



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

**Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
held on Monday 27 February 2017 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Parvez Ahmed

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Bhagwanji Chohan

COUNCILLORS:

Aden	Agha
Allie	Bradley
Butt	Carr
Chan	S Choudhary
Colacicco	Colwill
Conneely	Crane
Daly	Davidson
Denselow	Dixon
Duffy	Eniola
Ezeajughi	Farah
Harrison	Hector
Hirani	Hylton
Jones	Kabir
Kansagra	Kelcher
Long	Mahmood
Marquis	Mashari
Maurice	McLeish
McLennan	Miller
Moher	J Mitchell Murray
W Mitchell Murray	Naheerathan
Nerva	M Patel
RS Patel	Pavey
Perrin	Pitruzzella
Shahzad	Ms Shaw
Ketan Sheth	Krupa Sheth
Southwood	Stopp
Tatler	Thomas
Van Kalwala	Warren

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors A Choudry, Collier, Hoda-Benn, Hossain and Khan.

2. **Procedural Motions**

RESOLVED that the following procedural motions moved by Councillor Kabir and which related to three items on the agenda, be agreed:

1. *The Budget and Council Tax 2017-18 to 2019-20*

- i) That the Leader of the Council be permitted to speak for up to 15 minutes in presenting the report on the 2017-18 to 2019-20 Budget and Council Tax to the meeting, setting out the Cabinet's proposals for the Budget, after which, the following arrangements for the purpose of debating and voting upon the Budget and Council Tax 2017-18 to 2019-20 be as follows:

The Deputy Leader of the Council be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes;

The Chair of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee be permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes;

Councillor Davidson, on behalf of the Leader of the Conservative Group, be permitted to speak for up to 15 minutes;

The Leader of the Brent Conservative Group be permitted to speak for up to 15 minutes;

A general debate to follow, during which the usual rules for debate would apply, as set out in Standing Orders 46 and 47, save as set out in this procedural motion;

The Leader of the Council be permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes to submit his closing remarks; and

- ii) That voting on each Group's budget proposals be taken *en bloc*.

2. **Motion**

That Standing Order 34(e) be suspended to allow for a cross-party motion to be considered this evening.

3. **Petition**

That the lead petitioner be allowed to address Full Council for a maximum of five minutes and that the relevant Lead Member be allowed to respond for a maximum of three minutes.

Furthermore, a maximum of one speaker from each Group be allowed to speak for a maximum of three minutes should they wish.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 23 January 2017, be approved as an accurate record of the meeting, subject to the following amendments:

(i) Present

That Councillor Warren be recorded as having been in attendance at that meeting; and

(ii) Motions

That, under Minute No.15 (Motions) and, specifically, Minute No.15 (iii) ("Planning Shambles") it be recorded that the Mayor, Councillor Ahmed and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Chohan, be recorded as having abstained from the voting on this matter.

Matters Arising

With reference to supplementary question (v), as detailed at Page 14 to the minutes, Councillor Nerva asked whether the Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing, Councillor Hirani, was able to update Council on whether he had been successful in obtaining all party support to register Brent's concerns about social care funding.

In response, Councillor Hirani advised Council that a joint letter had been drafted and was ready to be sent but it had still to be determined as to whether the letter was to be sent on behalf of all three Group Leaders or on behalf of the Lead Member and that this would become apparent before the next Council meeting.

NOTE: It was noted that, as drawn to the Council's attention by Councillor Kansagra at its January meeting, the Council received notification of nominations by the Conservative Group, including nomination of Councillor Colwill to the Senior Staff Appointments Sub-Committee. The Council made appointments to committees in accordance with those nominations. The appointment of Councillor Colwill to the Senior Staff Appointments Sub-Committee had been formally taken by the General Purposes Committee at its meeting held on 8 December 2016.

4. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest received from Members.

5. Mayor's Announcements (including any petitions received)

The Mayor made the following announcements:

(i) Brent Holocaust and Genocide Memorial Day

The Mayor announced that, on 26 January 2017, over 200 people had attended the Brent Holocaust and Genocide Memorial Day, which had had a full programme that included a holocaust survivor testimony from Manfred Goldberg. The Mayor said that there had also been choirs, speeches and the lighting of memorial candles, which had added to the incredibly moving programme he had been honored to be a part of.

(ii) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History Month

The Mayor reminded Members that Brent Council and Brent Housing Partnership would be celebrating the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) History Month with an event to be held in the Civic Centre on Tuesday 28 February 2017 from 6pm to 8pm. He said that LGBT History Month had been celebrated since 2005 and the theme of this year's event, which would be open to staff, allies and members of the public was '*Pride NOT Prejudice*'. The Mayor said that the event was also open to the public and was an ideal opportunity to learn more about relevant services provided by Brent Council, and to network with Brent residents, partners and colleagues.

(iii) International Women's Day – Wednesday 8 March 2017

The Mayor was pleased to announce that Brent would be celebrating International Women's Day with an event to be held in the Civic Centre on Wednesday 8 March 2017. He said that International Women's Day was a global event that celebrated the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women and added that the day also marked a call to action for accelerating gender parity.

The Mayor said that International Women's Day was all about celebration, reflection, advocacy, and action and that, on the day, attendees would be able to hear how to move to purposeful action - and with men and women joining forces – how, collectively women could be helped to realise the limitless potential they offered both locally and globally.

The Mayor encouraged all Members to attend these events.

(iv) Mayor's Final Fundraising Event of Municipal Year 2016-2017

The Mayor announced that he would be hosting his final fundraising event of his Mayoral year in the Civic Centre on Thursday 16 March 2017. The Mayor extended his gratitude to Members for their continued support during his year in office and hoped that Members again would support this, his final event.

