



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

**Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
held on Monday 22 January 2018 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Bhagwanji Chohan

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Arshad Mahmood

COUNCILLORS:

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Agha | Ahmed |
| Bradley | Butt |
| Carr | S Choudhary |
| A Choudry | Colacicco |
| Collier | Colwill |
| Conneely | Crane |
| Daly | Denselow |
| Dixon | Duffy |
| Ezeajughi | Farah |
| Harrison | Hector |
| Hirani | Hossain |
| Hylton | Jones |
| Kabir | Kansagra |
| Kelcher | Long |
| Mashari | Maurice |
| McLeish | McLennan |
| Miller | J Mitchell Murray |
| W Mitchell Murray | Naheerathan |
| Nerva | M Patel |
| RS Patel | Pavey |
| Shahzad | Ketan Sheth |
| Krupa Sheth | Southwood |
| Stopp | Tatler |
| Thomas | Van Kalwala |
| Warren | |

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: Councillors Aden, Allie, Chan, Davidson, Hoda-Benn, Marquis, Moher, Perrin, Pitruzzella and Ms Shaw

1. **Mayors Statement - Order of Business**

Before consideration of the formal agenda, the Mayor informed members of a change to the order of business set out on the original summons. The Mayor advised that as members of the public were present to make a deputation and in support of the Non-Cabinet member debate he intended, in accordance with Standing Order 30, to move these items forward on the agenda for consideration in advance of Agenda Item 5 (Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies).

As a result it was **RESOLVED** that

- (1) The business to be considered at the meeting be re-arranged in the following order:
 - Agenda Item 5 – Deputations
 - Agenda Item 6 – Non-Cabinet Member Debate
- (2) The remaining items of business follow in the same order as listed on the agenda

(Please note the minutes reflect the order in which the items were considered at the meeting).

Prior to considering the first item listed on the agenda, Councillor Duffy advised the Mayor that he would, with immediate effect, be resigning as a member of the Labour Group. His resignation was due to concerns over how his request for an independent review into the way reports of asbestos contamination in soil at Paddington Old Cemetery had been dealt with.

As a result of Councillor Duffy's resignation, Councillor Warren moved a procedural motion that the Council seating plan be amended with Councillor Duffy being seated between Councillor Carr and Councillor Kansagra.

It was **RESOLVED** that the change in seating plan be agreed. Councillor Duffy immediately re-located to his new position.

Councillor Duffy then advised the Mayor that he wished to raise an item of urgent business, under Standing Order 30 (r) requesting that in view of the concerns raised regarding Paddington Old Cemetery, an independent review be set up in order to provide the necessary reassurance for staff, local residents and those families from the adjacent school and with graves on site. He advised that his request was also supported by Baroness Jones and the Friends of Paddington Cemetery.

In response, the Mayor felt it was important for members to be aware that the issue had been independently investigated by Internal Audit and the Audit Advisory Committee, which was chaired by an Independent Member. After careful consideration, the Audit Advisory Committee had not thought there was anything further to investigate and on this basis the Mayor advised he did not think there was any justification for the matter being considered as an urgent item at the meeting. He therefore ruled that the meeting should proceed to the first item of business.

The comments made by the Mayor were supported by Councillor Choudry, as Vice-Chair of the Audit Advisory Committee who confirmed that the investigation undertaken by Internal Audit had been considered at length by the Committee, including the independent members appointed to serve on that body. He was also therefore satisfied with the outcome of the process.

Councillor Warren, in support of the matter being considered as an urgent item, sought clarification on the ruling made by the Mayor and it was confirmed that the decision on whether an item be accepted as urgent was at the Mayor's discretion.

The Mayor subsequently confirmed his original ruling and moved on to the next item of business.

2. Apologies for Absence

The Mayor advised that direct apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Aden, Allie, Chan, Davidson, Hoda-Ben, Marquis, Moher, Perrin, Pitruzella and Shaw.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the following Council meetings be approved as an accurate record of the meeting:

(1) Monday 18 September 2017; and

(2) Monday 6 November 2017 (Extraordinary Council Meeting)

4. Declarations of Interest

The Mayor invited Members to declare any personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests in relation the matters due to be considered at the meeting, in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct.

(a) Councillor Butt declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 5 (as amended) - Deputation on Evelyn Avenue as family members lived in the street.

(b) Councillor Mashari declared a personal interest in respect of agenda items 5 & 6 (as amended) – Deputation and Non Cabinet Member debate on food banks as she advised she volunteered at the Sufra food bank.

(c) Councillor Daly declared a personal interest in respect of agenda items 5 & 6 (as amended) – Deputation and Non Cabinet Member debate on food banks as she advised she volunteered at the Sufra food bank.

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

The Mayor made the following announcements:

(i) **Councillor Shaw**

The Mayor was sorry to have to inform Members that Councillor Carol Shaw had recently been taken unwell whilst on holiday. He advised that she was, however, now back in the country in order to rest and recuperate. He had already conveyed best wishes to her for a speedy recovery and he was sure all Members would join him in sending Councillor Shaw their thoughts and best wishes.

(ii) People of Indian Origin Parliamentary Conference

The Mayor advised Members that he had recently visited New Delhi, in order to participate in the People of Indian Origin Parliamentary Conference hosted by the Prime Minister of India. He had been proud to share how so many cultures were supported and embraced in Brent and to demonstrate how much this diversity enriched the work undertaken to help improve families' quality of life and how residents were being engaged through the community hubs.

(iii) Cyrille Regis

It was with sadness that the Mayor referred to the recent and sudden passing of Cyrille Regis, who he pointed out had not only been a fantastic talent, but a pioneer in helping football tackle the racial abuse of its players.

The Mayor reminded Members that he had originated from Stonebridge and had then returned to Brent to lift the FA Cup at Wembley and represent England, later collecting an MBE for services to charity and football. Paying tribute, the Mayor advised that his passing at the age of 59 was both a huge shock and a very sad loss and that the Council's thoughts and prayers were with his family.

(iv) Fundraising Update

The Mayor was pleased to announce that he had held the second fundraising event of his Mayoral year at Stattavis Patidar Centre on Friday 8 December 2017. This event had been a success and enjoyed by all and he thanked all those who had been able to support it.

(v) Holocaust & Genocide Memorial Day

The Mayor reminded Members that Brent Holocaust and Genocide Memorial Day would be taking place on Thursday 25 January 2018 at 7pm in the Conference Hall. He advised the event would include speakers and communities who had been affected by the Holocaust and other Genocides around the world including Bosnia, Cambodia, Darfur and Rwanda. The programme would also include poetry, music, a Holocaust survivor speaker, choir and refreshments. All Members were encouraged to attend.

