



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

Minutes of the ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
held on Wednesday 17 May 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
A Choudry	Colacicco
Colwill	Conneely
Crane	Daly
Davidson	Denselow
Dixon	Duffy
Ezeajughi	Farah
Harrison	Hector
Hirani	Hoda-Benn
Hossain	Hylton
Jones	Kabir
Kansagra	Kelcher
Long	Mahmood
Maurice	McLeish
McLennan	Miller
Moher	J Mitchell Murray
W Mitchell Murray	Naheerathan
M Patel	RS Patel
Perrin	Ms Shaw
Ketan Sheth	Krupa Sheth
Southwood	Stopp
Tatler	Thomas
Van Kalwala	Warren

Apologies for absence

The Mayor outlined that direct apologies for absence had been received from: Councillors Collier, Khan, Marquis, Mashari, Nerva, Pavey, Pitruzzella and Shahzad.

Before the formal business of the meeting began, the Mayor asked all Members and guests present to remember those dear to the Council and Civic Office who had passed away recently. He noted the sad passing of former Mayoress Rose Lebor, and former Councillor and Mayor, Cyril Shaw.

A minutes silence was observed.

1. **To elect the Mayor of the Borough for the Municipal Year 2017/2018**

The Mayor asked Members for nominations to the Office of Mayor of the London of Borough Brent for the Municipal Year 2017/2018.

Councillor Butt (Leader of the Council) proceeded to nominate Councillor Chohan. He stated that Councillor Chohan had been a committed Deputy Mayor over the last year and had been a vocal advocate for encouraging residential participation in community projects across the borough. He stated that he had every confidence that he would continue to encourage ties between the Council and underrepresented communities, to ensure that every resident had a voice.

Councillor McLennan (Deputy Leader of the Council) seconded Councillor Butt's nomination for Councillor Chohan to become the new Mayor of Brent. She stated that she believed Councillor Chohan had proven himself to be capable and conscientious in his role as Deputy Mayor and that his grassroots experience of the voluntary sector was extensive and would prove to be an asset to the Mayoral Office.

There were no other nominations and it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Chohan be elected Mayor of the London Borough of Brent for the 2017/2018 municipal year.

Councillor Chohan proceeded to sign the statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Mayor and took over the chairmanship of the meeting.

2. **To Appoint a Councillor of the Borough to be Deputy Mayor**

The new Mayor announced that he had appointed Councillor Mahmood as Deputy Mayor for the 2017/2018 municipal year.

The Mayor's robe and chain of office was then passed from Councillor Ahmed to Councillor Chohan. Councillor Ahmed was presented with the past Mayor's badge and ribbon and Mrs Lena Ahmed was presented with the past Mayoress' badge.

The Mayor thanked Members for electing him as Mayor and for their support during his year as Deputy Mayor. He also paid tribute to his predecessor, Councillor Ahmed, and expressed further thanks to the Officers at the Council who had already assisted him in a smooth transition to becoming Mayor.

He expressed his desire to continue the efforts of the previous Mayor in increasing ties between the Council and underrepresented communities across the Borough and that he believed that the Office of the Mayor was a figurehead to bring everyone together. The Mayor also announced that he would be supporting the Asian Women's Resource Centre and The Akshaya Patra Foundation UK in his role during the forthcoming municipal year.

He concluded by welcoming the new Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mahmood, to his role and that he looked forward to a prosperous civic year ahead.

3. Vote of Thanks to the Outgoing Mayor

The Mayor invited Councillor McLennan to propose a vote of thanks for Co-Opted Members serving on the Council's Committees.

Councillor McLennan stated that the Annual Meeting of the Council was an opportunity to highlight the valued work of the Council's Co-Opted Committee Members. She outlined that two long standing Co-Opted Members of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, Dr Jeff Levison and Mother Christine Cargill, were standing down after many years of service. Members heard that whilst Co-Opted Members' roles comprised of being 'critical friends' to the Cabinet, their objectivity and counsel aided the Council drive for continued improvement in delivering services for residents. She concluded by thanking all of the Council's Co-Opted Members for their work on the Council's Committees over the past year.

The Mayor then invited Councillor Butt to propose a vote of thanks in the outgoing Mayor, Councillor Ahmed.

Councillor Butt stated that Councillor Ahmed had been an exemplary and dedicated Mayor to the people of Brent. This, he said, had been evidenced by the vast number of events he had attended and the amount of money he had raised for three charities based in the Borough (Brent Centre for Young People, Sufra North West London and Community Action on Dementia Brent). He stated that the outgoing Mayor had been a model of determination, grit and community spirit in his civic work and had also presided over some key decisions being made at Full Council meetings. Councillor Butt asked everyone assembled at the meeting to join him in offering their sincerest thanks to the work of Councillor Ahmed as Mayor of Brent during the 2016/2017 municipal year.

The Mayor invited Members to make additional contributions in thanking the outgoing Mayor.

