



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

**Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
held on Monday 11 July 2016 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Parvez Ahmed

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Chohan

COUNCILLORS:

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

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: Councillors Hector, Hossain, Khan, Moher and

Stopp and from Councillor Collier for leaving earlier due to not feeling well.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

Councillor Warren requested that the minutes be amended to reflect the recorded vote taken under item 10 "Representation of political groups on committees".

RESOLVED:-

that, subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 May 2016 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.
(amendment incorporated)

2. Declarations of interests

None declared.

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

The Mayor stated that he was honoured to be chairing his first Full Council meeting since being elected Mayor. He pledged that he would use his Mayoral year to promote the extremely good work of Brent Council with integrity and pride.

He spoke of the tragedies of the past few months that have occurred in the UK and abroad. He stated that thoughts were with all of those whose lives had been affected by such terrible acts of violence.

He asked Members to observe a minutes silence to remember those affected by the tragedies in Orlando, Bangladesh, Baghdad, Istanbul, Saudi Arabia, Dallas and also the murder of Jo Cox, MP.

Members stood for a minutes silence.

On behalf of the people of Brent, the Mayor congratulated all the British winners at Wimbledon 2016; they had made the nation proud – as had Louis Hamilton. The Mayor also congratulated the Portuguese football team on winning Euro 2016. He stated that these sporting achievements should be an inspiration to us all.

The Mayor informed Members that he had the honour of attending the Remembering Srebrenica Memorial event organised by the Remembering Srebrenica Charity, commemorating 21 years since the Srebrenica genocide in Bosnia, an event in history which claimed the lives of over 8000 men and boys.

The Mayor stated that Brent had observed UK Armed Forces Day on 25 June 2016. He stated that it was important that those who defend the UK and its interests were remembered.

The Mayor urged fellow Councillors to take part in the annual cricket match. He reminded Members that he would also be hosting the first fundraising event of his Mayoral year in the Grand Hall from 7pm on Thursday 14 July 2016.

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.

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) that Dr Robert Cawley be appointed as an Independent Person for Standards Committee;
- (ii) that Councillors Shaw and Warren be appointed as substitutes on the Audit Committee;
- (iii) that Councillors Davidson and Shaw be appointed as substitutes on the Corporate Parenting Committee;
- (iv) that Councillors Shaw and Warren be appointed as substitutes on the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee;
- (v) that Councillors Davidson and Shaw be appointed as substitutes on the Standards Committee;
- (vi) that Councillor Jones be appointed to the Alcohol and Entertainment Licensing Committee in place of Councillor Collier;
- (vii) that Councillor Pavey be appointed to the Tricycle Theatre Board.

5. Reports from the Leader and Cabinet

Councillor Butt, Leader of the Council, stated his intention to work with the newly elected Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, notably on housing issues. Councillor Butt stated his intention to maximise the opportunities for Brent especially in relation to Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC) and any potential housing opportunities. Councillor Butt stated his intention to lobby for a HS2 stop at Wembley Central. Brent would continue to work to maximise employment and skills opportunities. He stated that Brent was working with partners on the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP). Moving forward, Councillor Butt stated that by working closely with partners such as the Police and CCG it would be possible to maximise the benefits for Brent's residents.

Councillor Mashari, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Growth, Employment and Skills began by welcoming Amar Dave, the Council's new Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment. Councillor Mashari informed Members that changes were being made to the Planning Committee process. She stated her intention to work closely with the Chair of Planning to improve the planning process in Brent. Councillor Mashari reported that consultation was due to begin shortly on the South Kilburn masterplan. She informed Members that she was working closely with the West London Alliance following the result of the EU referendum.

Councillor W Mitchell Murray, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, informed Members that she had recently attended her first Local Safeguarding Children Board. She reported that it now appeared that the Government's academisation programme would not go ahead. Councillor Mitchell Murray stated that she had recently attended a Schools' Forum and also a meeting of Governors in Brent. Councillor Mitchell Murray informed Members that tenders for the Youth Service had been received but the lead bidder had pulled out. She reported that the Youth Service would therefore be kept in house but that the Council would seek support from the voluntary sector.

Councillor Hirani, Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing, reported on an upcoming report to Cabinet. Councillor Hirani reported on the Council's Slash Sugar campaign. He reported that Chalkhill Primary School had also signed up to the Council's campaign. The School would work with other schools to champion the campaign.

Councillor Pavey, Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, provided details of the Council's recently approved Civic Enterprise Strategy. The Strategy would generate income and incorporated ideas from staff members.

