



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

**Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
held on Monday, 12 July 2010 at 7.15 pm**

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Harbhajan Singh

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor M Aslam Choudry

COUNCILLORS:

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

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: Councillors Allie, Castle, Green, Leaman, Sneddon

and Van Kalwala

1. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meetings held on 1 March (circulated separately), 24 May (Annual meeting) and 26 May 2010 be approved as accurate records of the meetings.

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

None declared.

3. **Mayor's announcements**

The Mayor spoke on behalf of the Council in expressing his pleasure at seeing Councillor Steel at the meeting after his recent illness.

The Mayor announced that past Mayor, Gwen Tookey was recovering from a fall and wished her well.

The Mayor drew attention to the list of current petitions showing progress on dealing with them circulated around the chamber in accordance with Standing Orders.

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

RESOLVED:-

that the following appointments be made:

Planning Committee

- Councillor Long to replace Councillor Hossian
- Councillor Hossain to replace Councillor Long as first alternate to Councillor Adeyeye

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- Councillor Colwill as vice chair

Staff Appeals Sub-Committee (A)

- Councillor Beck as first alternate to Councillor Castle
- Councillor CJ Patel as second alternate to Councillor Castle

Staff Appeals Sub-Committee (B)

- Councillor Beck as first alternate to Councillor Castle
- Councillor CJ Patel as second alternate to Councillor Castle

School Admissions Forum

- Councillor Ashraf
- Councillor CJ Patel as first alternate to Councillor Ashraf
- Councillor Hashmi as second alternate to Councillor Ashraf

Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

- Councillor Hashmi as first alternate to Councillor Ashraf
- Councillor CJ Patel as second alternate to Councillor Ashraf

5. **Changes to the Council's Financial Regulations**

Members had before them the report that set out the proposed new interim financial regulations to cover the period April to September 2010.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the proposed new Financial Regulations set out in appendix A be adopted to take effect immediately and that the Council's constitution be amended accordingly;
- (ii) that it be noted that changes would be required in Autumn 2010.

6. **Question time**

The selected questions submitted under the provisions of standing order 38 had been circulated together with written responses from the respective Lead Members. The Members who had put the questions were invited to ask their supplementary questions.

The following three questions had been selected by the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group.

Parking income

The question from Councillor Clues had asked about the level of income generated from motorists. He stated that the answer he had received did not answer the part of his question that asked what was proposed to reduce the level of income. As a supplementary question he asked that, given that in the Labour election leaflets it had implied that £11 million was too much income from parking in the borough and that it was claimed that Labour were "working with the motorists to get a fairer deal", what proposals would be brought forward to reduce the amount of income from motorists in Brent.

Councillor J Moher (Lead Member for Highways and Transportation) expressed surprise that the question of election leaflets had been raised and considered the example given as mild. He added that there was no commitment to reduce the level of income and reminded Council that the use of the surplus was governed by law. Councillor Moher stated that what he would not be doing would be to furtively raid the account but would instead spend the money in consultation with motorists.

Highways maintenance

The question from Councillor Beck had asked for confirmation of when the programme for spending the additional £1.5 million on repairs to potholes and roads would be published. He again referred to the Labour pre election pledge to use money saved on consultants to repair roads. As a supplementary question Councillor Beck asked how many consultants had been got rid of and how much money this had generated for investment in Brent's roads.

Councillor J Moher (Lead Member for Highways and Transport) referred to the written answer provided to Councillor Beck. He accused the previous Liberal Democrat led administration of front loading repairs to roads and pavements during the first two years and then reducing spend during the latter two years of the administration. Even on a reduced spend he accused the previous administration of failing to complete the programme and stated that the issue of maintaining Brent's roads and pavements would be tackled in a proper way.

CCTV enforcement policy

The question from Councillor Green had asked if the new CCTV enforcement policy was going to be a money making scheme. In the absence of Councillor Green, Councillor Ashraf asked a supplementary question on his behalf. He asked given that Labour now ran Brent and any decisions taken were of their choosing, and further given that the current income from parking was around £14 million - £3 million more than the £11 million thought to be too much - would warning tickets for drivers who breach the new CCTV enforcement policy be issued so that the traffic can still be policed but without making more money.