(vi) Brent Teaching Awards

The Mayor was pleased to be able to announce that two Brent teachers were celebrating being featured in the Varkey Foundation's Global Teacher Prize Competition international list of top 50 teachers around the world. He asked

Members to join him in congratulating Eartha Pound from Crest Academy in Neasden and Andria Zafirakou from Alperton Community School for this achievement

(vii) Brent School Achievements

The Mayor advised that he was also delighted to inform members that in addition to the many outstanding schools across the Borough, two schools had recently featured in The Sunday Times Schools Guide 2018 identified as being among the highest-achieving primary schools in the UK - the schools were St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School in Harlesden and Our Lady of Grace Junior School in Dollis Hill.

(viii) New Years Honours

The Mayor then went on to congratulate, PC Paul Lockhart (as a former police constable in Brent) who he advised had been recognised in the Queen's New Year's Honours. Members were advised that Paul had recently retired from serving the borough after a 36-year career, and had been awarded a Queen's Policing Medal (QPM) for his role in helping to tackle serious and organised crime gangs internationally and at home.

(ix) Pride of Brent Awards

The Mayor advised he was also delighted to have been able to attend this year's Pride of Brent awards which he felt demonstrated the wealth of dedicated, hardworking staff within Brent. He was also particularly pleased to have seen so many different community groups and local businesses celebrate each other's achievements at the event. In terms of the staff awards, specific reference was made to two individuals – Angela Barnes and Ren Mulley who he advised had each worked for the Council for over 40 years. Members joined the Mayor in a round of applause.

(x) Petitions

Members noted that in accordance with Standing Order 66(f) a list of current petitions had been circulated which also detailed the progress made in dealing with them.

6. Deputations (if any)

The Mayor advised that one deputation had been received within the required timescale under Standing Order 32. The deputation had been requested by Dr Markandu Alalasundaran representing residents from Evelyn Avenue and related to concerns about the state or repair of the pavement and road surface in their street.

In addition a further deputation request had been received in support of the Non-Cabinet Member debate on the use of foodbanks, although the Mayor advised this had been submitted after the formal deadline had expired. The request had been received from Dee Woods, manager of the Granville Community Kitchen foodbank. Given that this request had been received after the formal deadline for submission

the Mayor advised Members that if they were minded to accept it there would be a need to suspend Standing Order 32 in order to allow it to be heard.

Given the subject matter of the additional deputation, Members indicated they would be willing to make an exception in order for it to be heard. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that Standing Order 32 be suspended to allow the additional deputation from Dee Woods to proceed.

The Mayor then welcomed Dr Markandu Alalasundaran and invited Councillor Kabir, as one of the ward councillors for Queensbury where Evelyn Avenue was located, to introduce the deputation. Councillor Kabir introduced Dr Alalasundaran, highlighting the time and effort he had spent organising local residents on this issue in an attempt to improve the local environment. These efforts had been supported by all three local ward councillors, who had been working closely with residents in an effort to prioritise the road for action.

Dr Alalasundaran was then invited to address the meeting and he began by highlighting the deterioration of the pavements and road surface in Evelyn Avenue over recent years and the associated safety concerns. He pointed out these had been compounded by works undertaken by the utilities companies, which had resulted in further damage. Residents had photographic evidence of the state of the road and pavements in Evelyn Avenue, which had been included in support of a petition they had also submitted. Residents felt their area was being neglected especially when compared to recent works in other areas, such as Princess Avenue, which had resulted in their pavement and road being resurfaced.

Amongst the safety concerns highlighted were the appearance of regular pot holes and trip hazards being caused by tree root uplift and large cracks appearing in the pavement. Having lived in the area for 30 years, Dr Alalasundarn advised he could not recall the road being resurfaced in that time and felt this had led to the road looking neglected compared to the surrounding area. Local residents felt that constant re-patching and repair works were no longer acceptable and were therefore asking that the Council consider undertaking urgent works. These included replacing the pavement and resurfacing the road in order to address the concerns regarding safety and improve the overall aesthetic look of the area and surrounding environment. He concluded by thanking the local ward councillors and Barry Gardner (as local MP) for their support in seeking to address the concerns raised and looked forward to a positive response in terms of any actions identified as a result of the deputation and petition.

The Mayor thanked Dr Alalasundaran for his comments and then invited Councillor Southwood, as Cabinet Member for Environment, to respond to the deputation. Councillor Southwood thanked Dr Alalasundaran and all residents involved in the campaign and advised she was pleased to see so many local residents taking an active interest in where they live and working with their local ward councillors, who she confirmed had been lobbying hard on their behalf.

Councillor Southwood recognised the specific concerns raised in relation to Evelyn Avenue which she felt had also served as a reminder about the condition of other roads across the borough. Whilst sharing the view that the condition of roads and pavements needed to be treated as a priority, she outlined the difficulties caused as a result of central government funding reductions which had led, for

example, to Brent receiving no funding from Transport for London (TfL) towards its principle road maintenance programme. This had now meant all roads having to compete for much more limited funding. In terms of Evelyn Avenue, she reassured local residents that the local ward councillors had requested inclusion of the road within the 2018/19 programme of works which be considered in accordance with the standard process. She ended by once again thanking residents for taking the time to highlight such an important issue at Council.

Before moving on Councillor Duffy raised a point of order seeking clarification on the nature of the budget reductions referred to. Councillor Southwood clarified that she had been referring to the removal of excise duty that was passed through TfL to fund the principle road maintenance programme alongside the £700m overall cut in Government funding to local authorities which had impacted on the Boroughs ability to fund a wider programme of works.

The Mayor then welcomed Dee Woods and invited Councillor Mashari as lead member for the Resource and Public Realm scrutiny review on the use of food banks in Brent to introduce the deputation. Councillor Mashari introduced Dee Woods as manager of the Granville Community Kitchen food bank and a community activist, award winning cook, broadcaster and independent researcher with 25 years local experience working with a range of diverse communities. Councillor Mashari highlighted the central role that Dee Woods and the Granville Community Food Bank had played in the scrutiny review, with the community kitchen set up as a community led organisation in 2014 using food as a medium to empower local communities and now serving over 200 meals per week. Members were also asked to welcome representatives from the Sufra community food bank who were attending in support of the deputation and Non Cabinet Member debate.

Dee Woods was then invited to speak and began by thanking Members for the opportunity to address them. She advised that her original aim in setting up the community kitchen had been to provide a more proactive approach towards problems identified with support available from the welfare state which she felt were having a negative impact locally on public health and wellbeing. This had included, as an example, increasing number of families struggling to provide nutritional and culturally appropriate food. She felt the issue was not related to food poverty but instead involved the government's failure to deliver welfare reform resulting in families living in poverty without the means to provide a healthy and hot meal due, for example, to the lack of a cooker or fridge.

From her experience, it was felt that London was increasingly becoming a community of have and have nots which she advised had led to her wanting to take action as it was felt no-one should need to go hungry, especially the young or vulnerable. She highlighted the current pressure on charities and other organisations in the voluntary and community sector such as the community kitchen and Sufra, with organisations now at breaking point in terms of capacity. It was felt the roll out of Universal Credit would make this position worse.