Councillor Southwood, Cabinet Member for Environment, reported that the new Mayor of London had indicated his intention to tackle poor air quality across London. She reported that consultation on improving air quality in Brent would take place over the summer. She reiterated the Council's commitment to promote alternative methods of transport to the car. She outlined initiatives to tackle illegal dumping.

Councillor Farah, Cabinet Member for Housing, outlined the Council's initiatives to combat housing problems in Brent.

6. Deputations

The Mayor informed Members that he had received requests for two deputations.

6.1 High Street Regeneration in Willesden Green

Councillor Collier, Willesden Green ward, introduced the deputation on the subject of High Street Regeneration in Willesden Green.

Deborah Mahs thanked Councillor Collier for the introduction. She stated that Willesden Green had a diverse population of around 15,500. She stated that the High Road in Willesden Green was one of the most neglected in Brent.

She stated that one of the worst affected areas was the Willesden Green town centre area which had around 89 businesses, the new library and cultural centre, and residential dwellings. She outlined the general neglect on the High Road. She stated that the Willesden Green Town Team hoped to be able to work with Brent Council to develop a thriving town centre. She reported that this was a priority for the new Mayor of London. Deborah Mahs stated that the Willesden Green Town Team had developed a charter which had resulted in visible improvements to the High Road.

Deborah Mahs asked that the Council engage with the Willesden Green Town Team to fully regenerate the town centre. She sought engagement in three areas from the Council:

- Curtilages;
- Unsightly railings;
- Bollards (on pavements).

Councillor Mashari, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Growth, Employment and Skills, thanked Deborah Mahs for her deputation. Councillor Mashari stated that she would visit Willesden Green town centre with Amar Dave, the Council's Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment. She suggested that Deborah Mahs sit on the newly established Business Forum. She said that the Council was looking at spatial planning with a particular focus on the Borough's High Streets. Councillor Mashari encouraged Deborah Mahs to establish a neighbourhood forum.

6.2 Catalyst Housing and the Church End Estate

Councillor Thomas, Harsleden ward, introduced the deputation on the subject of Catalyst Housing and the Church End Estate. Councillor Thomas outlined recent problems with Catalyst Housing, notably following a restructure.

The Mayor called on Marta Primo and Cynthia Richards to present their deputation.

Representing the residents' association, Marta Primo expressed deep concerns with the services provided by Catalyst Housing especially around cleaning in the blocks. She expressed concern at the CCTV in the block and also parking around the block for visitors.

Marta Primo asked that the Council reiterate the resident association's concerns directly to Catalyst Housing. She stated that the recycling facilities around the flats were inadequate and that no decent provision had been found for those facilities.

Councillor Farah, Cabinet Member for Housing, thanked Marta Primo for attending the meeting and presenting the residents' concerns. He stated that concerns had been raised with the Chief Executive of Catalyst who had agreed to arrange a meeting with Councillor Farah, ward councillors and representatives of the residents association. The meeting would take place on 20 July at the Civic Centre.

7. Questions from members of the public

The Mayor stated that a question had been received from Ms Trisha Langley; Ms Langley had received a written response but was not present at the meeting.

The Mayor stated that all Members had been supplied with a written answer.

8. Petitions

None.

9. Non Cabinet members' debate

None.

10. **Questions from the Opposition and other Non-Cabinet Members**

The Mayor informed Members that this item gave Members the opportunity to ask questions to Members of the Cabinet on any matter which was the responsibility of the Cabinet. He stated that Members had received written tabled responses to their questions.

The Mayor stated that non-Cabinet Members now had one minute to ask a supplementary question, if they wished.

Councillor Nerva asked what could be done to educate those caught illegally dumping in addition to fining offenders. Councillor Southwood, Cabinet Member for Environment, stated that when the pilot was reviewed, options for education would be considered.

Councillor Jones MBE expressed concern at the impact of Brexit on Brent's diverse communities. In response, Councillor Butt, Leader of the Council, stated that it was important for Brent to have a say in any response to Brexit. Councillor Butt expressed concern at the potential loss of European funding that Brent currently receives.

Councillor Colwill, Leader of the Conservative Group, stated that the number of potholes across the borough had increased significantly. He said that the number of potholes posed a significant danger to cyclists especially. In response, Councillor Southwood, Cabinet Member for Environment, stated that additional funding had been identified in the budget to address the most serious pot holes.

In response to a question from Councillor Duffy, Councillor Southwood, Cabinet Member for Environment, stated that handling tree stump removal was currently managed through two contracts.