(v) Petitions

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

In accordance with Standing Order 68, the Mayor drew to the attention of Members, a petition, which related to Islamia Primary School, and which had gathered over 1,200 validated signatures.

The Mayor invited the Lead Petitioner, Nur Enver, to address the Council.

Ms Enver said that she was attending the meeting on behalf of all the signatories of the petition to keep Islamia Primary School as a two-form entry. She said that the petition alone was a testament of just how important the school was. She said that in just three days, the petition had gathered 1,250 signatures. She said that Islamia Primary was a very unique school and the only voluntary aided Muslim school in Brent and which was oversubscribed. Ms Enver said that the school's latest Sats results had been amongst the top ten percent in the country. She said that the school catered for the needs of families who lived in Brent by providing equal opportunity and access to the school irrespective of families' financial backgrounds. She said that the school provided a service to parents to be able to educate their children not only through the national curriculum but simultaneously with a faith ethos and British values. The school was a flagship school which was recognised nationally and internationally. If the school resorted back to a one-form entry, the impact on the school, parents, children, the local community as well as the wider community would be devastating. She said that the school would be faced with a sibling crisis and also a staffing crisis as well as job cuts and this would put huge stress on staff there. There would also be financial implications for the school. Ms Enver said that the new funding formula was putting a lot of pressure on schools and being a one-form entry school, would find it difficult to avoid going into deficit. Also, if the school reverted to one-form entry, the catchment area would be removed, which would mean that the School would be taking on children from outside of Brent and would add to parking and congestion problems in the area. She said that it would also put additional pressure on Brent to provide primary places and that this would also have a knock-on effect on the environment and the carbon footprint. She said that she did not believe this but recently had started to think this was true and that there was an element of discrimination on the school's behalf. Ms Enver said that she noticed that many schools in Brent had become three, four or five-form entry and had been given the green light to expand, even when over 90% of residents had actually opposed it. There was, she said, a school which was on the same road as Islamia School which was in more of a congested area, had been offered four-form entry and a further school, which housed 480 boys and was within walking distance to Islamia School and this school was not even a Brent school. She said she would like to know how many schools had been reduced to one-form entry when there was such a demand for primary school places. The events that had led to the new build being stopped had emerged from an unfair cap on Islamia Girls' School, which was never part of the original agreement. Up until today, this cap had not been removed, which would hinder development at the girls' school. The GCSE results of this school had topped the league tables in West London. The Yusuf Islam Foundation had allowed the school to stay as a two-form entry and it had supported the school for ten years without asking for rent, and had provided space on the premises which belonged to the girls' school and had not charged for this. It was, she said, a kick in the teeth from Brent since the school had accommodated an additional 500 children throughout the past

10 years. Ms Enver's question to Council was "What has Brent done to resolve this?" The school would like Brent to find a permanent solution as its children deserved the same opportunities as others.

In response, Councillor Mili Patel, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, thanked Ms Enver for her petition and said that she was aware that Islamia was a very successful school which was delivering good outcomes for its pupils. She appreciated that Islamia was a popular school amongst its pupils, parents and governors. Councillor Patel said she wanted the school to thrive and to continue to deliver excellent outcomes to the community and that she would do whatever she could to help, however, she said that the Council was only one of a number of stakeholders and partners involved in this process and she pointed out that some of the concerns Ms Enver had addressed, specifically to the Council, were not solely in its gift to solve. Specifically, she said, the petition called on the Council to ensure that Islamia School remained as a two-form entry school thereby providing a viable solution to provide safe and secure premises for all 420 pupils there. Councillor Patel said that this was a positive goal, but it was not Brent Council which was consulted upon reducing its published admission number from 60 to 30 places, but Islamia Primary School's Governing Board. She said that the Board had taken this decision without the Council's knowledge and certainly without its support and hoped that parents would lobby the governing body and take part in the school's consultation. Councillor Patel wished to make it clear that the Council did not have funding to expand the current building or to build a new primary school on the Salisbury Road school site. She said that the Council wanted to work with the Yusuf Islam Foundation to achieve one of these outcomes. Unfortunately, she said, the Foundation had not been able to work with the Council to achieve this and its announcement in December of the withdrawal of the building had left the Council with an impossibly short deadline to achieve a sustainable and lasting outcome. Councillor Patel hoped that the parents and the Council could persuade the Foundation to reconsider and to work with the Council and the school on these proposals. In conclusion, Councillor Patel addressed one issue, which she felt should not have been mentioned in this discussion but as it had been raised by the petitioner she stressed that the particular religious practice at the Islamia School had no bearing whatsoever on the Council's approach to this issue and that the Council had a duty to find educational places for all young people and wanted even more children in Brent to get the good education that people of Islamia got and that's why the Council wanted to keep the school open.

6. Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies and Appointment of Chairs/Vice Chairs (if any)

There were no appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies or appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs.

7. Budget and Council Tax 2017-18 and 2019-20

The Council had before it a report by the Chief Finance Officer on the 2017-18 to 2019-20 Revenue and Capital Budgets and a proposal to increase Council Tax levels.

The Mayor announced that the DCLG had published the final local government finance settlement at 8.00pm on the evening of Monday 20 February 2017 and that it had been debated in Parliament on Wednesday 22 February 2017 and passed.

He said that the final settlement contained no changes to the figures published in the Budget Report for the Council meeting of 27 February 2017, which had been based on the draft settlement. The Mayor said that, this being the case, no amendments to that report were necessary but he thought it would be helpful to confirm with Members before the meeting that the local government settlement had now been finalised.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Butt, presented the report, which set out the Cabinet's proposals for the Budget and the setting of Council Tax for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20.