Dee Woods felt that a reliance on food banks and the voluntary and community sector as a means of plugging these gaps in the welfare state should not become the norm. It was therefore important to identify and address the root causes over the short, medium and long term. In her view a more joined up approach was needed with no complacency about the seriousness of the issues needing to be

addressed. Members were therefore encouraged to support the recommendations made as a result of the scrutiny review alongside the suggested establishment of a multi stakeholder food council, good food charter and support for community based food growing projects.

The Mayor thanked Dee Woods for her comments and then invited Councillor McLennan, as Deputy Leader, to respond to the deputation. Councillor McLennan advised that as the deputation was linked to the Non Cabinet Member debate due to be considered as the next item she would be responding jointly on both items.

The Mayor advised he would therefore move straight to the Non Cabinet Member debate.

7. Non Cabinet Members' Debate

In accordance with Standing Order 34 the Mayor advised that the subject chosen for the Non Cabinet Member debate was the outcome of the scrutiny review into the use of foodbanks in Brent.

Members were advised that the motion submitted as the basis for the debate had been circulated with the first supplementary agenda for the meeting.

The Mayor then invited Councillor Mashari to introduce the motion and open the debate who began by highlighting her support for the comments made by Dee Woods during her deputation. As a context to the scrutiny review she had chaired members were reminded of the dramatic increase in the use of foodbanks, with the example provided of the Trussell Trust having distributed 1.2million food aid packages over the last year.

Concern was expressed that official figures were not capturing the true extent of the issue, as the Government was not gathering data on the use of food banks. It was pointed out that in Brent alone, over the last year, an estimated 5,636 people were known to have accessed food banks which Councillor Mashari and the Scrutiny Task Group felt were now having to plug the vacuum caused as a direct result of the corrosion of the welfare state.

The current lack of understanding, policy and strategy from the government to address the issue of poverty and access to food were felt to present a significant risk to the public sector given that food banks were now playing such a significant role in society. It was also felt that the scale of the problem was only likely to increase with the roll out of Universal Credit on top of the current problems being experienced with implementation of the governments welfare reform programme. It was not felt that the usage of food banks should be regarded as the norm or a lifestyle choice with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) maintaining there was no link between problems with implementation of benefits and welfare reform and the increased use of food banks.

Councillor Mashari pointed out that the Scrutiny Task Group had produced a number of findings and recommendations including the need for better recording of usage and referrals. She also welcomed the offer from the Chief Executive to provide training sessions for members and officers on food bank usage and

referrals at which the video produced by the Task Group would also be available, as a means of improving understanding and encouraging more joined up working.

Given the lack of government involvement and leadership on this issue, she finished by highlighting the need for the Council and local public, voluntary and private organisations to demonstrate leadership and encourage greater collaboration through development of a proactive strategy with more targeted interventions. Thanks were also extended to all those involved in the Scrutiny Task Group review and for the invaluable work undertaken by those involved in running the food banks.

The Mayor then opened up the debate, with the following comments made during the discussion that followed.

Councillor Ezeajughi thanked all those involved for their support on the scrutiny review and highlighted how the visits undertaken by Members to food banks as part of this process had helped to demonstrate the true scale of hardship being experienced. Concerns were raised about the impact the roll out of Universal Credit would have in making this position even worse when witnessed alongside the problems already being caused by benefit delays, sanctions and low wages. Gratitude was expressed for the food bank staff and volunteers and he urged Members to support the findings from the scrutiny review as an outcome of the debate.

Councillor Nerva offered specific thanks to the staff and volunteers involved with the Granville Community Kitchen, Sufra and also St Laurence's Larder for their participation in the scrutiny review and support they were providing within the local community. He agreed that the issue was not related to a lack of food but was created by difficulties in being able to access food due to poverty and the problems already identified in relation to implementation of benefit and welfare reforms by the government. He also supported the view that the reliance on food banks would increase with the roll out of Universal Credit and urged Opposition Members to highlight these issues with their colleagues in government. The need to develop a co-ordinated and proactive strategy to address the issue locally was supported as a way forward for the Council's new Administration to actively progress following the local elections in May 2018.

Councillor Duffy highlighted the need for a consistent approach in terms of addressing food poverty outlining the need not to underestimate the impact low wages also had. He welcomed the support for the Granville Community Centre, which he highlighted local ward councillors had fought hard to support when under threat. Ongoing support he felt the Council could provide for organisations providing these services included the offer of rent free or peppercorn rent premises and greater advertising to raise awareness and encourage donations. As a point or order in response to the comments made, Councillor Mashari clarified that the original proposals put forward in relation to the Granville Community Centre had not been from herself.

Moving on with the debate, Councillor Stopp supported the view that the increasing role food banks now played in society could be seen as a direct legacy of the Government's welfare reform programme and the erosion of the welfare state. Whilst grateful for their involvement, he felt it was wrong that the voluntary and

community sector were now having to fill the resulting gaps in order to address the lack of access to food and levels of poverty within certain sections of the community for which he felt funding should be prioritised by government.

Councillor Kansagra, as an opposition member who had supported the scrutiny review also took the opportunity to thank all those involved for their time and effort and advised that he endorsed the findings outlined for debate at Council. He took the opportunity to also highlight the assistance being provided by many religious organisations from different faiths across the borough in providing informal meals and food assistance alongside the support from food banks, which he felt was an example of the Big Society at work. In his view the issues driving the increasing use of food banks were more complex than purely welfare reforms and involved the wider problems caused by the economic downturn presided over by previous governments.

The support for the assistance being provided through various religious organisations and centres was also highlighted and endorsed by Councillor Choudry.

As the time available for the debate was shortly due to expire, the Mayor then invited Councillor McLennan, as Deputy Leader, to conclude the discussion by summing up and responding to the various issues raised. Councillor McLennan thanked Councillor Mashari and the Scrutiny Task Group for what she felt had been a challenging review and also thanked Dee Woods for her passionate deputation as well as the representatives from SUFRA for also attending the meeting in support of the debate.

The findings from the review had highlighted a number of important issues and she felt it also necessary to recognise that the use of food banks included people both in and out of work. Cabinet had already considered the Task Group report and had agreed to take forward the recommendations made. Whilst some would be relatively straightforward to implement others would require a longer term partnership approach to be developed. Whilst mindful of the challenge presented as a result of financial constraints placed on the Council, she assured Members that the way in which each recommendation could be taken forward would be carefully considered. Councillor McLennan ended by thanking all those involved in the Scrutiny review for their contribution and by way of highlighting her support advised that she also felt it was unacceptable for the use of food banks to be on the increase in a country with one of the largest economies in the world.

