



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

**Minutes of the ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
held on Monday 14 May 2018 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Bhagwanji Chohan

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Arshad Mahmood

COUNCILLORS:

Abdi	Aden
Afzal	Agha
Ahmed	Allie
M Butt	S Butt
Chan	S Choudhary
A Choudry	Colwill
Conneely	Crane
Daly	Dar
Denselow	Dixon
Ethapemi	Ezeajughi
Farah	Gbajumo
Hassan	Hector
Hirani	Hylton
Johnson	Kabir
Kansagra	Kelcher
Kennelly	Knight
Lo	Long
Marquis	Mashari
Maurice	McLeish
McLennan	Murray
Mitchell Murray	Naheerathan
Nerva	M Patel
RS Patel	Patterson
Pavey	Perrin
Sangani	Shahzad
Krupa Sheth	Southwood
Stephens	Tatler
Thakkar	

1. Opening of the Meeting

Councillor Chohan (as Mayor) opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and inviting Carolyn Downs (as Chief Executive) to outline the programme for the evening.

Before moving on to the formal business on the agenda, the Mayor took the opportunity to welcome all newly elected and returning councillors following the local borough election held on 3 May 2018 and thanked the Chief Executive, in her role as Returning Officer, and her staff for their efforts in running the election.

He also wished those councillors who had retired or stood down at the election the Council's best wishes for the future.

The Mayor then moved on to report, with regret, the passing of a former councillor and Chair of the Willesden East Young Conservatives, Richard Hazlehurst, who had served Mapesbury ward from 1966 – 1971. On behalf of the Council, the Mayor also took the opportunity to pay tribute to Baroness Tessa Jowell, following her recent passing. The Mayor then advised that it was with much sadness he also had to report the recent passing of Councillor Lesley Jones MBE. He reminded members that Lesley had been a former Mayor and had served the Borough with distinction since having been elected in 1998. He advised she would be missed by the whole council.

As a mark of respect the Mayor asked all those present to stand in order to observe a minutes silence.

A minutes silence was observed.

As a number of Members had indicated they wished to formally pay tribute to Lesley Jones he then opened up the meeting to invite contributions.

Councillor Butt opened the tributes by highlighting the esteem in which Lesley had been held by all those who had known and worked with her as a friend, community leader and advocate. He pointed out that not only had she been a tremendous Mayor but she had also been a stalwart of Cabinet with an unrivalled sense of civic duty who had been a selfless, compassionate and when required fierce campaigner for good and worthy causes which he felt was the standard all councillors should aspire towards. She would be sorely missed by her family and also by colleagues across the Council and within the Labour Group.

The following Members also spoke in tribute:

- Councillor Janice Long – who highlighted Lesley's dedication as a ward councillor to the local residents she had represented and many campaigns she had fought in the Willesden area, especially in relation to planning matters.
- Councillor Parvez Ahmed – who highlighted the friendship, mentoring and support that had been provided by Lesley prior to him becoming Mayor and also the formidable work undertaken in representing the residents of Willesden and for which he felt she had been rightly honoured.

- Councillor Aslam Choudry – who expressed his gratitude for Lesley's tremendous friendship over the years and highlighted how much she would be missed by her family and colleagues alike.
- Councillor Reg Colwill – who highlighted Lesley's passion for Brent and, as an example of her legacy, the work she had undertaken with Mount Stewart School for which she would be fondly remembered.
- Councillor Sandra Kabir – who remembered the support Lesley had provided her as a mentor when joining the Council and also the passion she had displayed working to support young carers in Brent.
- Councillor Krupesh Hirani – who highlighted Lesley's passion in campaigning on local issues and also the many years she had dedicated to teaching as a profession.
- Councillor Michael Maurice – who advised that he had known Lesley for over 10 years and had often sought and exchanged advice on a range of issues. He also highlighted her passionate yet caring and fair nature and advised she would be sorely missed.
- Councillor Kana Naheerathan – who remembered the support Lesley had also provided to him as Mayor.
- Councillor Joshua Murray – who felt it was important to recognise the inspiration Lesley had provided many young people across the borough having attended Youth Parliament meetings to provide advice and guidance and also in her role in the teaching profession.
- Councillor Ahmad Shahzad – concluded the tributes by highlighting Lesley's friendship, advice and support and how much she would be missed not only by those local residents she had represented but also by her friends and colleagues on the Council.