Councillor Butt said that, at an organisational level, the Council was doing well, given the near impossible circumstances the Council was having to work in. He said he wanted to draw a distinction between being immensely proud of the collective responsibility and being unhappy at what the Council was here this evening to do. He said that Brent, as a Labour authority, was once again being forced to impose austerity cuts by the Conservative Government. He said that this was a seventh year of pointless austerity and disproportionate cuts across each and every service the Council provided. He was pleased that the Administration had managed to set a deliverable budget and said that it would offer as much protection as it could to services that were most vulnerable and which were most depended upon. He added that the Administration was introducing a three-year capital investment programme.

Councillor Butt went on to say that that the Council was doing all of this with far less money. He said that, at this point, public services in Brent had lost around £850m in cumulative funding and that, by 2020, this would rise to approximately £1.2bn, or £1,700 per household. He said that this challenge had been made even greater by two factors. Firstly, he said, the Government had given the Council more responsibility but had failed to provide adequate funding needed to carry out this additional responsibility. Secondly, the Council continued to see high and rising demand both by volume and complexity for many of the essential but increasing expensive services the Council provided. With this in mind, he said, in revenue terms, the Council was just about keeping its head above water, but to do so, the Council had to compromise in almost every aspect of what it did and that the Council had to find the least worst option.

Councillor Butt said that despite setting a deliverable budget, the coming years were not without risk and that the Council owed it to its residents to be clear that while certainly achievable the Council could not be complacent about these savings being easily achieved. The Council also needed to be mindful of the fact that if it failed to deliver what it had set out, then it would have no option but to look again at those essential services that it had worked so hard to protect.

He said that the Council had one of the most ambitious capital investment programmes scheduled over the next three years with more than £0.5bn allocated.

Housing for example, was a major investment target with upgrades to Council housing, independent living and massively improving standards for residents.

Councillor Butt said that the Council faced enormous challenges across a variety of different areas such as: housing whether owned or rented; adult social care; and looked after children, who were the most vulnerable residents. He said that the Government should be putting every instrument of state at their disposal but instead had cut funding for Brent schools by £20m. Councillor Butt also expressed his concerns for the local economy and local small and medium businesses faced with tax increases.

Councillor Butt said that there was a gulf between a financially independent local authority to one that had been cut adrift. He said that the challenge had been made worse by the nature of what the Council did. Demand, he said, was counter cyclical and that Council Tax and business rates were as regressive as they got. He said all of this stifled enterprise and could not see what the Government was trying to achieve. He said that this was a 21st century Conservative Government, which was finishing what it had started in the 1980s and 90s. In conclusion, Councillor Butt said that Brent's residents knew that they had a Labour led Council on their side and that it remained a Brent for the future, in which, everyone had a stake.

Councillor McLennan, Deputy Leader of the Council, said that today's budget had come about following a consultation process which had taken place in supermarkets, Brent Connects and by speaking with people on the streets. She said it had been a privilege to hear people's views and concerns and what it all meant to them. Councillor McLennan said that it had been challenging and hoped that in terms of what had been presented would mitigate some of the excesses laboured on residents. Councillor McLennan said that the Budget had been cut by 60% over 4 to 5 years, which had brought about an enormous challenge. She said that the Council had to produce a balanced budget to protect its most vulnerable services. Councillor McLennan said that staffing levels were 4,425 in 2010 and was now 2,200, which meant that the Council could rent out two floors of the Civic Centre to generate income. She said that the Council would have to make further cuts in future years and would need to be aware of the impact on schools funding formula. Councillor McLennan said the Council would look at how the Government was talking about business rates. Small business, she said, were the life blood of Brent's community and that whilst this budget had been difficult and challenging, she believed that this budget had achieved what it had set out to do. In conclusion, Councillor McLennan asked that all Members recognise what the Administration had to do and to formally accept and endorse the budget as set out before them.

Councillor Kelcher, Chair of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, said he was grateful to have been given the opportunity to put the views of both Scrutiny Committees and their task groups following their Budget deliberations. He said that the Committee had taken a reflective and strategic review and that the Panel that produced the report had been cross-party and cross-committee.

He said that the first thought with regard to the Budget was that there had been a significantly improved role for the scrutiny function. He said that the Committee had considered the decision to accept a four-year settlement and had agreed with that.

With regard to Council Tax he said that there had been a changing picture throughout this and that it had to be rewritten several times. Reserves, he said, were sustainable and sensible. Councillor Kelcher said that front line and back office distinction was not as clear as it had previously been and the Committee decided that this should be on the basis of impact on the people of Brent.

Councillor Kelcher believed that the scrutiny function could push civic enterprise strategy with local businesses having procurement opportunities.

Councillor Davidson, on behalf of the Leader of the Conservative Group, said that he had listened to the Administration's proposals with interest and, despite anti-government assertions, Brent Labour's first instinct was to demand that Brent residents paid more for the same mediocre service. He said that Brent residents had already been let down by the Mayor of London and that they now faced the first Council Tax rises since former Mayor, Ken Livingstone, had been in office. Councillor Davidson said that the Mayor of London was raising Council Tax by 1.5% yet Brent was demanding a 4% rise in Council Tax. He said that the Budget lacked creativity to protect residents and that incomes in Brent were amongst the lowest in London. He went on to say that Brent Labour Group was taking the maximum Council Tax increase without having to have a referendum. He said that the Conservative Group had produced an alternative budget which froze Council Tax. He said that the Conservative Party was a compassionate party and that his budget was compassionate as it sought to address key concerns of residents and protected and enhanced front line services. It also included additional funding for Adult Social Care and took a radical approach to deliver a clean borough. He applauded the Council's savings made in certain areas such as sharing back office functions and piloting Fixed Penalty Notices and commended the work of Councillors McLennan and Southwood in these areas.