As an outcome of the debate Members **RESOLVED** to note the findings of the Scrutiny Task Group review on the use of food banks and to recognise and thank all those involved along with the invaluable work undertaken by food bank staff, volunteers and donors.

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

The Mayor referred Members to the second supplementary agenda pack circulated in advance of the meeting, which contained a list of changes to appointments on Council Committees, Sub Committees and other bodies.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following appointments be approved:

- (1) To confirm the appointment of Michele Lonergan (Leaseholder) and Karin Jaeger (Tenant) as co-opted members of the Housing Scrutiny Committee.
- (2) Resignation of Councillor Davidson as a full Member and Vice-Chair of the Council's Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee with Councillor Kansagra nominated to take his place as full Member and Vice-Chair.
- (3) Resignation of Councillor Kansagra as full Member of the Alcohol and Entertainment Licensing Committee with Councillor Davidson nominated to take his place as full Member.
- (4) Councillor Marquis to resume her role as Chair of the Planning Committee, upon her return from maternity leave. For the avoidance of doubt Councillor Agha will, at the same time, resume his previous substantive role as Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee with the size and composition of the Planning Committee being otherwise unaffected.

9. Reports from the Leader and Cabinet

In accordance with Standing Order 31, the Council received reports from the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members as follows:

(i) Councillor Butt (Leader of the Council)

In accordance with Standing Order 14 (f) Councillor Butt reported use of the Key Decision and Forward Plan urgency procedure in relation to the following decisions:

- Agreement of Final Terms of Shared ICT Service Inter-Authority Agreement;
- Award of a contract for CRM Implementation;
- Authority to Award Works Contract for South Kilburn Enterprise and Community Hub (Phase 1b);
- Acquisition of land at 136 Honeypot Lane; and
- Award of Microsoft Dynamics 365 Licences.

(ii) Councillor McLennan (Deputy Leader of the Council)

Councillor McLennan advised she was pleased to be able to announce the bringing back in house of another service – procurement. In addition she advised that Brent had been the first London Borough to sign off a Council Tax Protocol which would involve the Council Tax enforcement team and Citizens Advice working together to assist those in Council Tax arrears managing their debt. She then concluded her update by advising Members of steps being taken to review cleaner environment investments by the Council's Pension Fund.

(iii) Councillor Tatler (Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Growth, Employment and Skills)

Councillor Tatler took the opportunity to highlight some of what she felt had been the key achievements within her portfolio remit over the length of the current Administration, which were as follows:

- More than 6,000 new homes built, with one of the highest levels of affordable housing delivered across London;
- The delivery of 50% social housing as part of the award winning South Kilburn re development programme;
- Over £1m of Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (CiL) funding allocated to projects across the borough;
- The support being provided for small and medium enterprise, high streets and town centres across the borough through the introduction of Town Centre Managers;
- The education delivered for over 8,000 learners through the Brent Starts adult education service with a 94% achievement rate and the service being rated a Good by OFSTED;
- The success of Brent Works in securing employment and apprenticeships for over 400 people; and
- The securing of over 1,000 sq. ft. of workspace for local businesses;

Thanks were expressed to all officers and members involved for their efforts and support in delivery of the above achievements and ongoing work to support residents and the local economy.

(iv) Councillor Southwood (Cabinet Member for Environment)

Councillor Southwood also took the opportunity to highlight some of what she felt had been the key achievements within her portfolio remit over the length the of the current Administration, which were as follows:

- Performance of the refuse collection service with over 25,000 bins being cleared each day and on average only 12 missed collections;
- Work being undertaken to prioritise air quality, sustainable transport and a reduction in carbon emissions and footprint;
- The roll out of LED lighting across the borough with accompanying savings of £850k per year and delivering over a third of the Council's commitment towards its carbon reduction targets;
- Delivery of the first completely segregated cycleway in Carlton Vale and Quietway from Gladstone Park to Regents Park;
- The introduction of dockless cycles to the borough as a means of encouraging greater and more affordable access to cycling;
- The increase in electric vehicle charging points across the borough which would also contribute towards the Mayor for London's aim of encouraging the private hire and taxi fleet in London to move towards electric;
- Whilst recognising the challenges identified as a result of the earlier deputation regarding Evelyn Avenue in relation to road and pavement repairs it was possible to report the repair of over 26,000 reported road defects alongside the resurfacing of 42 miles of road and 19 miles of replacement paving.

Once again officers and Members were thanked for their support in delivery of the above achievements given the challenging ongoing financial position for the Council.

(v) Councillor Miller (Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities)

Councillor Miller began by expressing his support for PC Christopher Appleton and Samantha Clark who he advised had been the police officers injured in a recent traffic incident on the North Circular Road. On behalf of all Members he wished both officers a full and speedy recovery.

He also advised Members that he was grateful for the recent reports of anti-Semitic graffiti in the North of the Borough, which had been passed to the police for investigation. He pointed out that the Council would continue to work with the police to tackle all forms of hate crime and anti-Semitism in the borough and reminded Members of the event to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day that would be taking place at the Civic Centre on Thursday 25 January 2018.

In terms of other issues, he highlighted the progress being made on roll out of the £2.3m investment in CCTV as part of the Safer Brent Initiative and with introduction of the Public Space Protection Orders designed to tackle Street Drinking in problem areas supported by a review of Licensing Policy. A review had also been completed on the policy and approach towards tackling Domestic Violence and Abuse aimed at ensuring earlier intervention. Finally Members were reminded that the results of the bidding process for the London Borough of Culture were due to be announced on 27 February 2018, with Brent having submitted a strong submission.

(vi) Councillor Patel (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People)

Councillor Patel began by wishing all teaching staff, parents and pupils a happy new year and congratulating everyone for their efforts in achieving the best ever exam results in Brent during 2017, which it was hoped would be maintained in 2018.

Whilst welcoming the Governments U-turn on proposals to force all schools to become Academies by 2022 she expressed concern that the government now appeared to be pursuing their agenda in a different way. Specific reference was made to changes in the school funding formula and partnering arrangements which she felt had made it more difficult for headteachers and governors, including those at Village School, not to consider seeking Academy status as an option. As Cabinet Member she did not support the government's policy on Academies, highlighting instead what were felt to be the advantages for schools remaining within the Brent family of schools. She had therefore welcomed the governor's decision at Village School to undertake further consultation on the move towards seeking Academy status.

In terms of other updates, Councillor Patel advised members that she had recently attended the Brent Care Council at which the Brent Pledge had been updated and had also attended the Brent Parent Carers Forum resulting in positive feedback on how the Forum was being listened to. She ended by

reminding Members that the next training session on the Council's Corporate Parenting role was due to take place on Tuesday 22 January 2018, which had been identified as mandatory for councillors.

(vii) Councillor Farah (Cabinet Member for Housing and Welfare Reform)

Councillor Farah advised Members that good progress continued to be made across the housing service with the integration of Brent Housing Partnership successfully completed in October 2017 and progress being made on the accompanying reorganisation of housing management services to ensure continued improvements in performance.