Councillor Shaw thanked Councillor Pavey, Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, for his written answer. She welcomed his comments condemning hate crime.

Councillor Tatler asked what work was going on with schools across the Borough to encourage recycling rates. She suggested that the Council could attend school fetes to promote initiatives such as recycling. Councillor Southwood (Cabinet Member for Environment) pledged to ask Veolia to work with ward councillors to promote such events.

In response to Councillor Long, Councillor Southwood, Cabinet Member for Environment, stated that the Council would look at innovative ways to promote food recycling.

At this point in the meeting Councillor Warren raised a point of order in relation to the seating plan, pointing out that two members were not seated according to the agreed seating plan. The councillors returned to their allocated places - in line with the agreed seating plan.

11. **Report from Chairs of Scrutiny Committees**

Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Kelcher, Chair of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee thanked the Mayor and said what a privilege it was to be speaking at Councillor Ahmed's first full council as Mayor.

Councillor Kelcher stated that the two scrutiny committees were responsible for some of the most important activities on the Council. He stated that, last year, scrutiny published three task group reports, instituted one call-in, made numerous recommendations and quizzed the leader and all of his cabinet. He drew Members' attention to the Annual Report of Scrutiny.

Councillor Kelcher highlighted key reforms and changes to improve the way Scrutiny worked. He stated that one Scrutiny Committee had brought about a series of challenges, most acutely that of capacity.

He stated that the old committee's workload has been divided into two, and the total number of annual meetings increased to twelve. He stated that the Resources and Public Realm Committee would look at the Council's big spending projects, crime and the environment – whilst the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee would particularly focus on health issues.

He stated that the Council's Scrutiny function had received an assessment from a Local Government Association peer review team. Firstly, the LGA team noted that there was often frustration, occasionally leading to distrust, between members and officers regarding the content of reports. He stated that most of this was entirely innocent and accidental.

Secondly, Councillor Kelcher stated that the LGA felt that the choice of topics was done slightly haphazardly, with lots of worthy things being discussed, but the full list not being thought through strategically. Councillor Kelcher stated that scrutiny officers had recently organised events for each committee where Strategic Directors gave an outline of the main issues in their departments, and members could also suggest any topic they felt worthy.

In discussions with LGA scrutiny experts, Councillor Kelcher concluded that it had become clear that verbal recommendations made in Committee meetings by a vote of members had much greater standing in other authorities. Previously recommendations made in this way by Scrutiny in Brent had not made it on to the papers for Cabinet to respond to. He pledged that, from now on, recommendations made at committee would be much clearer and Members would insist these were followed up.

Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Ketan Sheth, Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, stated that the first meeting of the Committee would take place next week. He stated that this was the first time that housing, social care, public health, children's services and the NHS had been brought within the scope of one scrutiny committee in Brent.

Councillor Sheth stated that he saw the Committee's mission as not only to hold the Cabinet and Council partners in the NHS to account for their policies and decision-making, but to understand the impact of these decisions on the local people who elected members to represent them.

He stated that the new committee would be scrutinising some key policies of the Cabinet. The main item the Committee would look at initially would be the landlord licensing scheme.

Landlord licensing was a flagship policy for Cabinet and it was extremely important in a borough where almost one third of households were living in the private rented sector. He stated that if there were recommendations that his committee could make to the Cabinet to improve the scheme then the committee would make this clear.

Councillor Sheth stated that it was almost a year since the Cabinet agreed to set up an ethical lettings agency in the borough. He said that his committee would also look at this at its first meeting.

12. **Report from the Constitutional Working Group**

Carolyn Downs, Chief Executive, introduced the report. Members were reminded that, on 26 May 2016, the Monitoring Officer had commissioned an independent investigator, Richard Penn, to produce two reports.

The first report on the administrative process surrounding Councillor Oladapo's death was received on Sunday 3 July 2016 and the full report and recommendations were presented to the Council's Constitutional Working Group ("CWG") on 4 July 2016.

The first report of Mr Penn was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The Chief Executive stated that this report presented to Full Council the recommendations made by the CWG. The second report on a complaint against a member arising out of the circumstances surrounding Councillor Oladapo's death was expected, in draft form, week commencing 11 July 2016.

Councillor Warren, indicated his group's support for the recommendations in the report.