He went on to say that there was, however, still needless spending. Brent Conservatives would cut this immediately to deliver money to frontline services. The Council's Communications Department paid £1m to produce Brent Labour propaganda which he suggested should be funded by the Brent Labour Group. He said that the cost of this department had increased by 25% over the last decade and the Conservative Group would cut this entirely as it was unnecessary expenditure. Brent's Business Intelligence Unit was an £800k department tasked with understanding the Brent population and providing support to the organisation to deliver change. He said that the Cabinet should be undertaking this function and again that the Conservatives would scrap this department entirely. He said that £200k had been spent on trade union funding and, at a time when unions are causing misery to commuters, this should be borne by Brent Council. As a small business owner himself, he looked for efficiency. He said that this attitude to business had not been applied to this Council budget. By applying 5% savings to an annual budget of £40m the Conservative Group had identified £2m savings to back office functions. He stated that all of these savings should be returned to Brent residents. Despite endless failed schemes to tackle fly tipping Brent remained one of the dirtiest London Boroughs. He said that enough was enough and that this key priority was one that the Council failed to deliver on time and again and that the Conservative budget aimed to get a grip on this. Councillor Southwood's trial with Kingdom Security had had some success but the Conservative proposal would go further. It would mean cleaner streets and revenue raised that can be ploughed back into front line services. He outlined that the Conservatives would promote and

expand self-funded security firms to enforce fixed penalty notices for littering, predicted to raise £200k in the first year. A similar strategy was adopted by Wolverhampton Council which saw revenue from fines rise from £34k to over £200k in one year. He also explained a Conservative proposal to start charging for collection of bulky waste, forecast to raise an additional £500k. The Conservative Group proposed that these savings outlined will be put into Adult Social Care funding in addition to the 2% precept. Councillor Davidson outlined that Adult Social Care is key issue with the number of over 65s expected to grow by 8% and that strategy was essential to continue to ensure high levels of care. He stated this strategy was currently absent in Brent with residents neglected and offered a patchy standard of care. He said that the Conservatives were proposing a contract for Adult Social Care, with a minimum standard for care and compassion and additional moves to integrate Health and Social Care. This new funding, alongside enhanced Scrutiny structures, would ensure that Adult Social Care will become fit for purpose.

He concluded that this budget was about choices and the Conservatives wanted a budget to ensure the Council would work for hard pressed residents, and would rather use the savings specified to freeze Council Tax. The group also wanted to get serious about cleaning up Borough once and for all and stated that they had imagination and drive to do so. Councillor Davidson finally thanked Officers in the Finance Department for support in developing the proposals.

Councillor Warren, Leader of the Brent Conservative Group, introduced the Brent Conservative budget proposals and stated that they were putting forward a Brent Conservative budget for Adult Social Care. He outlined that the Brent Conservatives were proposing an additional £3.5m for Adult Social Care and were not asking residents to pay for this, but were instead giving them money back. He said that the move to add £3.5m to the Council's reserves was unnecessary and the Brent Conservative proposals were centred on spending this money for Adult Social Care. He noted that the Scrutiny Committee had previously concluded that the level of reserves was adequate but still went along with increase in reserves, which he didn't believe was effective. He noted that he went to Cabinet budget meeting in February and felt that the discussion had been minimal and not adequately addressed the responses of 84 residents that replied to budget consultation.

He stated the he felt that the Administration's proposed budget was cynical and again asked residents to give the Council more money despite the Council having money to spend. He stated that his headline figure was a 3% cut in Council tax and also corrected the figure on his circulated motion stating that band D would be 40p more than stated. He referenced the £110m underspend in the Council's capital budget and also the business rates revenue which would be generated from the new housing and Quintain projects around Wembley Stadium. He also pointed to the revenue generated from Section 106 agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy. He stated that the Brent Conservative budget would ensure that more money was being given back to residents and would spent in ways that residents want to see it spent. He also discussed the New Homes Bonus and explained how the Brent Conservative budget included some of that money in the Council's revenue account, as previously it was recorded in the capital account. Councillor Warren also emphasised Brent Conservative proposals to scrap the Press and

Communications department and spend the money generated on Adult Social Care.

Councillor Warren continued and referenced the three representations requested from Councillor Shaw to include in the Brent Conservative budget. These included more lollipop people around schools in the Borough; a reversal of the increase in visitor parking permits; and the creation of a new fund for care leavers. He also mentioned proposals to scrap the green bin tax. Councillor Warren continued by again citing a failure of scrutiny in the Borough which had passed comment on the free current bulky waste service, opposing the Administration's proposal to charge for the service. He outlined that the Brent Conservatives planned to maintain the free bulky waste service in their budget and believed that the proposals to charge would see fly tipping increase as a consequence. He also noted Brent Conservative proposals for an additional £100k on CCTV cameras; a further £100k to deal with effects of fly tipping and a £350k New Carers Fund. He stated that he believed the Brent Conservative proposals equate to a fair and balanced budget, unlike the one proposed by Brent Labour. He concluded that the Council had more money than it was implying, referencing how much money had been spent on legal fees; the costs of entering into bad contracts; and how the accounts relating to an exit payment for former employee Cara Devani had not been signed off by auditors of those accounts. He noted that he had objected to these accounts, as had others. He concluded by stating that a neighbouring Borough, Hammersmith and Fulham, had not increased Council Tax and therefore proving it was not a necessity. He commended the Brent Conservative budget to Full Council.

A general debate followed with Members commenting on the proposed Budget and amendments that had been put forward by the Opposition Groups.