The Council continued to respond well to the Grenfell Tower tragedy and were confident in terms of action being taken to address concerns regarding fire safety. Members were reminded that the requirements within the Homelessness Reduction Act were due to come into effect from April 2018, with the Council's homelessness service well placed to deliver the new requirements.

In addition, Councillor Farah, advised Members that the Council was currently awaiting a response from the Secretary of State on its application to extend the Selective Licensing Scheme and had been one of only six London Boroughs selected to contribute towards work being undertaken by the GLA around this issue, including development of a rogue landlord database and work with local housing providers. He ended by advising Members that whilst not welcoming the planned roll-out of Universal Credit across the Borough during 2018 the Council had planned and were ready for its implementation.

(viii) Councillor Hirani (Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing)

Councillor Hirani took the opportunity to highlight some of what he felt had been the key achievements within the area of Public Health and Adult Social Care over the length of the current Administration, which were as follows:

- Delivery of a Carers Hub as the single point of contact for over 24,000 carers across Brent;
- Continuing to build out of the social care crisis through the delivery of 538 new independent living accommodation units. These would provide a better standard of accommodation for individuals whilst also saving the Council £332 each week in terms of the cost per unit;
- Improving the integration of health, mental health, housing and employment services to support those suffering mental health issues. Alongside this, the Council had also signed up to the Mental Health Challenge and were recognised as a "Time to Change" Borough committed to tackling mental health discrimination;
- Rebuilt John Billam Resource Centre;
- Worked with the NHS to create step down beds for hospital discharge;
- Continued to invest in the Disabled Facilities Grant;
- Banned the locating of new fast food outlets close to schools and worked with planning to restrict the opening of new Shisha Cafes;
- Introduced a Healthy Catering commitment for local businesses;

- Widened the smoking cessation service to cover issues related to shisha and chewed tobacco;
- Extended the Substance Misuse Service;
- Remained on track to deliver 19 outdoor gyms across the borough meaning no resident would be more than a mile away from their nearest facility by 2020 and continued to support a range of running groups and park runs located within the borough; and
- Continued to support schools around their healthy eating and physical activity programmes.

He ended by highlighting the financial pressure on the NHS and support from the current Council Administration for colleagues in attempting to maintain services suffering as a result of the Government's financial constraints.

The Mayor thanked the Leader and Cabinet Members for the updates provided.

10. Questions from Members of the Public

The Mayor advised that in accordance with Standing Order 33 two questions had been received from the following members of the public:

Question 1 from Atiya Munir to Councillor Tatler, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Growth, Employment and Skills relating to the availability of job search and careers guidance support services for young people in Brent.

Question 2 from Hiran Patel to Councillor Tatler, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Growth, Employment and Skills relating to development proposals at 245-253 Ealing Road

Members noted the written responses provided to each question, which had been circulated with the agenda. The Mayor advised that both members of the public had been invited to the meeting but were not able to attend and had advised they did not wish to raise any supplementary question. He thanked them both for the questions submitted.

11. Petitions (if any)

The Mayor informed Members that there were no petitions to be debated in accordance with the Council's petition procedure and Standing Order 66.

12. Questions from the Opposition and other Non-Cabinet Members

The Mayor advised that seven questions had been submitted by Members for response by the relevant Cabinet Member. The written responses supplied had been circulated with the Council agenda. The Mayor then invited supplementary questions from the Members who had submitted the original questions.

12.1 Councillor Ezeajughi thanked Councillor Miller (Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities) for his response and ask firstly for an assurance to be provided on the way crime hot-spots, particularly those within his ward, would benefit from the new CCTV system. Secondly he asked if it would be possible to

ensure the installation of HD cameras on high rise blocks to enhance coverage

In response Councillor Miller highlighted what he felt to be the clear message provided for residents about the current Administration's attitude and priority towards community safety demonstrated as a result of the renewal of the CCTV system. In terms of specific sites, he pointed out these would need to be assessed against the relevant evidence criteria taking account of the relevant Code of Conduct and RIPA regulations. The point raised relating to coverage on high rise blocks was recognised as an important issue, with discussions already having commenced with housing regarding the integration of the BHP and Councils CCTV system and on which he would keep members updated on progress.

- 12.2 Councillor Krupa Sheth thanked Councillor McLennan (Deputy Leader) for her response and asked for details on what barriers the Conservative Government had put in place to prevent the Council from building more homes and what plans the Council had to tackle these.

In response Councillor McLennan advised she was struggling to find any positives regarding the Governments current housing policy. The Administration was however aware of the housing crisis in Brent, which would require the building (based on targets within the Mayor for London's Plan) of an additional 3,000 homes per year over the next ten years across the Borough. Whilst having a strategy in place to deliver the requirement there was also a need to ensure that these developments contained sufficiently affordable social housing. The Council continued to lobby the Government for lifting of the cap in order to maximise its ability to fund the building programme required. Other innovations included the setting up of I4B as a means of purchasing properties on behalf of the Council to assist in meeting housing demand and reducing pressure on Temporary Accommodation. Whilst the Council was not therefore standing still she felt much more could be achieved if the Government were to relax the current barriers in place.

- 12.3 Councillor Conneely thanked Councillor Farah (Cabinet Member for Housing and Welfare Reform) for his response and raised concerns about the proposed inclusion within current welfare reforms of the requirement for women who had experienced rape to have to prove this to HMRC in order to be able to access benefits. The proposals had been referred to as "non-consensual conception" and she asked Councillor Farah if he would be prepared to commit the Council to continue campaigning against this proposal and not to accept the conditions as laid out within the current legislation.

In response Councillor Farah advised he supported the concerns raised, especially with regard to the terminology being used. He felt the proposals being put forward by Government should not be regarded as welfare reform but as a welfare cut and advised that the Council would continue to lobby against the proposals whilst also working to support local residents in preparing for any changes.

- 12.4 Councillor Denselow thanked Councillor Hirani (Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing) for his response and welcomed the outline provided of

the way in which the issues highlighted within the Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness were being addressed in Brent. He felt the appointment of a Government Minister for Loneliness was an indication of the seriousness with which the issue of social isolation was now being treated. The work being undertaken through the Social Isolation in Brent initiative was highlighted alongside the work being undertaken by many other community groups, including GoodGym Brent, which he agreed would be appropriate for a future member briefing and urged all members to support.

In response Councillor Hirani advised that welcomed Councillor Denselow having raised such an important issue.

- 12.5 Councillor Long thanked Councillor Farah (Cabinet Member for Housing and Welfare Reform) for his response which she noted had been focussed around debt advice rather than the promotion of Credit Unions, for which she was a strong advocate. Having checked, she pointed out that the Council's website did not appear to make any reference to the Credit Union formally supported by the Council although others were. The need to promote the existence of Credit Unions was highlighted and the Cabinet Member was therefore asked when it was anticipated that full publicity would be provided in support of Credit Unions in Brent.