Councillor Butt thanked Mr Penn for the report stating that the recommendations, if approved, would lead to better systems and processes in place for dealing with requests to approve Members' absence from meetings.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that those members who are potentially likely to breach the six months rule because of their non-attendance should be given written notice of this by Member Services as soon as it becomes known through the various checks and balances;

- (ii) that all reports with a recommendation that a Councillor's absence should be approved are submitted first to a meeting of the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and the Head of Member and Executive Services, following consultation with the relevant Group Whip. Those officers will, on the basis of each case, recommend whether or not the report should go forward;
- (iii) that a member will be given written notice of the date on which they will cease to be a member of the authority, in cases where it is not recommended that absence be approved;
- (iv) that Members of CWG will receive written notification of whether or not the report referred to in (ii) will go forward and on what basis;
- (v) that any report recommending extension of absence, and in particular the recommendation itself, should make clear whether the member's absence is being approved until a specific date only or perhaps contingent on the member being required to take some action, for example providing further information;
- (vi) that, where the approval of absence of six months or more is requested then a medical certificate should be provided to the Chief Executive and a fresh certificate presented as requested;
- (vii) that a member should, in the case of occasional absence, tender their apologies directly to the Head of Executive and Member Services; those apologies received by the Chief Whip should be forwarded on by email to the Head of Executive and Member Services and where no contact is received from a member then their absence will not be recorded under "apologies".

13. **Motions**

13.1 **Government budget**

Councillor Miller moved the motion circulated in his name by referring back to the decision by the Chancellor to abandon his budget surplus target for 2020.

The motion was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the decision by the Chancellor to abandon his budget surplus target for 2020 be welcomed;
- (ii) that the Council regrets the suffering that has had to be endured by citizens of this country for six wasted years, including the residents of Brent, in pursuit of this goal by the inappropriate means of squeezing some of the most vulnerable, and passing responsibility for cuts onto local government;
- (iii) that the Council regrets all those who cannot access affordable accommodation because the government refuses to let councils invest in housing, for the sake of this abandoned goal; the Council regrets the extra strain put on the NHS, due to the squeeze on adult social care budgets that was caused for the sake of this abandoned goal; the Council regrets the

stress pushed onto some of the most vulnerable residents as the social security budget was cut for the sake of this abandoned goal;

- (iv) that the Council hopes that the government now realises that you cannot cut your way to growth, and will invest in services, infrastructure and people properly through local councils such as Brent, who understand what the real needs are and how to respond to them.

13.2 **Parking charges**

Councillor Maurice moved the motion circulated in his name. The motion sought to revoke the change to the parking permit charges agreed in which, in 2018, owners of diesel vehicles will have to pay more for their permits.

The motion was put to the vote and declared LOST.

13.3 **What a waste of money**

Councillor Warren moved the motion circulated in his name. The motion sought to express regret making the exit payment of £157,610 to the former director of human resources, Cara Davani. Councillor Warren stated that the Rosemarie Clarke case would have significant reputational damages on the Council for many years to come. He requested a recorded vote.

The motion was put to the vote and declared LOST.

Voting was recorded as follows:

FOR: Councillors Davidson, Shaw and Warren

AGAINST: Councillors Aden, Agha, Bradley, Butt, Chan, Choudhary, Choudry, Colacicco, Conneely, Daly, Denselow, Ezeajughi, Farah, Harrison, Hirani, Hoda-Benn, Hylton, Jones, Kabir, Kelcher, Mahmood, Marquis, Mashari, McLeish, McLennan, Miller, W Mitchell Murray, J Mitchell Murray, Naheerathan, M Patel, RS Patel, Pavey, Perrin, Pitruzzella, Shahzad, Ketan Sheth, Krupa Sheth, Southwood, Tatler and Van Kalwala

ABSTENTIONS: The Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillors Carr, Colwill, Crane, Dixon, Duffy, Eniola, Kansagra, Long, Maurice, Nerva and Thomas

14. **Urgent business**

14.1 **Amendment to Standing Orders**

Councillor McLennan, Deputy Leader of the Council, introduced the report informing Members that this report sought Full Council's urgent agreement to waive and amend Standing Order 73(a) which, with one exception, required contracts valued over £500,000 to be executed as a deed under seal.

In response to a question from Councillor Warren, Conrad Hall, Chief Finance Officer, agreed with Members that it was undesirable to have to have such a report

at Council under urgent business. He assured Members that circumstances warranted urgent consideration of the item by Full Council.

Conrad Hall informed Members that, for the avoidance of doubt, the report sought authority to enter into gas and electricity contracts as contracts, rather than as Deeds, and to amend standing orders to allow future flexibility solely on this technical point. He stated that no changes to the actual details of those contracts were proposed, merely the technical form of the contract.