The Mayor thanked everyone for their kind and touching tributes.

Before moving on to the formal agenda, the Mayor also took the opportunity to formally welcome the Nigerian High Commissioner to the meeting.

2. **Apologies for absence**

The Mayor advised that direct apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Colaccico, Gill and Ketan Sheth.

3. **To elect the Mayor of the Borough for the Municipal Year 2018/2019**

The Mayor asked Members for nominations to the Office of Mayor of the London of Borough of Brent for the Municipal Year 2018/2019.

Councillor Butt (Leader of the Council) proceeded to nominate Councillor Arshad Mahmood. In moving the nomination he started by thanking Councillor Mahmood for his worthy and dedicated service as Deputy Mayor over the past year and also towards civic life in general. He highlighted Councillor Mahmood's commitment towards empowering and improving the lives of Brent residents and stated he had every confidence that he would continue to be a hardworking and excellent ambassador for Brent.

Councillor McLennan (Deputy Leader of the Council) seconded Councillor Butt's nomination for Councillor Mahmood to be appointed as new Mayor of Brent taking the opportunity to recognise his dedication and efforts as Deputy Mayor.

There were no other nominations and it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Mahmood be elected Mayor of the London Borough of Brent for the 2018/2019 municipal year.

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

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

Councillor Mahmood as newly elected Mayor thanked Members for his nomination and appointment as Mayor. He then announced that he had appointed Councillor Ernest Ezeajughi as Deputy Mayor for the 2018/2019 municipal year.

Councillor Ezeajughi and Mrs Ezeajughi then moved to take up their seats on the dias. The Mayor's robe and chain of office were then passed from Councillor Chohan to Councillor Mahmood and the Mayoress' badge from Mrs Chohan to Mrs Arshad. Councillor Chohan was presented with the past Mayor's badge and ribbon and Mrs Chohan was presented with the past Mayoress' badge.

Councillor Mahmood, as newly elected Mayor then formally returned thanks for his appointment and to everyone for attending the ceremony, advising that it had been a huge honour and privilege to have been nominated and elected to serve as Mayor. He highlighted his origins in Pakistan with him coming to the UK aged 14 and since then being proud to call Dollis Hill and Brent his home. In terms of family, he thanked his wife Nighat for her support, along with his daughter, three sons and four grandchildren and advised that he was pleased to have been joined by so many relatives from both home and abroad.

The Mayor thanked all Members for their support and advised that he was looking forward to working with them over the next year and also took the opportunity to pay tribute to his predecessor Councillor Chohan for his hard work and way he had conducted himself so diligently and responsibly during his time as Mayor. He also acknowledged and thanked the former Mayoress, Mrs Chohan, for her excellent work and the support she had provided to Councillor Chohan as Mayor.

The Mayor then moved on to thank Councillor Ezeajughi for accepting the position as Deputy Mayor and advised that he was looking forward to working closely with him to continue delivering positive outcomes for local communities and stakeholders across Brent. The opportunity was also taken to thank the Chief Executive her management team and the Mayors Office for their ongoing support, with the Mayor advising that he would endeavour to continue the hard work of his predecessors and to capitalise on the strengths, attributes and talents of his colleagues in order to support the Council's ongoing vision and mission.