Councillor Colwill (Leader of the Conservative Group) congratulated Councillor Chohan on his election as the new Mayor and thanked Councillor Ahmed for his year in office on behalf of the Conservative Group. He said that it had been a pleasure to accompany him to events in Westminster and his inclusivity to all was welcome. He praised his chairmanship of Full Council meetings over the past year where he had treated all Members fairly and equally. Councillor Colwill also referenced the Mayoral support to voluntary groups and placed on record his thanks to all voluntary groups across the borough who were doing invaluable work for residents.

Councillor Warren (Leader of the Brent Conservative Group) also thanked the Mayor for his achievements during his year in office. He praised the number of engagements which the outgoing Mayor had attended. He extended best wishes to Councillor Ahmed on the conclusion of his term and wished the new Mayor well in his role.

Councillor Kabir referenced the high number of events Councillor Ahmed had attended during the past municipal year, and highlighted that many of these were also outside of Brent itself. She stated that she had heard very positive feedback about the Mayor's presence at events outside of the borough, which had shown what an exemplary ambassador the outgoing Mayor had been for the Council. She also paid tribute to the outgoing Mayoress, Mrs Ahmed, stating that the Mayor would not have been able to achieve such a successful year without her.

Councillor Davidson said that Councillor Ahmed had been a tremendous Mayor of Brent. He mentioned how professional the Mayor had been in hosting an Ulster Unionist delegation, which had contributed to all of the delegation having a fantastic day in Brent. He agreed that Councillor Ahmed had been model ambassador for the Council.

Councillor Dixon praised Councillor Ahmed as being a role model for her. She noted how cheerful and warm he had been at every event and that he had been second to none on ensuring community cohesion. She said that it was a pleasure to represent Dollis Hill ward alongside him.

Councillor McLennan stated that it had been a fantastic and whirlwind year for the outgoing Mayor. She noted how many events he had been to over the course of the year and that residents had nothing but praise for his work. She said that he would be sorely missed in the role but was confident that his fine work would continue under Councillor Chohan. She concluded by also thanking Mrs Ahmed in her role as outgoing Mayoress.

Councillor Kansagra (Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group) praised the outgoing Mayor, stating that in his 17 years as a Councillor he had not seen a Mayor attend as many functions as Councillor Ahmed. He also commended his fundraising work and stated that he would welcome Councillor Ahmed back as Mayor again in the future.

Councillor Agha concurred with all the remarks already made. He stated that the outgoing Mayor had been a hugely popular Mayor and wished him all the best for the future.

The Mayor then invited Councillor Ahmed to respond and review his year in office.

Councillor Ahmed stated how proud he was to have been elected as the first Mayor of Brent of Bangladeshi origin. He placed on record his appreciation for all of the support from both Officers and Members that he had received during his Mayoral year. He welcomed Councillor Mahmood to his new role as Deputy Mayor and thanked Councillor Chohan and Mrs Chohan for all of their hard work during the 2016/2017 civic year. He gave a recap of his year in office, noting that he had attended nearly 800 events and had been privileged to meet so many inspiring, talented and generous people across the borough. He referenced the three charities he had been supporting (Brent Centre for Young People; Sufra North West London; and Community Action on Dementia Brent) and announced that over £40,000 had been raised to share between them over the course of the civic year. He thanked everyone who had been involved in the fundraising efforts. Councillor

Ahmed also took a moment to pay tribute and present a certificate to Councillor Thomas, who was celebrating 25 years as a Councillor in Brent and Newham.

The outgoing Mayor stated that it had been a privilege to represent the borough at so many events and welcome so many visitors to the Mayor's Parlour at the Civic Centre. He concluded by thanking his close friends and family for their patience and continued love and support throughout the year.

4. Declarations of Interests

There were no interests declared by Members.

5. Minutes of the Previous Meetings

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The minutes of the 27 February 2017 Full Council meeting be approved as a correct record; and
- (ii) The minutes of the 20 April 2017 Special Full Council meeting be approved as a correct record.

6. Changes to the Constitution

Councillor Butt directed Members' attention to the report on proposed changes to the Council's Constitution. He noted that the changes laid out had been through the Council's formal Constitutional Working Group (CWG) and had been the subject of countless discussions in order to draft the changes. He stated that the changes proposed were positive for the Council and that the envisaged creation of a new Housing Scrutiny Committee and Audit Advisory Committee would enhance democracy and accountability across the Council.

The Mayor invited Councillor Warren to speak on the Brent Conservative amendment (to delete Standing Order 13 (a) – Vote of No Confidence in the Leader). Councillor Warren stated that he had spoken about this issue before back in 2014 but that no progress had been made in changing the system of voting no confidence in the Leader of the Council. He said that this standing order, as things stood, lacked democratic legitimacy and accountability because of the raft of constitutional stipulations which needed to be undertaken before a vote could be held.

Councillor Kansagra commented that this issue had already been discussed and decided upon at previous Full Council meetings. He made the point that opposition groups should accept that the Leader will be comprised from the largest party at the Council and it is up to them to decide who the Leader will be. He outlined that the Council had a Constitution which it adhered to and that the proposed amendment was unnecessary.

Councillor Butt responded stating that Councillor Warren had always had the opportunity to attend internal CWG meetings and put forward his proposal but had chosen to come to the annual meeting to disrupt proceedings and to try and score political points.