Conrad Hall informed Members that officers had been seeking to finalise the contracts for some time, however, standing orders required that the contracts are only executed as a Deed and the other side had refused to accept this technical point, leading officers no practical alternative other than to request this flexibility.

Conrad Hall confirmed that, having discussed the matter with the Chief Legal Officer, that there were no operational disadvantages in so doing in this contract, and it would secure significantly more favourable pricing for the council.

Conrad Hall reiterated that there were no operational disadvantages in so doing, and the future flexibility proposed to the Chief Legal Officer extended solely to the technical form of future contracts - whether they were to be executed as a Deed or not. It would not affect in any way Members' power to specify what should go into contracts, who they should be awarded to and so on.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the execution of a tripartite contract with the Laser Energy Buying Group and Npower Limited for the supply of the Council's electricity for the period 2016 – 2020 be executed as a simple contract;
- (ii) that the execution of a tripartite contract with the Laser Energy Buying Group and Total Gas and Power Limited for the supply of the Council's gas for the period 2016 – 2020 be executed as a simple contract;
- (ii) that Standing Order 73(a) be amended as set out in paragraph 3.7 of the report.

14.2 **Rise in hate crime**

The Mayor stated that Members would be aware that there was concern about a rise in hate crime in the context of the outcome of the referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union.

The Mayor stated that, as a result, he had agreed to take the rise of hate crime as an item of urgent business.

The Mayor read out a statement from London Councils regarding hate crime:

'We will not tolerate hate crime or any kind of attack against people because of their ethnic origin. We are proud to be a diverse city and we will stay that way. We will continue to work together for the security and prosperity of all Londoners'.

Councillor Colwill spoke on behalf of the Conservative Group. He stated how lucky Brent residents were to live in such a diverse borough.

Councillor Warren spoke of the impressive diversity in Brent. He warned against complacency. As community leaders, Councillors had a duty to challenge hate crime. The motion from London Councils sent a clear message to all of Brent's residents.

Councillor Choudhury stated that Brent was fortunate not to have too many instances of hate crime but that hate crime, according to the Police, was on the rise, notably following the EU referendum. He stated that during the riots in 2011, Brent had not witnessed outbreaks of significant violence.

Councillor Carr stated that all hate crimes must be reported to the Police. She echoed words of Pastor Martin Niemöller about the cowardice of German intellectuals following the Nazis' rise to power.

Councillor Maurice spoke of his Jewish faith saying that he had, at all times, been welcomed in the Council Chamber.

Councillor Tatler spoke of her personal experience of racism. She stated that in addition to hate crimes, quiet prejudice needed also to be challenged.

Councillor Nerva stated that the diversity of Brent worked well. Brent was a melting pot of diversity. He stated that there had to be zero tolerance for hate crime. Councillor Nerva spoke of an event on 21 July organised by Brent Council Time to Talk – about personal experiences of hate crime. He also spoke about an event being organised by the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham about Hate Crime.

Councillor Kelcher spoke of elected members' special responsibility to report hate crime. He spoke of recent experiences in Kensal Green Ward.

Councillor Shahzad stated that the EU referendum appeared to have divided the country. He stated that some of the rhetoric used during the EU referendum campaign had contributed to the rise in hate crime. People were fearful of their current status in the country as a result of the EU referendum result. He urged national politicians to reassure people living in fear about their right to stay in the country.

Councillor Mahmood expressed concern about the apparent rise in hate crime since the EU referendum. He said that the people of Brent generally live in harmony. He urged his fellow Councillors to stand together to condemn this behaviour which had no place in society.

Councillor Hoda-Benn stated that some people had lived with racist and xenophobic hate crime throughout their lives. She urged her fellow Councillors to encourage residents to ensure all hate crime was reported.

Councillor Mashari echoed the views of colleagues about racist attacks. She stated that the rise of recent hate crime had been directed at Eastern European residents

in Brent especially Romanian and Polish. She urged her colleagues to stand resolute with the Eastern European communities of Brent.

Councillor Butt thanked his fellow councillors for their contributions and welcomed the cross party consensus. He sought to send a clear message to all those living in Brent – wherever they may be from originally. He stated that the Council would stand by its residents during times of uncertainty regardless of the result of EU exit negotiations. He welcomed the conviction, honesty and integrity of his fellow councillors.

RESOLVED:

We will not tolerate hate crime or any kind of attack against people because of their ethnic origin. We are proud to be a diverse city and we will stay that way. We will continue to work together for the security and prosperity of all Londoners.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm

COUNCILLOR PARVEZ AHMED
Mayor