Councillor Farah advised, in response, that the Council was currently preparing for the roll-out of Universal Credit across the Borough for which a detailed communications strategy was being developed and this would include reference to Credit Unions.

- 12.6 Councillor Nerva thanked Councillor Southwood (Cabinet Member for Environment) for her response in relation to the Council's Tree Management Strategy. As a ward councillor representing an area with a significant number of trees we was keen to see if the Cabinet Member would consider:

- (a) exploring how the Council might take a more assertive approach towards Insurers, involving if necessary the British Association of Insurers, seeking the removal of trees as a result of insurance damage claims and also encourage a financial contribution towards the £250 cost of sponsoring a new tree; and
- (b) the introduction of an easy to use payment system for residents wishing to sponsor new tree planting or the replacement of trees.

In response Councillor Southwood advised that she shared the frustration expressed in relation to insurers who she advised were becoming increasingly aggressive in their approach towards claims. She advised she would therefore be happy to write to the British Association of Insurers to highlight the concerns raised and encourage their members to consider contributing towards the cost of sponsorship or the replacement of trees removed as a result of damage claims given the significant environmental and economic benefits. She also supported the need to ensure that the tree sponsorship and payment process was as easy for residents to access and use as possible and advised she had already asked officers to investigate the possible use of crowd funding options. Residents had already been successful in attracting Neighbourhood CIL funding to provide new or

replacement trees, which was also welcomed as a means of maintaining the tree stock and recognising the positive contribution this made to the local environment.

- 12.7 Councillor Maurice thanked Councillor Southwood (Cabinet Member for Environment) for her response regarding operation of the Civic Amenity site by Harrow, given its use by many residents in the north of the borough. He highlighted the difficulty many residents in the north of the borough would have in accessing Brent's Civic Amenity site in Abbey Road and therefore asked if the Cabinet Member would be willing to explore the possible use of funding contributions with the West London Waste Authority (of which Brent and Harrow were both members) to invest in a new Civic Amenity site in the north of Brent.

Councillor Southwood advised that whilst recognising the frustration for many residents in the north of the borough who currently found it more convenient to use the Harrow facility, the policy introduced by Harrow would not prevent use but would require non Harrow residents to pay a charge. As a member of WLWA she would be willing to raise the matter but highlighted the significant investment that would be required to fund a new Civic Amenity facility within the borough. As an alternative she felt that was also a need to consider what alternative ways could be offered for residents to dispose of, or recycle their waste in the most consistent way.

13. Report from Chairs of Scrutiny Committees

13.1 Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Kelcher (as Chair of the Scrutiny Committee) provided Council with the following update on the work of the Scrutiny Committee since the last report to Council on 18 September 2017:

- Members of the Committee had spent a significant amount of time reviewing the Council's budget consultation proposals with the report produced due to be appended for consideration with the final budget report at the February Council budget setting meeting.
- Outside of the budget scrutiny the Committee had also commenced a review of recycling activity within the borough. The initial findings had shown that recycling rates across London as a whole were starting to flat-line which Members had felt required consideration of a different approach towards the way in which waste was measured and dealt with in order to reduce the impact on landfill. The review had included a visit to the Abbey Road Civic Amenity site where Members had examined the relationship between Brent and the West London Waste Authority, witnessed a mattress mountain and also the problems caused in having to deal with unseparated waste.

In order to reduce landfill, Members had identified a need for earlier intervention alongside greater education around recycling and re-use and where appropriate the use of more compulsory measures. The Committee were also keen to look at ways of promoting more use of the existing "Can you recycle me" App.

- The Committee had also undertaken a review of Trading Standards, given the important and valued role of the service in protecting local residents. Members had met with Trading Standards Officers (which was a shared service operated jointly with the London Borough of Harrow) and amongst the issues considered had been the potential to introduce a spend to save rationale for the service.
- Finally he advised Members that the Committee had also started to look at development of the Council's Digital Access Strategy with the potential already identified in a number of areas to provide a more cost effective and efficient delivery of services.

13.2 Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Ketan Sheth (as Chair of the Scrutiny Committee) provided Council with the following update on the work of the Scrutiny Committee since his last report to Council on 18 September 2017:

- As part of the scrutiny functions role in reviewing any significant changes proposed to the provision of health services within the borough the Committee had held a special meeting to consider Brent Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) planned changes to the GP extended access service. Whilst recognising the issues with the existing service, a number of concerns had been raised which resulted in a number of recommendations. These had included the need for consideration to be given to some form of transitional arrangements for unregistered patients; further consideration to be given to transport and disabled access at the proposed hub and also for NHS England to enable the early introduction of an on-line booking system for patients wanting to access the service. Given the value placed on GP services by local residents the Committee would continue to monitor and update Council on the development and introduction of these service proposals.
- Another significant area of work identified by the Committee had been around the action being taken to address the levels of childhood obesity in the Borough. It was reported that Brent had the highest levels of childhood obesity across London with 45% of Year 6 children classified as either overweight or obese. As a result the Committee would be meeting with the Director of Public Health, Director of the CCG and Cabinet Member to consider the measures being taken to address what was recognised as a complex problem. Amongst the issues to be considered were the approaches being taken to the promotion of healthy food and lifestyles, physical activity and sport alongside steps to encourage the reduction in consumption of sugary snacks and drinks. Given the importance of this issue he advised this would also be a matter on which Council would be kept updated.

13.3 Housing Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Long (as Chair of the Scrutiny Committee) provided Council with the following update on the work of the Scrutiny Committee since her last report to Council on 18 September 2017:

- The Committee at its last meeting in January 2018 had undertaken a detailed look at the Housing Revenue Account proposals in relation to the rents charged at the Lynton Close Travellers site. Members were supportive of the significant reduction in rent charges being recommended, which it was hoped would assist improve collection rates and as a result enable further investment and improvement to the site amenities.
- Members were advised that the Committee had now completed their Task Group review on Fire Safety with the report now approved for consideration by Cabinet. The focus of the review had been on improving fire safety in low rise properties rather than tower blocks with, as an example, residents encouraged to consider basic steps such as the installation and maintenance of smoke alarms.
- The Committee had also held its first review session with a Register Provider having invited Metropolitan Housing Trust to their last meeting to respond to questions on how they dealt with issues raised on repairs and other performance related matters. One of the issues identified had been the lack of any distinct process for dealing with issues raised on behalf of residents by ward councillors which would be a matter explored in more detail with other Registered Providers as they were invited to attend the Committee. Members were advised that Genesis would be attending the Committee's next meeting.
- Another issue reviewed by the Committee had been the management of scaffolding installation across the borough.

Councillor Long concluded her update by advising the Committee were looking forward to working with the two newly appointed tenant and leaseholder co-optees on the Committee following their formal confirmation as members earlier in the meeting.