On this basis, the Mayor then announced that he would be supporting the following charities in his role during the forthcoming year and looked forward to Members support in his fundraising efforts which would assist some of the most vulnerable in society:

- SUFRA NW London – a local charity established to address both the causes and consequences of impoverishment in the local community; and
- The READ Foundation – a non-profit organisation working to create schools places for children affected by poverty;

Finally the Mayor outlined his intention to use the office of Mayor as a means of building on the success already achieved in uniting communities across a borough as diverse as Brent.

He concluded by looking forward to the hard work ahead with the belief that being able to utilise the passion, dedication and commitment of all those around him it would be possible to achieve excellent results for local communities across Brent.

5. **Vote of Thanks to the Outgoing Mayor**

The Mayor then invited Councillor McLennan to propose a vote of thanks for co-opted and other Members serving on the Council's Committees.

Councillor McLennan stated that the Annual Meeting of the Council was an opportunity to highlight the valued work of the Council's co-opted committee members, given the core role they played as critical friends in the Council's democratic process. She advised that their independence and objectivity were highly valued and concluded by thanking all of the co-opted Members for their work in supporting the success of the Council's Committees over the past year.

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

Councillor Butt began by thanking Councillor Chohan for his dedication to the Mayoralty during his time in office, highlighting his origins in Kenya before moving to the UK to set up a successful business. As a councillor in Alperton he outlined how the outgoing Mayor had always put his residents first, encouraging them to engage in civic life and community projects and had shown a deep commitment to his local community, volunteering for many organisations across both Brent and London. This had continued during his time as Mayor, with him attending many civic and ceremonial events and serving as an outstanding ambassador for the borough, promoting Brent across London and the world. In addition, Councillor Butt highlighted the outgoing Mayor's legacy in relation to his charity and fundraising efforts in support of the Asian Women's Resource Centre and the Akshaya Patra Foundation, both providing vital support for local communities across the Borough. As a result of the time and effort invested, he was pleased to announce that Councillor Chohan (supported by the Mayor's office) had raised over £30,000 during his year in office, for which he was congratulated by all members of the Council. The funds raised would improve the lives of many residents and he felt reflected the hard work and commitment that Councillor Chohan had invested as First Citizen of Brent. Councillor Butt ended by asking everyone assembled at the meeting to join him in offering their sincerest thanks to the work of Councillor Chohan as Mayor of Brent during the 2017/2018 municipal year.

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

Councillor Colwill (Leader of the Conservative Group) congratulated Councillor Mahmood on his election as the new Mayor and thanked Councillor Chohan for his year in office on behalf of the Conservative Group. He praised his chairmanship of Full Council meetings over the past year in terms of his friendly, open minded and fair approach and also took the opportunity to congratulate him for his wonderful fund raising efforts. He ended by extending his best wishes for the future to Councillor Chohan on the conclusion of his term of office.

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

Councillor Chohan expressed his gratitude for having a final opportunity to review his year in office and started by placing on record his appreciation for all the support received from both Officers and Members during his Mayoral year. Specific thanks were given to Carolyn Downs as the Council's Chief Executive and Councillor Butt, as Leader of the Council, for the support they had provided along with the following key individuals who (along with the Chief Executive) the outgoing Mayor invited to come forward to receive a small token of his thanks:

- Peter Gadsdon
- Regina McDonald
- Thomas Cattermole
- Kim Gordon

He then thanked Councillor Mahmood for his support as Deputy Mayor and wished him well for his coming year as Mayor highlighting the commitment he knew he would bring to the role.

Looking back on his year in office, Councillor Chohan reflected on the numerous events he had attended giving him an opportunity to meet many inspiring, talented and generous individuals. He advised it had been a real honour with highlights including the announcement of Brent as the 2020 London Borough of Culture, Jack Petchey Awards and also attending the Parliamentarians of Indian Origin Conference in Delhi to represent Brent. The event had been attended by 35 MPs from across the world many of whom he was pleased to report had agreed to pursue further co-operation with Brent.