Councillor Agha stated that the scale of austerity from the Conservative Government left Councillors with little choice other than to accept and endorse the Administration's balanced and deliverable budget. He noted that it reflected the pressure of seven years of austerity yet the Council had still managed to protect central services. He said that the Government's approach was also causing the health service to lurch from crisis to crisis and had created an unfair sense that GPs were not pulling their weight. This was despite GPs seeing more patients than ever with 350 million consultations every year. He explained that increased demand on available appointments and a reckless approach by the Government had exposed the country to a vicious cycle and that the healthcare system was at risk of becoming a shadow of its former self in an act of shameless political sabotage.

Councillor Nerva stated that despite the amount of time devoted to the opposition groups, it remained unclear on what they were proposing. He explained that at one stage in the past the Council had been under great pressure financially. He said that this provided a clear reason for having increased monetary reserves. He referenced Councillor Warren's comment about an overspend on legal fees and stated that it would be unwise to spend reserves for the sake of it as some financial burdens on the Council remained unpredictable. He explained that 90% of Local Authorities are raising Council Tax because the Government assumed that this will happen to help address the crisis in health service and its impact on social care. He said that the Council was getting no help from the Government to address the problems within adult social care. He said he was pleased that a strategy of prevention was being pursued to address some of these problems. In addition, he

noted that proposals for bulky waste collection were interesting and hoped that it could be looked at on an all-party basis, aside from the budget process. He hoped that this would also look at how to increase recycling and all ensure that landlords took responsibility for having arrangements in place to dispose waste correctly. He noted that this was meant to be resident collection service. He concluded that he would also like to see more proposals going forward around enforcement on parking charges.

Councillor R Patel also noted the Council's difficulty in having to develop fair budget proposals in the face of Government cuts, explaining that Council Tax had previously been frozen for five years despite this. He noted the devastating effect that cuts were having on the NHS. He outlined his belief that the Council had been able to maintain good services despite cuts to funding and with Brent being one of the most deprived Boroughs which had a high level of demand on housing and social services. He referenced that Surrey County Council wanted to raise Council Tax by 15%, which only served to highlight the pressure Councils were under. He said it was widely known that Central Government offered a 'sweetheart deal' to Surrey but that Brent would not be offered that position. He concluded by commending the Administration's budget proposals.

Councillor Duffy began by highlighting the crisis in adult social care. He stated that the Council currently do a good job in providing adult social care and that should not be forgotten, however the Council do not produce value for money in all contracts and this would need to be reviewed. He stated the current contractual model employed by the Council had not been working. He also said that the parking account needed to be reviewed and that bulky waste services should have a simple split between an express service that residents pay for and free service for those who cannot pay. He also referenced the Community Infrastructure Levy in Kilburn being at a high level because of the constant noise and dirt caused by the amount of lorries in the area. He stated that any Cabinet plan to take that money away from the locality and into central Council reserves would not be popular with residents. He concluded by stating his support for the Administration's budget but reiterated that the Council could be more efficient and look for more savings by reviewing its model for entering into contracts.

Councillor Shaw spoke in support of Councillor Warren and the Brent Conservative budget and on three items which she said affected the residents of Brondesbury Park. She implored the Council to move that lollipop people in the Borough be reinstated to ensure that children are safe going to school. Secondly, she spoke against the increase of £4.50 to the daily visitors parking permit. She also spoke about proposals from the Children's Society to exempt care leavers from paying Council Tax, and argued that this would be a sign of a compassionate council. She concluded that she was pleased about the budget that the Brent Conservative Group was putting forward as it was one that residents could be proud of and support. She urged the Council to accept the Brent Conservative Group proposals.

Councillor Stopp said that the Conservatives on the Council could not claim to be a compassionate party when the Government had taken 60% out of the Council's budget in recent years. He also condemned the proposals made by Councillor Warren about spending the money that Brent Labour had earmarked for the Council's reserves. He said that he was pleased that Brent was represented by a Labour-run Council as he would have been worried about the damage that might

have been done to the Borough had the Conservative or Brent Conservative Groups been in power. Councillor Stopp went on to address the Community Infrastructure Levy in association with Councillor Duffy's remarks and said that the Council needed to look at this as a way to bring money into the building and to look at other ways in which the Council could learn from other good Labour Councils across the Country. In conclusion, Councillor Stopp said that the proposed budget was good work given the difficult spending cuts identified.

Councillor Mahmood thanked those responsible for presenting this budget. Brent, he said, had suffered more than some other local authorities and that the Labour Group's proposals represented a fair, responsible and balanced budget. He welcomed the increase in Council Tax by 4%, of which, 2% would be spent on social care and said that Brent did well with its Adult Social Care Budget. Councillor Mahmood went on to say that he was pleased that special consideration had been given to the Borough's elderly people and dementia sufferers in Brent. Dementia, he said, was on the increase and was affecting more people. He hoped that the Council would continue to help them support families and carers and to provide support equally and fairly to all residents.

Councillor Southwood recommended the Budget to Members as she believed that it was rooted in real life and wanted to keep popular and valued services sustainable. She said that the Council was in a position to make tough choices such as the generating of waste and disposal of it had a cost in terms of money and the environment. She said that Councillor Warren had reminded her about the LED lighting programme, which had resulted in the delivery of one-third of carbon savings and biodiversity in parks. Councillor Southwood said that the responsibility for the development of new services, highways enforcement and damage caused to pavements, currently lay with the Council and that the proposed Budget had set tone for work the Council wanted to undertake.

