated that employment in the private sector was rising and the Council was still able to deliver good services showing that there had been economies to make. There had been alternatives to closing six libraries and the parking situation was forcing the closure of local shops. He suggested that the first ½ hour of parking should be free of charge. Councillor Kansagra referred to the new arrangements for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which had seen a large injection of cash by the Government and it was now necessary to ensure the proper management of Brent Housing Partnership. He felt ways could have been found to maintain grants to the voluntary sector. He supported the principles behind the initiative for controlling energy prices but pointed out that the Government had already taken the initiative on this and it should not be for the Council to get involved in private business ventures. Councillor Kansagra submitted that it was not fair that a working family paying taxes should receive less income than a family not working. This made it necessary to cap benefits. He felt that the Council should accept the Council tax freeze grant again made available by the Government.

In response to the comments made about parking charges, Councillor J Moher stated that the Council was reviewing its parking charges. A point was made about the scale of the cuts, rather than the need to make cuts. It was pointed out that in

the last two years the Council had achieved a lot but continued to face many challenges. The priorities were to provide jobs and school places. It would be necessary to look strategically at how services were provided.

A view was submitted that it was a tribute to the Government that it had managed to reduce the deficit from the level inherited from the previous government. In contrast to the views of the Leader it was suggested that the Council had broken community spirit by closing libraries, not listening to the views of people, not reducing parking charges and cutting the maintenance of streets and pavements. A more widely supported view was expressed that parking charges were killing-off local businesses and that only small local businesses could provide the growth needed in the borough. Another aspect raised was the importance of providing affordable homes. It was submitted that the refinancing of the HRA should allow for new homes to be built. Another idea put forward was to provide outdoor fitness equipment in parks. It was submitted that it would serve the Council well to remember that it was there to serve the whole of the borough.

Councillor Butt thanked members for their input and noted the views expressed. He reminded the meeting that employment opportunities had already opened up through the regeneration of a number of areas in the borough; that the Council already had a £80M school building programme; that the closure of some libraries had allowed for an improved service to be provided and that the Council had to be fair in which organisations it grant-aided.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the broad budgetary priorities set out in the report from the Executive be noted, and
- (ii) that the issues raised in the First Reading debate be noted and referred to the Budget and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee as appropriate.

9. Reports from the Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Councillor Ashraf introduced the circulated report. He pointed out that the Budget and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee had met for a third time since the last meeting of Full Council. He welcomed Councillor Hopkins as the new chair of the committee and thanked members and officers generally for their contributions towards the work of overview and scrutiny.

10. Changes to Constitution

Members had before them a report on changes to the constitution brought about by the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 and other miscellaneous amendments relating to director functions, Executive Committee structures and contract standing orders.

Councillor Lorber proposed an amendment to the recommendations which he felt would remove an anomaly in that there was no provision in the constitution for the appointment of interim senior officers. Councillor R Moher suggested the

amendment was premature because it was already the intention to fully review the constitution in the near future.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the changes to the Constitution shown in Appendix 1 to the report submitted relating to meetings and access to information be agreed;
- (ii) that the changes shown in Appendix 2 to the report submitted relating to the re-distribution of Director's functions be agreed;
- (iii) that the changes to the Constitution regarding the Barham Park Trust Committee shown as Appendix 3 to the report submitted be agreed; and
- (iv) that the changes to the Contracts Standing Orders shown at Appendix 4 to the report submitted be agreed.

11. **Treasury Management Annual report 2011/12**

The report before members summarised the borrowing and investment activity and performance compared to prudential indicators during 2011/12. The Executive at its meeting on 19 September 2012 had resolved to submit the recommendations in the report to Full Council without any further comments. The report had also been considered by the Audit Committee on 27 September 2012 as part of the scrutiny function required under the 2009 Treasury Management Code of Practice issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the Treasury Management Annual Report and Annual Investment Strategy Report be approved;
- (ii) that the outturn for prudential indicators be noted; and
- (iii) that the updated position since 2011/12 be noted.

12. **2012/13 Mid Year Treasury report**

The report before members updated them on recent treasury activity.

RESOLVED:

that the 2012/13 mid-year Treasury report be noted.

13. **Motions**

13.1 **Number 18 bus route**

Councillor Baker moved the motion circulated in his and Councillor HM Patel's names which called for the Lead Member for Highways and Transportation to lobby Transport for London (TfL) to get the No.18 bus route extended to Harrow bus station. He pointed out that at the present time it terminated at Sudbury town

centre and caused obstruction to traffic and he felt it should go on to Harrow and better serve the local community and patients at Northwick Park Hospital.

Councillor J Moher responded by stating that this issue had often been raised with TfL but it had recently responded by saying it would cost an additional £1.4M to extend the route to the hospital or £2M to Harrow town centre and the additional revenue generated would not cover this. Alternatives were being pursued and the problem of bus congestion at Sudbury town centre was being resolved with the implementation of a new bus stand. Councillor Lorber added that the matter had been raised in the past with the then Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, and suggested that the current Mayor of London should be approached about this.

Following a vote, the motion was declared LOST.