Councillor Chohan then moved on to reflect on his fundraising activities over the year in support of his two chosen charities – Asian Women's Resource Centre and Akshya Patra. He highlighted the fantastic work they carried out and was proud to confirm that the final amount he had raised in support of both organisations was £32,000. He thanked everyone who had been involved in his fundraising efforts over the year including the following members of his charity committee – Ajay Kukadia, Trupti Sangani, Babita Champaclal and Kanti Kukadia.

Concluding, the outgoing Mayor highlighted how much he had enjoyed his time in office and what a privilege it had been to represent the borough at so many events and welcome so many visitors to the Mayor's Parlour at the Civic Centre. He ended with a special thanks to his wife Praba, daughter Jyoti, brother Kishor and other close family members for their continued love and support throughout the year.

6. Declarations of Interests

There were no interests declared by Members.

7. **Minutes of the Previous Meetings**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous Council meeting held on 26 February 2018 be approved as a correct record.

8. **Appointment of Leader of the Council**

As this was the first meeting of the new Administration following the local borough elections on 3 May 2018, the Mayor invited nominations for the office of Leader of the Council which would be for a four year term to expire in May 2022.

Councillor Dixon moved and Councillor McLennan seconded the nomination of Councillor Muhammed Butt to the office of Leader of the Council.

There were no other nominations and it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Muhammed Butt be elected Leader of the Council.

9. **Changes to the Constitution**

The Mayor then moved on to invite Councillor Butt to introduce the report from the Director of Legal and HR Services setting out a number of proposed changes to the Council's Constitution.

In introducing the report Councillor Butt advised that the report set out a number of proposals designed to streamline the Council's committee and decision making structure including a merger of the Audit and Standards Committees; extending the remit of the Licensing Committee; discontinuing and reallocating the functions of the Highways and Equalities Committees. The report also proposed updates to the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance along with a number of other minor changes relating to the Scheme of Delegation; Proper & Statutory Officer functions and guillotine procedure for council meetings.

The Mayor then invited any other Members to speak, with Councillor Kansagra expressing concern at what he felt to be the limited consultation with Members on the proposed changes. In response to the concerns raised, the Chief Executive confirmed that the proposals had been subject to consideration by the Constitutional Working Group (CWG) in May 18 at which the Conservative Group had been represented.

As there were no other Members who indicated they wished 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 proposed within the report be approved;

- (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.
- (3) to note that, to the extent the changes related to executive functions of the Council, they had been approved by the Leader of the Council.

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

The Mayor then invited the Leader of the Council to briefly introduce the report from the Chief Executive which Councillor Butt advised fulfilled the Council's duty to review and determine the representation of different political groups on certain Committees at its annual meeting.

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

It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) that the size of each Committee be agreed, as detailed within the report;
- (2) that the allocation of seats on Committees to each of the Council's political groups (where the rules of political balance apply) be agreed as set out in the report with the Council making appointments to those committees in order to give effect to the wishes of the political groups allocated the seats;
- (3) to note that the political balance on their Sub-Committees be reviewed at the first meeting of the General Purposes Committee and Licensing Committees; and
- (4) to agree that the Labour Group and Conservative Group be allocated political assistant post(s) as detailed within the report.

11. **Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies and Appointment of Chairs/Vice-Chairs**

The Mayor then moved on to invite the Leader to introduce the report from the Chief Executive which Councillor Butt advised set out the nominations for appointments to Committees, Joint Committees, Forums, Panels, Outside Bodies and nomination for Chairs and Vice Chairs, where necessary, for the 2018-2019 municipal year.