The Mayor thanked each of the Scrutiny Chair's for their updates and it was **RESOLVED** that the content of each of their reports be noted.

14. **Report from the Vice-Chair of the Audit Advisory Committee**

Councillor Choudry (as Vice-Chair of the Audit Advisory Committee) referred Members to the report circulated with the main agenda which had provided a summary of the main activities carried out by the Committee since the last update to Council on the 18 September 2017.

He outlined the issues considered by the Committee at their meetings in September and December 2017 (as detailed in section 3 of the report) and advised that an update on the work undertaken by the Committee at their last meeting in January 2018 would be provided as part of the next update to Council. He advised that the Committee had welcomed the appointment of Grant Thornton as the Council's new external auditors and were continuing to work well with the existing auditor KPMG. The Committee had also welcomed the appointment of the Council's new Head of Internal Audit.

In concluding his update, Councillor Choudry advised Members of the work underway to produce a full, risk based annual audit plan for 2018/19, which the

Committee were due to consider in March 2018 and Members support was sought in identifying an potential additional risks or items for consideration as part of the plan.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Choudry for his update and it was **RESOLVED** that the content of the report be noted.

15. **Emergency Preparedness: Task Group Report**

Councillor Ketan Sheth introduced the report from the Chief Executive which set out the final report produced by a joint Task Group comprised of Members from the Audit Advisory Committee and each Scrutiny Committee to assess Brent's emergency preparedness.

Councillor Sheth outlined the background to the setting up of the Task Group, which had been formed following a number of large scale terrorist events and the Grenfell Tower tragedy, to review and assess the plans in place within Brent to deal with any similar types of large scale emergency incidents. Whilst many of the terrorist incidents referred to had been managed by the individual Local Authorities concerned, the scale of the Grenfell Tower fire had required a pan-London response which had involved over 100 staff from Brent in range of diverse roles. Councillor Sheth took the opportunity to thank the Mayor for the event he had hosted to recognise these staff. In terms of the Task Group's report this had outlined a number of strengths in terms of Brent's approach along with nine recommendations, most of which had now been or were in the process of being implemented. He ended by thanking Members and officers for their support on the review, which had also been considered by the Audit Advisory Committee on 10 January 2018. Members were advised that the issue had, as a result of the review, now also been added to the annual audit plan for future monitoring.

The Mayor then invited comments from other Members. In response to an unrelated comment from Councillor Duffy both Councillors Ketan Sheth and Nerva felt it important to highlight the serious nature of the review and for Council to remain focussed on the arrangements in place to deal with any incident should the Council be required to respond.

As there were no other members who indicated they wanted to speak on the report, the Mayor then put the recommendations to the vote by a show of hands and they were declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to approve the final report, findings and recommendations as set out within the Joint Task Group's report on Emergency Preparedness.

16. **Changes to the Constitution**

Councillor Butt introduced the report from the Director of Legal and HR Services which proposed a number of changes to the Constitution. The changes included an update to the financial limits on officers' delegated powers in respect of procurement decisions; the terms of reference for Planning Committee (and related Standing Orders) along with the Planning Code of Practice; the introduction of a

public question time session at alternate Council Meetings for members of the Brent Youth Parliament and various other minor changes.

The Mayor then invited comments on the report, with Councillor Warren advising that he felt the changes in relation to planning site visits represented a sensible compromise and his Group would therefore be supporting the recommended changes.

As there were no other members who had indicated they wanted to speak on the report, the Mayor put the recommendations to the vote by a show of hands and they were declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the changes to the Constitution, as detailed within the report and appendices be approved; and
- (2) the Director of Legal and HR Services be authorised to amend the Constitution accordingly, including the making of any necessary incidental or consequential changes.

17. **2017/18 Mid Year Treasury Report**

Councillor McLennan introduced the report from the Chief Finance Officer which provided an update on Treasury Management activity during 2017/18. Members noted that the report had been approved and referred on to Council for consideration by Cabinet on 15 January 2018 in compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

As there were no other members who indicated they wanted to speak on the report, the Mayor put the recommendations to the vote by a show of hands and they were declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that Council note the 2017/18 mid-year Treasury Management update Report.

18. **Motions**

18.1 Motion from the Labour Group – Forward Together: Brent Council's record of achievement

The Mayor invited Councillor Bradley to move the motion he had submitted on behalf of from the Labour Group. He began by advising of how proud he felt the Council should be of its achievements during the current and previous Labour Administration given the impact of the austerity measures introduced by the Government which had seen Local Authority budgets reduced by almost a half. Despite increasing demand on services and the significant financial challenges faced, Councillor Bradley felt it was possible to highlight a number of key achievements delivered within Brent designed to support local residents and communities.

As examples he referred to the following:

- The work undertaken in partnership with schools which had led to 97% now being rated as good or outstanding with pupil attainment also at record levels alongside investment in the school improvement programme;
- Investment of £190m to deliver improvements in roads, parks and libraries;
- Investment in Adult Social Care and social housing to assist more vulnerable residents and create a sustainable adult social care service;
- The innovative launch of I4B to manage Council investment in a programme of house purchases to increase the supply of affordable housing;
- The measures taken to tackle rogue landlords
- Accreditation of the Council as a London Living Wage employer and to promote wider accreditation through the Council's procurement and commissioning strategies;
- Launch of the Cleaner Brent App;
- The Council's partnership with Quintain which would deliver over 5000 new homes, 7000 jobs and £140m of CIL investment.

Councillor Bradley felt there were many more examples available but finished by advising that although not standing in the May 2018 local elections he would look forward to these achievements being continued by the new Labour Administration in 2018 and urged all Members to support the motion.

The Mayor then invited Councillor Warren, on behalf of the Brent Conservative Group to respond who set out what he felt to be a number of contradictions within the motion. Starting with Adult Social Care, he highlighted the record number of complaints currently being made to the Local Government Ombudsman alongside the fact that the motion failed to recognise the additional funding provided by the Government in support of Adult Social Care. In terms of libraries, which were also referred to in the motion, he highlighted the number of closures experienced with the transformation in service coming about as a result of community rather than Council involvement. In terms of the partnership with schools he again felt credit for any improved performance should rest with the schools themselves rather than the Council. He also highlighted significant concerns that had been raised regarding the Council's relationships with local developers and did not support the view that the majority of Labour councillors had played any meaningful role in the decision making process in relation to any of the above examples. For these reasons he advised that the Brent Conservative Group would not be supporting the motion.

The Mayor then invited a further contribution from the Labour Group with Councillor Butt, as Leader of the Council, speaking in support of the motion. Councillor Butt began by querying the Oppositions view regarding the role played by members in the decision making process, highlighting the updates provided earlier in the meeting from the Chairs of each Scrutiny Committee as examples of the work and engagement of Members. He also highlighted the fact that it had been necessary to hold an Extraordinary Council Meeting (with the associated expense) to enable the necessary review of the political representation arrangements following the Opposition Group having unified.