Councillor Tatler said that a Harrow resident had said to her how lucky she (Councillor Tatler) had been to be living in Brent as the Council there did its job. Councillor Tatler said that this showed that the Council listened and communicated with its residents and demonstrated how Brent's residents could only trust the Council's Labour Party. She said that difficult decisions had been taken during the budget process and that a different approach had been taken to delivery of regeneration, not only through house building but place making. Councillor Tatler went on to say that the Council's Labour Group had delivered over 50% social housing and had also looked at how to help its residents gain meaningful employment. She said that Brent CIL provided better funding to help neighbourhoods and that time and space was needed to develop town centres into the hearts of local communities. In conclusion, Councillor Tatler said that the Government was looking to raise business rates and that the Council was looking to work with it in relation to this.

Councillor Kansagra agreed with the Leader of the Council that the Council had suffered cuts in the region of £850m and up to £1.2bn and that any business would have gone bankrupt if it had suffered such reductions in funding but that the Council had not. He thanked the Labour Administration and those responsible for managing those cuts. Councillor Kansagra questioned what the cuts reflected and whether the Council was over-staffed, which he felt it was and that the reduction in staff levels had identified efficiency savings and he was glad that the Administration

was using these. He said that had the Administration not identified these cuts it would have borrowed and spent. Councillor Kansagra said that Councillor Butt was looking forward to a period of post-Conservative to which he felt there was no chance of this. He commended the Conservative Group's alternative budget to Members.

Councillor M Patel said that, with regard to education, the Prime Minister's priorities had been wrong, particularly in relation to her views on grammar schools and schools funding cuts. She said that the Prime Minister had been the first since the early 1990s to have cut funding per pupil and questioned what this £26.5m reduction in spending would mean for Brent and that, despite all of this, the Council's Children and Young People Department's budget continued to focus on protecting vulnerable children and to give them the best start in life as possible.

Councillor Miller said that stronger communities had a smaller financial profile but that vulnerable Brent residents faced a further raft of damaging and centrally enforced austerity. He said that the Council's duty was to offer the greatest possible protection from cuts, innovation to get around them and political protection from them. Councillor Miller said that a vacant post within the Council's Trading Standards Team had been removed and a further £25k extra income had been secured through ring-fenced commercial building control activity over the year ahead. In addition, he said the Council would gain approved provider status to allow the Council to avoid seeking permission from other local authorities to operate in their areas with a further £35k to be generated over the year ahead. He said that all steps possible would be taken to increase the self-sufficiency of the Willesden Green Library Centre with a Café and more innovative use of the existing space for commercial rent. There were, he said, easier stories to tell than the income generation and the money that the Council would make savings in. Councillor Miller said that this was a budget for a safer Brent, that Labour made a difference in the area of policing, and the London Mayor was no exception. There would, he said, be an investment of £480k to be match funded by the Police to introduce 'Met Patrol Plus' because keeping Brent's residents safe was at the top of the Council's priorities. He said that with crime rising across London, now was the time for the Council to be ready to detect and prevent crime and, in line with a range of suggestions from the Scrutiny Committee, to make allowance for new capital investment in a modernised, digital CCTV system which would allow the Council to share its bandwidth with its local partners and reduce the cost of reallocating cameras. In both of these ways, Councillor Miller said that, despite irresponsible Conservative attempts to undermine the viability of local government as a whole the Administration was showing that it would invest in a safer Brent and stand with its residents.

Councillor Hirani thanked Members from all parties on the prominence they had given to adult social care during the budget debate. He said that the proposed Budget showed that the Council was spending more on Adult Social Care, despite the Council having £150m less to spend on adult social care due to Central Government's grant cut. He said there was increasing demand for these services with 200 more patients who had an adult social care need in relation to dementia. Councillor Hirani said that the Council had been featured recently by the Local Government Association for its innovative NAIL programme where the Council had plans to deliver 529 extra care homes by 2018 and that this scheme would save the Council £332 per week compared to a nursing and residential care home placement

and that, to date, had delivered £4.7m worth of savings and still provided better care to residents who needed it. He said that the Council was displaying ambitious plans to address the social care crisis and that the Council had a Brent Local Health and Care Plan that sat under the Health and Well-being Board and on which, Councillor Colwill was a member. Councillor Hirani confirmed that the Council already had a contract with the Carers Support Centre. Councillor Hirani spoke on Councillor Davidson's reference to the by-election held last week in Copeland, which had seen the Labour Party lose its seat there. He said that the people of Brent had voted differently and recommended that Full Council agree the proposed Budget as it showed how the Council planned to address the social care crisis in Brent.

Councillor Carr suggested that the Council might wish to consider cutting the number of elected ward Members it had from three to two as this would realise a quick saving. She said that the increase in Members' budget expenses was 25% and that Councillors should practice what they preached. Councillor Carr also believed that the Council did not require a whole department to promote the interests of the Leader of the Council.

Councillor Colwill recommended the alternative budget moved by Councillor Davidson as there were proposals to bring money back in to regenerate the Borough. He said that this had been done between all parties over the years and that the homes that were being produced would bring in much more revenue as time went on and that if the Council kept regenerating, it would end up with a vibrant Brent which required all Councillors to work together to achieve this. In conclusion, Councillor Colwill urged that the Council continue to look after its schools during these times of cuts.

Councillor Butt, in delivering his closing remarks, thanked all Members for their contributions to the debate and said it had been interesting listening to what the alternative budgets had proposed. In questioning whether the opposition groups had consulted or engaged with public prior to producing the alternative budgets and confirmed that, in the case of the Administration's proposed budget, the Labour Group had. He said that the Administration had been absolutely honest with residents in an attempt to deliver a better Brent. Councillor Butt said that Councillor Warren's alternative budget had been disappointing. He added that Councillor Warren had been afforded the option to attend Cabinet and to engage with the Administration and that what he had proposed was of little substance, few other options due to austerity and a lack of ideas or vision.