Councillor J Moher (Lead Member for Highways and Transport) referred to the report included with the summons for the Council meeting concerning the enforcement of moving traffic and parking contraventions by means of CCTV cameras which gave a clear indication of how the new arrangements would work. Councillor Moher stressed the importance of the proposal, which included taking over responsibility from the police. He hoped all councillors would familiarise themselves with what was proposed. He referred to the previous administration considering the proposals back in March 2009 but not progressing them. He also referred to discussion at a previous meeting of the Forward Plan Select Committee about training staff to exercise judgement when enforcing the policy.

The following two questions had been selected by the Leader of the Conservative Group.

Funding for South Kilburn Estate

The question from Councillor Colwill had asked if there had been any change to the funding that was announced in April for the South Kilburn Estate. He referred to a story that had appeared in the local newspaper suggesting that the money had been removed. Councillor Colwill stated that there was £16 million surplus left in the Kilburn regeneration money pot and as a supplementary question, he asked for confirmation that the money would stay in South Kilburn.

Councillor Crane (Lead Member for Regeneration and Economic Development) replied that the Council was working in partnership on the regeneration of South Kilburn. He did not know the exact amount of money ringfenced for this area and

would ask officers to provide this. Nevertheless he was confident that the area would remain a priority for regeneration. However, he warned that the longer term implications of Government cuts were not known but it was clear they would affect all regeneration schemes and in turn affect working people.

Planning enforcement

The question from Councillor HB Patel had asked if it was intended to alter planning procedures so that serial contraveners were penalised. He stated that unauthorised developments were of great concern to all and only 25% of notices had been complied with. As a supplementary question, Councillor Patel asked what percentage of the 75% had complied following taking action against those that contravene planning applications and was the Lead Member prepared to take positive action to stop this process.

Councillor Powney (Lead Member for Environment, Planning and Culture) replied that he thought his written answer covered the supplementary question being asked. He emphasised that the Council was an aggressive enforcer of planning regulations. However it was better to get people to comply with planning permissions because it was cheaper than pursuing enforcement.

The following five questions had been selected by the Leader of the Labour Group.

Civic centre development

The question from Councillor Hector had asked what plans there were for the current Town Hall and if these had been affected by the economic climate. Councillor Hector indicated that she was satisfied with the answer she had received from the Leader of the Council and did not wish to ask a supplementary question.

Building Schools for the Future (BSF) funding

The question from Councillor Gladbaum had asked what efforts had been made to lobby local MPs on BSF funding. Councillor Gladbaum felt the Lead Member would be as appalled as she was by the Government's decision which would adversely impact on young people in the borough for decades to come. As a supplementary question she asked if there were any other sources of funding to replace the £80 million lost to the borough.

Councillor Arnold (Lead Member for Children and Families) agreed that the cutting of the programme and the way it had been done was shocking. She stated that it appeared the Government did not understand the need and so it was difficult to see where other funding would come from. The Council was left with seven schools in desperate need of rebuild/repair and a shortage of places because many of the schemes had included plans for expansion.

'Free schools'

The question from Councillor Harrison had asked if the Lead Member agreed that the Conservatives 'free schools' plan was a shambles. As a supplementary question, Councillor Harrison asked if the Lead Member was aware of where the funding would come from for free schools and would it be at the expense of existing schools.

Councillor Arnold (Lead Member for Children and Families) stated that the proposal did not appear to have been properly thought through and made reference to the Swedish experience. More information from the Government was awaited but it had already been mentioned that resources might be drawn from existing funding for schools.

Budget cuts

The question from Councillor S Choudhary had asked if recent press reports that decisions had already been made to cut services were accurate. He stated that the suggested cuts were as a result of the cuts made by the Government but as a supplementary question asked if assurances could be given that the Council would seek to protect front line services from the savage cuts imposed by the Government.

Councillor John (Leader) stressed that the reports in the local press were very inaccurate but it was true that the Council faced very difficult times with £60 million to £90 million of budget cuts to be made over the next few years. Careful consideration would be given to where any cuts were made and decisions would be taken to ensure services continued to be delivered in a joined up way.

Kingsbury Road traffic scheme

The question from Councillor Naheerathan had asked if the Kingsbury Road traffic scheme would be reviewed. He stated that he was very satisfied with the reply he had received from the Lead Member because it indicated that the scheme would be reviewed next spring.

Councillor J Moher (Lead Member for Highways and Transport) added that the main objection from local residents was that they felt they had not been consulted and so a review of the scheme would be included in the 2010/11 programme.

7. Reports from:

7.1 the Executive

The Borough Solicitor advised that discussions at the Constitutional Working Group had resulted in agreement that the format of future Council meetings should change. Officers would be reporting to the September meeting of Full Council on the required changes to standing orders but in the meantime it had been agreed informally that this meeting of Council should allow for debate on the items reported by the Executive.