Despite a reduction of over £105m to the Council's budget imposed by Government he outlined how it had been possible for the Council to continue delivering major achievements for the benefit of its residents, which would be continued when the

budget was set for 2018/19. As further examples of the initiatives being delivered he highlighted the investment of £400k to fund 12 additional police officers in Brent; the building of over 5000 new homes and receipt of over £14m in CIL funding; the bringing back in-house of the Brent Housing Partnership; achievements being made within the Brent Family of Schools and innovative approach towards tackling housing demand through the Council's investment in the I4B programme. He felt these were all example of the type of achievements that could be delivered by a Labour Administration and therefore once again urged all Members to support the motion.

In exercising his right of reply, Councillor Bradley highlighted what he felt to be an important principle supporting the view that it had been possible for Members to influence and play an active role in the decision making process.

The motion (as set out below) was then put to the vote by a show of hands and declared **CARRIED**:

"This Council knows first-hand that, under a Conservative government, and prior to that, the Lib Dem-backed Tory coalition, local councils across the country have seen their funding cut by more than half.

This Council puts on record that, although immensely damaging to many of the essential services and support that residents and communities depend upon, as a result of the determination and innovation of local authorities of all political persuasions, the fullest impact of austerity has, thus far, been averted.

This Council takes pride in the fact that, in Brent, despite the enormous financial challenge, eight years of Labour stewardship have resulted in major achievements that include:

- Creating a sustainable adult social care service that ensures elderly residents can retain their independence for longer and continue to live with dignity;
- Transforming our libraries service into one of the most successful and most accessible in the country;
- Working in partnership with our schools such that 97% are now rated as either Good or Outstanding, and, as a result, our students are amongst the UK's highest achieving; and
- In concert with developers, generating hundreds of millions of pounds in investment, building thousands of brand new homes of all tenures and affordability, creating good quality, skilled jobs, boosting the local economy, and rejuvenating neighbourhoods across the borough.

This Council recognises that, having managed to achieve so much on behalf of residents, despite huge cuts to its funding by a Conservative government, local Labour councillors have played an integral part in the decision making and scrutiny processes.

This Council looks forward to the 2018-2022 Labour administration; understands that, despite claims to the contrary, Conservative austerity will continue; and embraces the many challenges and opportunities that will present themselves.”

18.2 Motion from Brent Conservative Group – London Taxicard Scheme

The Mayor invited Councillor Warren to move the motion he had submitted on behalf of the Brent Conservative Group who began by highlighting how he felt the Mayor for London had failed to deliver on a number of promises. Despite managing to issue numerous press releases he felt the Mayor for London had failed residents in relation to the impact of the cuts proposed to the taxicard scheme, which he pointed out would impact on over 70,000 users of the service across London and 2-3,000 users in Brent all with serious mobility issues. He referred to examples of similar concerns being expressed by a number of other Labour controlled Councils across London and in supporting the motion felt it was important to recognise that the blame for this rested solely with the decision taken by the Mayor for London.

Following the original motion having been moved, the Mayor advised Members of an amendment submitted by Councillor Hirani, the details of which had been included with the second supplementary agenda published in advance of the meeting. Councillor Hirani formally moved the amendment highlighting what he felt to be the Government’s lack of support for the disabled and most vulnerable in society demonstrated through the introduction of Universal Credit, Independent Living Fund, Disability Living Allowance and wide ranging funding reductions for the NHS, Local Authorities and other organisations. He pointed out that Transport for All a transport mobility campaign group had been developing proposals to mitigate the impact of proposed budget reductions and also highlighted the positive action being taken by the Mayor for London to reverse decisions taken by the previous Mayor which would improve accessible travel. This had included investment in the accessible station programme. Of the stations identified for upgrade to step free access, 13 were located locally which would have a direct and disproportionate benefit for residents and businesses in Brent. He therefore urged Members to support the amendment proposed, which was as follows:

- (i) Amend title of motion by removal of reference to “Mayor Khan’s” and insertion of “Government” as follows:
- (ii) In first paragraph delete all wording after “This Council” and replace with:

“recognises the difficult decisions that Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan has been forced to take as a result of Government cuts to the capital’s funding. As an example of ongoing austerity’s impact, the 2018/19 budget for Taxi cards will regrettably fall by 13% - affecting around 70,000 users, some of whom live in Brent.”
- (iii) Amend the 2nd paragraph of the motion as follows:
 - Delete after “We recognise that” the wording “this cut will have a significant and direct impact on service users”; and
 - replace with “the Mayor is doing his utmost to improve London’s transport network for all”

(iv) Amend the 3rd and final paragraph of the motion as follows:

- Delete all wording after “Accordingly, we agree that the Chief Executive should write to”; and
- Replace with “the Government expressing the council’s concerns at the impact of reductions in funding to the Mayor on services to Brent residents.”

Following the amendment having been moved, the Mayor then asked whether a further member from both the Brent Conservative and Labour Groups wished to speak on the motion and proposed amendment. As a result Councillor Colwill (speaking on behalf of the Brent Conservative Group) highlighted concerns regarding the state of many roads and pavements in the borough in relation to comfort and safety for elderly residents and those with mobility issues. Councillor Collier spoke on behalf of the Labour Group, highlighting the personal nature of the issue to him, given mobility issues experienced by his sister as a user of the taxicard scheme. He advised that he would be abstaining from the vote on both the amendment and motion which he felt had failed to reflect the practical difficulties and impact on the quality of life that would be caused as a result of the budget reductions for people who relied on the service. In his view it would have been more appropriate for the motion to have been focussed on ways in which the Mayor for London’s decision making process could have been influenced rather than on political arguments between both groups.

In recognition of the final comments made, both Councillor Warren and Councillor Hirani advised that they did not intend to exercise any right of reply so the Mayor then moved straight to the vote by show of hands on the amendment (as set out above) which was declared **CARRIED**.

The substantive motion (as amended and set out below) was then put straight to the vote by show of hands and declared **CARRIED**:

“This Council recognises the difficult decisions that Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan has been forced to take as a result of Government cuts to the capital’s funding. As an example of ongoing austerity’s impact, the 2018/19 budget for Taxi cards will regrettably fall by 13% - affecting around 70,000 users, some of whom live in Brent.

We recognise that the Mayor is doing his utmost to improve London’s transport network for all; including some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in London.

Accordingly, we agree that the Chief Executive should write to the Government expressing the council’s concerns at the impact of reductions in funding to the Mayor on services to Brent residents.”

19. Urgent Business

The Mayor advised Members there were no urgent items of business for consideration.

The meeting was therefore declared closed at 9:16pm.

The meeting closed at 9.16 pm

COUNCILLOR BHAGWANJI CHOHAN
Mayor