Prior to a vote being taken on the amendments put by Opposition Groups and the proposals by Cabinet, the Chief Executive confirmed that the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor would abstain from the initial vote cast in each case.

On a recorded vote being taken, the alternative budget moved as an amendment to the Cabinet's proposals for the Budget by Councillor Davidson, was declared **LOST**.

Voting was recorded as follows:

For the Amendment (5)

Councillors Carr, Colwill, Davidson, Kansagra and Maurice

Against the Amendment (51)

Councillors Aden, Agha, Allie, Bradley, Butt, Chan, S Choudhary, Colacicco, Conneely, Crane, Daly, Denselow, Dixon, Duffy, Eniola, Ezeajughi, Farah, Harrison, Hector, Hirani, Hylton, Jones, Kabir, Kelcher, Long, Mahmood, Marquis, Mashari, McLeish, McLennan, Miller, Moher, J Mitchell-Murray, W Mitchell-Murray, Naheerathan, Nerva, M Patel, R Patel, Pavey, Perrin, Pitruzzella, Shahzad, Shaw, Ketan Sheth, Krupa Sheth, Southwood, Stopp, Tatler, Thomas, Van Kalwala and Warren.

Abstentions to the Amendment (2)

Councillors Ahmed and Chohan

On a recorded vote being taken, the alternative budget moved as an amendment to the Cabinet's proposals for the Budget by Councillor Warren, was declared **LOST**.

Voting was recorded as follows:

For the Amendment (2)

Councillors Shaw and Warren

Against the Amendment (54)

Councillors Aden, Agha, Allie, Bradley, Butt, Carr, Chan, S Choudhary, Colacicco, Colwill, Conneely, Crane, Daly, Davidson, Denselow, Dixon, Duffy, Eniola, Ezeajughi, Farah, Harrison, Hector, Hirani, Hylton, Jones, Kabir, Kansagra, Kelcher, Long, Mahmood, Marquis, Mashari, Maurice, McLeish, McLennan, Miller, Moher, J Mitchell-Murray, W Mitchell-Murray, Naheerathan, Nerva, M Patel, R Patel, Pavey, Perrin, Pitruzzella, Shahzad, Ketan Sheth, Krupa Sheth, Southwood, Stopp, Tatler, Thomas and Van Kalwala.

Abstentions to the Amendment (2)

Councillors Ahmed and Chohan

On a recorded vote being taken to the Cabinet's proposals for the Budget, by Councillor Butt, the motion was declared **CARRIED**.

Voting was recorded as follows:

For the Motion (49)

Councillors Aden, Agha, Allie, Bradley, Butt, Chan, S Choudhary, Colacicco, Conneely, Crane, Daly, Denselow, Dixon, Duffy, Eniola, Ezeajughi, Farah, Harrison, Hector, Hirani, Hylton, Jones, Kabir, Kelcher, Long, Mahmood, Marquis, Mashari, McLeish, McLennan, Miller, Moher, J Mitchell-Murray, W Mitchell-Murray, Naheerathan, Nerva, M Patel, R Patel, Pavey, Perrin, Pitruzzella, Shahzad, Ketan Sheth, Krupa Sheth, Southwood, Stopp, Tatler, Thomas and Van Kalwala.

Against the Motion (7)

Councillors Carr, Colwill, Davidson, Kansagra, Maurice, Shaw and Warren

Abstentions to the Motion (2)

Councillors Ahmed and Chohan

Accordingly, it was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) An overall 3.99% increase in the Council's element of Council Tax for 2017/18, with 2% as a precept for Adult Social Care and a 1.99% general increase, be agreed;
- (ii) If the 2% adult social care precept in the Council's element of Council Tax was rejected, Adult Social Care expenditure would be cut by £2.1m in 2017/18 from the levels proposed in this paper, be agreed;
- (iii) The General Fund Revenue Budget for 2017/18, as summarised in Appendix A, be agreed;
- (iv) The cost pressures, technical adjustments and savings, as detailed in Appendix B, be agreed;
- (v) The HRA Budget, as set out in Section 6, be agreed;
- (vi) The dedicated schools' grant, as set out in Section 7 be agreed;
- (vii) The pension fund contribution rates of 32.5%, 33.8% and 35.0% for 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 respectively, be agreed;
- (viii) The report from the Budget Scrutiny Panel, as set out at Appendix C, be noted;
- (ix) The Capital Programme, as set out at Appendix D, be agreed.
- (x) The Treasury Management Strategy and the Annual Investment Strategy for 2017/18, as set out at Appendix E, be agreed;
- (xi) The Prudential Indicators measuring affordability, capital spending, external debt and treasury management, as set out at Appendix F, be agreed;
- (xii) The advice of the Chief Legal Officer, as set out at Appendix G, be noted;

- (xiii) The categorisation of Earmarked Reserves and Provisions, as set out in Appendix H, be agreed;
- (xiv) The schedules of fees and charges to be set by the Council, as set out at Appendix I, and the proposed new Fees and Charges Policy, as set out at Appendix J, including the officer delegated powers to which it referred, be agreed;
- (xv) The results of consultation, as set out in Section 9 and detailed in Appendix K, be noted;

NOTE: These recommendations only include a provisional Council Tax level for the GLA as its final budget was not agreed when this report was despatched. This means that the statutory calculation of the total amount of Council Tax under Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 may be amended by the final Greater London Authority precept.

- (xvi) In relation to the Council Tax for 2017/18:

The following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2017/18, in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended:

- (a) £981,517,657 being the aggregate of the amount that the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act.
- (b) £874,652,471 being the aggregate of the amounts that the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
- (c) £106,865,186 being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year.
- (d) £1,145.16 being the amount at (c) above, divided by the amount for the tax base of 93,319, agreed by the General Purposes Committee on 8 Dec 2016, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.