Councillor Warren requested a recorded vote on the Brent Conservative Group's proposed amendment. The amendment was put to the vote and declared **LOST**.

Voting was recorded as follows:

FOR the amendment (3):

Councillors Carr, Shaw and Warren.

AGAINST the amendment (45):

Councillors Aden, Agha, Ahmed, Allie, Bradley, Butt, Chan, S Choudhary, A Choudhry, Colacicco, Colwill, Crane, Daly, Davidson, Denselow, Dixon, Duffy, Ezeajughi, Farah, Harrison Hector, Hirani, Hoda-Benn, Hossain, Hylton, Jones, Kabir, Kansagra, Long, Maurice, McLeish, McLennan, Miller, Moher, J Mitchell Murray, W Mitchell Murray, Naheerathan, R Patel, Perrin, Ketan Sheth, Krupa Sheth, Southwood, Tatler, Thomas and Van Kalwala.

ABSTENTIONS to the amendment (2):

Councillors Chohan and Mahmood.

(Note: Councillors Conneely, Kelcher, M Patel and Stopp had left the meeting at the time of the recorded vote)

The recommendations on the changes to the Constitution contained within the report for agenda item number six were then put to a vote and declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The changes to the Constitution proposed within the report for agenda item number six and authorisation for the Chief Legal Officer to amend the Constitution be approved; and
- (ii) The proposed amendments to the Members' Allowance Scheme and authorisation for the Chief Legal Officer to fulfil the publicity requirements be approved.

7. **Representation of Political Groups on Committees**

The Mayor briefly introduced the report from the Chief Legal Officer which fulfilled the Council's duty to review and determine the representation of different political groups on certain Committees at its annual meeting.

No Members indicated that they wished to speak and the proposed recommendations in the report were put to a vote and declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The size of each Committee be agreed;

- (ii) The allocation of seats on Committees to each of the Council's political groups (where the rules of political balance apply) be agreed; and
- (iii) The political balance on the Council's Sub-Committees be reviewed at the first meeting of the General Purposes Committee.

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

The Mayor referred Members to the report which outlined the nominations for appointments to Committees, Joint Committees, Forums, Panels, Outside Bodies and nomination for Chairs and Vice Chairs, where necessary, for the 2017-2018 municipal year.

No Members indicated that they wished to speak and the proposed recommendations in the report were put to a vote and declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The proposed appointments of Members, Co-Opted Members and substitutes to Council Committees, Joint Committees, Panels, Forums and Outside Bodies for the 2017-2018 municipal year be agreed;
- (ii) The proposed appointments of Chairs and Vice Chairs for these Committees, Joint Committees, Panels, Forums and Outside Bodies for the 2017-2018 municipal year be agreed; and
- (iii) The appointments of the Cabinet, Cabinet Committees and Joint Executive Committees and their respective Chairs and Vice Chairs for the 2017-2018 municipal year be noted.

(The full list of appointments can be found as part of Appendix A to the [supplementary pack](#) which was circulated before the meeting).

9. **Calendar of Council Meetings for the 2017/2018 Municipal Year**

The Mayor drew Members' attention to the report for agenda item number nine on the proposed calendar of meeting dates for Full Council and other meetings during the 2017-2018 municipal year.

He invited Councillor Warren to introduce the Brent Conservative Group amendment on adding a 20 November 2017 Full Council meeting to the calendar. Councillor Warren stated that he believed the plan to remove the November Full Council meeting from the calendar was a mistake and represented another example of a lack of democracy within the Council. He said that any residents who wished to make a deputation to Full Council would have to wait four months between September and January and that it was in the interests of democracy to reinstate the November Full Council meeting.

Councillor Butt responded by stating that Councillor Warren always had the opportunity to hold the Council to account through attending and speaking at Cabinet meetings, yet he rarely did so. He maintained that the Council was

improving democratic oversight through the creation of new Scrutiny and Audit Committees and that residents had the right to petition the Council at any time. He concluded by stating that the Labour group were always out on the doorstep across the borough listening to residents' concerns and opinions.

In response, Councillor Warren stated that when he did attend Cabinet meetings he was rarely given the opportunity to speak on issues. Councillor Duffy also added that he felt Councillor Warren's request for an extra Full Council meeting was reasonable.

Councillor Colwill asked to put on record the Conservative Group's dismay at Councillor Warren's behaviour at the annual meeting and apologised to all residents in attendance.

The Brent Conservative amendment was put to a vote and was declared **LOST**.

The proposed recommendations within the report were put to a vote and declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The proposed dates for Full Council and other meetings to take place during the 2017-2018 municipal year be agreed; and
- (ii) The Head of Executive and Member Services would be granted the authority to make any alterations deemed necessary to the municipal calendar during the course of the municipal year having consulted the Leader of the Council; the Leader of the Principal Opposition Group and the Chair of the affected meeting.

10. **Urgent Business**

There was no other urgent business to be transacted.

The meeting closed at 8.08 pm

COUNCILLOR BHAGWANJI CHOCHAN
Mayor