Brent Local Development Framework - adoption of the core strategy

Councillor Powney introduced the report circulated which summarised the key recommendations of the Planning Inspector following the submission of the core strategy to the Secretary of State in September 2009. He explained that the most significant views of the of the Inspector were outlined in (a) – (e) under paragraph 3.4 and expressed the hope that these would be accepted.

Enforcement of moving traffic and parking contraventions by means of CCTC cameras

Councillor J Moher introduced the report circulated which sought approval for the transfer of powers to the Council for moving traffic contraventions, as listed in appendix A of the report. He pointed out to members the effects of what was being proposed. He was pleased that there appeared to be cross party support for this. Councillor J Moher referred to press coverage that had suggested that the proposals were a money making exercise but he stated that the money raised by the scheme would be used to recover the costs and provide training. He stated that motorists had fair warning of the scheme and that it would deter anti social motorists and so commended it to the Council.

Building Schools for the Future

Councillor Arnold reported on the huge implications for the borough of the government decision to halt the Building Schools for the Future programme. The secondary schools affected by the announcement were the two Crest academies, Copeland, Alperton, Cardinal Hinsley and Queens Park. She added that this would also prevent the vision being realised of the schools affected becoming community hubs.

Voluntary sector grants

Councillor R Moher reported on decisions made on main programme grants which, following the recommendations of a task group, had been agreed for a three year period and tied to one of the main themes of the Council. This year the theme was crime and community safety and regeneration. Twenty organisations had had their grants agreed totalling £370,573 and of those that had not received a grant, two had lodged an appeal although other funding streams already existed for them.

Impact of the chancellor's budget

Councillor Butt reported that despite expecting a tough budget it had been worse than predicted with £7 million grants being withdrawn. The effect on the Council would be the need for up to a further £30 million savings required over the next 4 years on top of the savings already being achieved. The announcement regarding housing benefit rent levels would result in 2,000 residents being affected and a £9 million reduction affecting the most vulnerable in the borough. The schools budget had been affected by the removal of £115 million. He stated that all those people who might expect assistance would be affected.

Commenting on the Executive's report, Councillor Lorber stated that he had a number of concerns about the enforcement of moving traffic and parking contraventions by means of CCTV and this was the very reason why the proposal had not been agreed beforehand. Concerns included the level of fines and London Councils was currently consulting on the scale of penalties to ensure they were proportionate to the incident. For this reason he suggested it was premature to introduce the proposals. Allied to this item was the amount of CCTV cameras in the borough which, Councillor Lorber suggested, once installed could be used for other purposes. If the Council invested in installing the cameras and the Government then decided they could not continue to be used it would be a waste of resources

and this was another reason why now was not the right time to introduce these proposals. Councillor Lorber stated that for the reasons indicated he would oppose the recommendation before Council.

The view regarding the fairness and proportionality of the penalties imposed by the enforcement of traffic contraventions was echoed by Councillor HB Patel. He expressed the hope that the Council would use the new powers to make sure traffic was able to move freely and not use them as a money making scheme.

Support was expressed for the proposals put forward in the report on adopting the Local Development Framework core strategy. However, the Executive was urged to ensure that strategic objective 3 on enhancing the vitality and viability of town, district and local centres was translated into hard proposals that would benefit local people and traders.

In response to the comments made, Councillor J Moher pointed out that before the Council implemented the proposals for enforcement of moving traffic contraventions it would need the approval of London Councils and would therefore see the review being undertaken by London Councils on the level of fines. Many other Councils were making similar arrangements. As far as he was concerned any other purpose the CCTV cameras might be put to would be open for further consideration. Councillor Moher expressed the hope that all sides on the Council would support this important local safety scheme.

Councillor Powney responded to the observations made on the core strategy by explaining that the site specific aspects would follow but for this meeting the Council was only being asked to approve the core strategy.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the core strategy, as submitted to the Secretary of State and incorporating the changes recommended by the Inspector, set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted, be adopted;
- (ii) that the powers to enforce moving traffic contraventions be transferred from the Metropolitan Police to the Council pursuant to the London Local Authorities and Transport for London Act 2003 as from 1 January 2011.

(Councillor D Brown wished it recorded that he had voted against resolution (ii) above).

7.2 Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

In the absence of the Chair there was no report from Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

8. Urgent business

None.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm

COUNCILLOR HARBHAJAN SINGH
Mayor