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

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the proposed appointments of Members, co-opted Members and substitutes to Council Committees, Joint Committees, Panels, Forums and Outside Bodies for the 2018-2019 municipal year be agreed, as detailed in Appendix A of the report;

- (2) the proposed appointments of Chairs and Vice Chairs to Council Committees, Joint Committees, Panels and Forums for the 2018-2019 municipal year be agreed, as detailed in Appendix A of the report; and
- (3) Council note the appointments:
 - (a) notified by the Leader of the Council in relation to the new Cabinet and Cabinet Committees and their respective Chairs/Vice-Chairs for the 2018-19 municipal year, as set out in Appendix B of the report;
 - (b) to be confirmed by the General Purposes Committee to their Sub Committees for the 2018-19 municipal year, as set out in Appendix C of the report;
 - (c) to be confirmed by the Licensing Committee to their Sub Committees for the 2018-19 municipal year, as set out in Appendix D of the report.

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

12. **Calendar of Council Meetings for the 2018/2019 Municipal Year**

The Mayor then invited the Leader to introduce the report from the Chief Executive which Councillor Butt advised detailed the proposed calendar of meeting dates for Full Council and other meetings during the 2018-2019 municipal year.

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

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the proposed dates for Full Council and other meetings to take place during the 2018-2019 municipal year be agreed with Members noting the intention to commence the majority of meetings at 6:00pm and Cabinet at 4:00pm; and
- (2) the Head of Executive and Member Services be granted the authority to make any alterations deemed necessary to the municipal calendar during the course of the municipal year having consulted the Leader of the Council; the Leader of the Opposition Group and the Chair of the affected meeting.

13. **Members Allowances Scheme - Review**

Moving on the Mayor invited the Leader to introduce the report from the Chief Executive detailing the outcome of a review and proposed changes to the Members Allowance Scheme.

Councillor Butt advised Members that the review followed on from the report to Council on 26 February 2018 at which a Members Allowance Scheme for 2018/19 had been approved but where it had also been agreed this should be subject to a more detailed review following the local borough elections. The report presented for consideration by Members now presented the outcome of that review which had

also taken account of the recommendations and guidance made following the most recent review undertaken by an Independent Remuneration Panel appointed on behalf of all London Boroughs by London Councils. Whilst the changes proposed included an increase in the level of basic allowance payable to all Councillors it was important to note this had been offset by a reduction in the number of Special Responsibility Allowances payable in order to better reflect the guidance from the IRP.

The Mayor then invited any other Members to speak, with Councillor Kansagra again expressing concern at what he felt to be the limited consultation with Members via the Constitutional Working Group (CWG) on the proposed changes given their potential impact on a large number of Members and Opposition Group. In response to the concerns raised, the Chief Executive confirmed that the Scheme had been subject to review by CWG in February with the amendments now proposed also subject to consideration by CWG, as agreed, following the local borough election in May. The Conservative Group had been represented at both of these meetings.

No other Members indicated they wished to speak so as a right of reply, Councillor Butt, in summing up felt it important to highlight that the revised Scheme was felt to represent a fair and balanced approach which had taken account of the recommendations arising from the independent review undertaken through the IRP on behalf of all London Boroughs.

The Mayor then put the recommendations to the vote by a show of hands and they were declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the amendments to the 2018/19 Members Allowance Scheme be approved in the terms detailed within the report, to become effective from 15 May 2018;
- (2) the Director of Legal and HR Services be authorised, in order to comply with the statutory requirements, to publicise the amended Members Allowance Scheme.

14. **Members Code of Conduct**

As the final item of business the Mayor invited the Leader to introduce the report from the Director of Legal and HR Services detailing a number of changes to the Members Code of Conduct.

The Leader advised that the proposed changes had been designed to streamline the code and make it easier and clearer for Members to understand their responsibilities and follow, in order to ensure that the highest principles of conduct were maintained.

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

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the proposed changes to the Members Code of Conduct be approved, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (2) to authorise the Director of Legal and HR Services to make the consequential changes referred to within the report; and
- (3) To note that the changes to the Members Code of Conduct would come into effect immediately and would be publicised on the Council's website.

15. **Urgent Business**

As there was no other urgent business to be transacted the Mayor declared the Annual Meeting closed and invited all those present to join him at his reception

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm

COUNCILLOR ARSHAD MAHMOOD
Mayor