13.2 Recruitment of permanent Chief Executive and Director of Finance

Councillor Lorber moved the motion circulated in his and the names of Councillors Ashraf, Beck, Brown, Hopkins and Hunter which sought to require options for the restructure of the Corporate Management Team to be brought forward. He expressed concern that members had not been given any information about the recent loss of the Council's Chief Executive and Director of Finance and that this presented an opportunity to review the Council's management structure.

Councillor Kansagra indicated his support for the motion. Councillor Butt stated that it was necessary in times of emergency for an interim appointment to the post of Chief Executive to be made without delay. In turn, it was the responsibility of the Head of the Paid Service to arrange for the appointment of a Director of Finance.

Following a vote the motion was declared LOST.

13.3 Fire service in Brent

The motion circulated in the names of Councillors Brown, Hashmi, Hunter, Lorber, CJ Patel and Sneddon was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that Council expresses its support for and appreciation of the work carried out by the London Fire Brigade in Brent;
- (ii) that Council notes:
 - a) that the fire brigade attended 3,217 incidents in Brent during 2011/12, including 798 fires, 989 special services and 1,430 false alarms. In addition it carried out 2,235 home fire safety visits and other community and fire safety tasks,
 - b) that the Mayor of London has imposed cuts of £65 million (about 15%) over the next two years on the London Fire Brigade,
 - c) that a document leaked to the BBC lists the following 17 fire stations threatened with closure: Acton, Belsize, Bow, Clapham, Clerkenwell, Downham, Islington, Kensington, Kingsland, Knightsbridge, New Cross, Peckham, Silvertown, Southwark, Westminster, Whitechapel and Woolwich,

- d) that although the three stations in Brent do not appear on this list of threatened stations, only one of these (Wembley) appears on a list of “safe” fire stations provided by the Chair of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA),
 - e) that as a result the future of Park Royal and Willesden Fire Stations has become a matter of speculation;
- (iii) that Council condemns the Mayor of London for proposing reckless cuts to the London fire budget without taking advice from senior fire officers as to the consequences, therefore leading to fire station closures;
 - (iv) that Council supports the retention of all three fire stations in Brent and believes that the closure of any of these stations would be unacceptable to local residents and compromise fire safety;
 - (v) that Council supports the proposed increase in appliances at Hendon and Stanmore stations which will deliver extra fire cover to parts of Brent;
 - (vi) that Council requests the interim Chief Executive to write to the Mayor of London with a copy to the Chair of LFEPA making this council’s position clear.

13.4 **Off payroll contracts**

The motion circulated in the names of Councillors Brown, Cheese, Hopkins, Lorber, Matthews and Shaw which called for any member of the Council’s corporate management team serving for more than three months to be directly employed by the Council and subject to PAYE was put to the vote and declared LOST.

13.5 **Permitted development**

The motion circulated in the names of Councillors Ashraf, Beck, Brown, Hopkins and Lorber seeking to ensure the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government’s proposals on permitted development were opposed was put to the vote and declared LOST.

13.6 **The living wage**

Councillor A Choudry moved the motion circulated and sought cross party support for it. He stated that the opportunity existed for the Council to assess what more it could do to help some of the poorest people in society and he was pleased the Council was already paying the living wage.

Councillor HB Patel suggested that pressure put on those employers paying less than the living wage would help increase wages but that some workers would continue to have to live on low wages because of the legacy of the last government. Councillor HB Patel added that the minimum wage was still relatively new to the country and so the introduction of the living wage would be opposed by some because of the costs involved. Councillor HB Patel moved an amendment to the motion which sought to remove reference to the government’s failure to support the living wage.

Councillor Lorber stated that his party supported the living wage and had also sought to assist those on low incomes through changes in the tax system. However, he noted that the Council's commitment to paying the living wage excluded those working in the social care sector.

The proposed amendment to the motion was put to the vote and declared LOST.

The motion was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

that Council:

- (a) welcomes the increase of the living wage to £7.45 per hour and £8.55 per hour in London,
- (b) notes that employees in cities with high costs of living, such as London, need to earn more than the national minimum wage just to stay above the poverty line, with one in ten workers in London currently earning less than the living wage,
- (c) welcomes the fact that from 1 October all directly employed staff in Brent were receiving pay rates at or above the London living wage.
- (d) welcomes the progress in ensuring employees of Brent contractors also receive the living wage,
- (e) notes its disappointment at the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Government's failure to support the living wage at a national level.

13.7 **Cuts to emergency services**

The motion circulated in the name of Councillor Harrison was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

that Council:

- a) notes that many of Brent's emergency services are under threat from cuts imposed by the coalition government,
- b) opposes the extent of the cuts, which are too fast and too deep and will endanger lives,
- c) notes with disappointment the failure of Brent Central MP, Sarah Teather, to oppose the cuts to emergency services,
- d) calls on the Government to reverse the cuts to the emergency services that will see Willesden Police Station and potentially two of Brent's three fire stations closed.

14. **Urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 10.00 pm

COUNCILLOR MICHAEL ADEYEYE
Mayor