(e) Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
763.44	890.68	1,017.92	1,145.16	1,399.64	1,654.12	1,908.60	2,290.32

being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at (d) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings

listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- (xvii) It be noted that, for the year 2017/18, the proposed Greater London Authority precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, in respect of the Greater London Authority, for each of the categories of dwellings are as shown below:

Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
186.68	217.79	248.91	280.02	342.25	404.47	466.70	560.04

- (xviii) Having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at paragraph 2.29(e) and 2.30, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2017/18 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
950.12	1,108.47	1,266.83	1,425.18	1,741.89	2,058.59	2,375.30	2,850.36

It be noted that the Chief Finance Officer has determined that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2017/18 is not excessive in accordance with the principles approved under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Act 1992.

- (a) The Chief Finance Officer be and is hereby authorised to give due notice of the said Council Tax in the manner provided by Section 38(2) of the 1992 Act.
- (b) The Chief Finance Officer be and is hereby authorised, when necessary, to apply for a summons against any council tax payer or non-domestic ratepayer on whom an account for the said tax or rate and any arrears has been duly served and who has failed to pay the amounts due to take all subsequent necessary action to recover them promptly.
- (c) The Chief Finance Officer be and is hereby authorised to collect revenues and distribute monies from the Collection Fund and is authorised to borrow or to lend money in accordance with the regulations to the maximum benefit of each fund.

- (xix) In the event that the GLA sets a different Council Tax precept to that set out in this report (which was the published provisional amount at the date of

despatch) that authority be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer to vary the amounts at (xvi), but only insofar as to reflect the GLA decision, and to make consequential, but no other, amendments to the amounts at (xvii).

8. Members' Allowance Scheme

The Council had before it, a report by the Chief Legal Officer, which sought the Council's approval to the making of a Members' Allowance Scheme, in the proposed terms, as set out in the report, for the 2017/18 Financial Year.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The Members' Allowance Scheme in the proposed terms set out in the report, for the Financial Year 2017/18, be approved; and
- (ii) The Chief Legal Officer be authorised to comply with the statutory requirements to publicise the Council's Members' Allowance Scheme.

9. Changes to the Constitution

The Council had before it, a report by the Chief Legal Officer, which sought the Council's approval to proposed changes to the rules of debate at meetings of the Full Council.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) With immediate effect, the changes to the Constitution proposed in the report, be agreed; and
- (ii) The Chief Legal Officer be authorised to amend the Constitution accordingly.

10. Appointment of Deputy Electoral Registration Officer

The Council had before it, a report by the Chief Executive, which sought the Council's approval to the appointment of a Deputy Electoral Registration Officer under Section 52(2) of the Representation of the People Act 1983, and that such appointed person be authorised to perform and exercise any of the duties and powers of the Electoral Registration Officer.

RESOLVED that the Council's Electoral Registration and Services Manager be appointed as the Deputy Electoral Registration Officer, with the full powers of the Electoral Registration Officer in her absence.

11. Review of New Scrutiny Committee Structure

Councillor Ketan Sheth, Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, introduced a report by the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships, which reviewed the new structure of the Council's two scrutiny committees, which had come into effect on 18 May 2016, and which examined the

impact of the dual structure on addressing the challenges and strategic issues for scrutiny at the Council.

By way of an amendment, Councillor Warren moved that the recommendation within the report be deleted and be replaced by the following:

- “1. This Council notes both the failure of its scrutiny arrangements and lack of any effective scrutiny since May 2014; and
2. This Council instructs Officers to revisit the proposals and present to Council a new scrutiny structure with a minimum of four such committees.”

On a vote being taken by a show of hands, the AMENDMENT was declared **LOST**.

Accordingly, it was **RESOLVED** that the content of the report be noted and agreed.

12. **Localism Act 2011 - Pay Policy Statement**

The Council had before it, a report by the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development, which, in accordance with Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011 (requirement upon English and Welsh local authorities to produce a pay policy statement on an annual basis) sought the Council's approval to the Pay Policy Statement attached to the report, as an accurate and factual representation of the Council's pay arrangements for 2017/18.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The Pay Policy Statement attached to the report be approved as an accurate and factual representation of the Council's pay arrangements for 2017/18; and
- (ii) Any amendments required during the year be brought back to a future meeting of the Council's General Purposes Committee and Full Council for approval.

13. **Motion**

In accordance with the agreed procedural motion, the following motion was debated by Council:

Brent Council Condemns US Travel Ban

Councillor Shahzad OBE moved the motion by urging that this Council unanimously condemns recent unjustified and inhumane efforts by President Donald Trump to ban the men, women and children of predominantly Muslim countries from entering the United States, and objects in the strongest terms to the principle of any nation imposing arbitrary, discriminatory travel bans.

This Council holds that racism and xenophobia, for which there can be no place in civilised society, be challenged at every turn, and that the politics of hate and fear must always be robustly confronted and comprehensively rejected.

This Council draws attention to the recent commemoration of Holocaust and Genocide Memorial Day and implores President Trump to heed urgent warnings against allowing the catastrophic mistakes of our collective past to be repeated.

This Council celebrates our borough's proud diversity and is testament to the immense and invaluable contribution afforded by the universal human right of global migration.

While recognising the need to prioritise national security, this Council calls on the UK government to continuing setting an international example of enlightened compassion, ensuring that our words are more than matched by our actions via a guarantee that this country will always be as much a place of sanctuary as it is a land of opportunity.

The motion was put to the vote and was declared **CARRIED**.

14. **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

The meeting was declared closed at 9.35pm.

COUNCILLOR PARVEZ AHMED
Mayor