



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

**Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
held on Wednesday 1 May 2019 at 6.00 pm**

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Ernest Ezeajughi

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Lia Colacicco

COUNCILLORS:

Abdi	Aden
Afzal	Agha
Ahmed	Allie
M Butt	S Butt
Chan	Chappell
Chohan	S Choudhary
A Choudry	Colwill
Conneely	Crane
Daly	Dar
Denselow	Dixon
Donnelly-Jackson	Ethapemi
Farah	Gbajumo
Hassan	Hector
Hirani	Hylton
Johnson	Kabir
Kansagra	Kelcher
Kennelly	Knight
Lo	Long
Mahmood	Maurice
McLeish	McLennan
Miller	W Mitchell Murray
Naheerathan	Nerva
M Patel	RS Patel
Perrin	Sangani
Shahzad	Ketan Sheth
Krupa Sheth	Southwood
Stephens	Tatler
Thakkar	

1. **Opening of the Meeting**

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

Before commencing the formal proceedings, the Chief Executive advised it was with sadness that she found herself having to ask those present to join the Council in remembering those affected by recent terrorist attacks, this time in both New Zealand and Sri Lanka. On behalf of the Council, the Chief Executive advised that the Council's thoughts were with those affected by these tragedies, including their families and friends, and as a mark of respect and remembrance ask all present to stand and observe a minute's silence.

A minute's silence was observed.

The Chief Executive then briefly outlined the programme for the evening.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

The Mayor advised that direct apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mashari and Murray.

3. **To elect the Mayor of the Borough for the Municipal Year 2019/2020**

Councillor Mahmood asked Members for nominations to the Office of Mayor of the London Borough of Brent for the Municipal Year 2019/2020.

Councillor M Butt (Leader of the Council) proceeded to nominate Councillor Ernest Ezeajughi. In moving the nomination, he highlighted how pleased he was to be able to nominate Councillor Ezeajughi who he was sure would continue to be a hardworking and excellent ambassador for Brent.

Councillor McLennan (Deputy Leader of the Council) seconded Councillor M Butt's nomination for Councillor Ezeajughi 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 therefore **RESOLVED** that Councillor Ernest Ezeajughi be elected Mayor of the London Borough of Brent for the 2019/2020 municipal year.

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

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

Councillor Ezeajughi, as newly elected Mayor thanked Members for his nomination and appointment as Mayor. He then announced that he had appointed Councillor Lia Colacicco as Deputy Mayor for the 2019/2020 municipal year.

Councillor Colacicco and her consort Mr Tom Evans then moved to the dais. The Mayor's robe and chain of office were then passed from Councillor Mahmood to Councillor Ezeajughi and the Mayoress' badge from Mrs Arshad to Mrs Ezeajughi. Councillor Mahmood was presented with the past Mayor's badge and ribbon and Mrs Arshad was presented with the past Mayoress' badge.

Councillor Ezeajughi, as newly elected Mayor, then formally returned thanks for his appointment and to everyone for attending the ceremony including the following as his special guests:

- Deputy Lieutenant Mei Sim Lei
- First Lady of Anambra State, Dr Mrs Ebere Obiano
- His Excellency Ambassador George Oguntande, Nigerian High Commissioner (represented by Special Advisor Minister Oludare E. Folowosele)

He began by stating what a huge honour and privilege it had been to have been nominated and elected to serve as Mayor. He thanked everyone for expressing their trust, confidence and faith in his ability to carry out the role, recognising the significant achievements of previous Mayors.

As background to his appointment, Councillor Ezeajughi highlighted his origins in Nigeria with him coming to the UK in 2004 and being proud to call Wembley and Brent his home and having represented Stonebridge ward from 2014.

In terms of his family, he highlighted that he had been happily married to Ijeoma for 15 years and had been blessed with 2 sons and 2 daughters whom he thanked for their support and was pleased had been able to join him for the ceremony.

The Mayor advised that his interest in politics had started at a young age following his late father (Sir Simeon Okeke Ezeajughi) having become the Deputy Chairman of Orumba North local government area in Anambra State after his career in education as a Head Teacher and Inspector of Schools. He highlighted how attending meetings with his father had inspired him to take an interest in local grassroots politics and had led to his interest and ambition to stand for various positions both within Nigeria and then the UK for which, he felt, his father would have been very proud.

The Mayor advised that he was delighted to have been joined by so many colleagues, friends and family from all over the UK and also Nigerian whom he thanked for their support. He pointed out that he was looking forward to working with all Members of the Council over the next year and also took the opportunity to pay tribute to his predecessor Councillor Mahmood for his hard work in flying the flag for the Borough and way he had conducted himself so diligently and responsibly during his time as Mayor. He was especially grateful for the generosity and support shown by Councillor Mahmood during the period of transition. He also acknowledged and thanked the former Mayoress, Mrs Arshad, and Councillor Mahmood's family for their excellent work and support they had provided to Councillor Mahmood as Mayor and in his fundraising activities. He also took the opportunity to specifically thank Councillors M Butt and McLennan for his nomination as Mayor.

The Mayor then moved on to thank Councillor Colacicco for accepting the position as Deputy Mayor and advised that he was looking forward to working closely with her 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 Mayor's 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, recognising the value of teamwork in all that he did and hoped to achieve.

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 and he hoped help to build a stronger community where no one suffered alone:

- Sickle Cell Society – a registered charity set up to support and represent people affected by sickle cell disorder and to improve their overall quality of life. He advised it was an honour to be able to select this particular organisation given that his close friend and former councillor Tayo Oladapo had passed away in January 2016 as a result of the disease. In addition, he was pleased to announce that the Sickle Cell Society would also be working in collaborative partnership during his term of office with the Caring Family Enhancement Initiative (CAFÉ) Project in Anambra State, Nigeria, spearheaded by Her Excellency Dr Mrs Ebere Obiano.
- The Jason Roberts Foundation (representing the anti-knife and gun crime charity) – the Foundation was established in 2007 by Jason Roberts (a former professional footballer) in order to underpin his belief in equal opportunities, rights and representation of individuals regardless of background or circumstances. Since then, he pointed out that the work of the Foundation had broadened to provide a support programme including mentoring, life skills, education and training projects within its wider sports activities and had worked with young people at risk of offending, those excluded from school or struggling in the school curriculum, and young people with physical and learning difficulties. The organisation also aimed to create a safe haven to engage with children at an early stage to prevent them pursuing crime, which he felt was particularly relevant given the impact of crime on the lives of so many young people across the country.

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 and for whom he was proud to have been elected to represent as First Citizen.

He also highlighted how much he was looking forward to hosting Brent's first ever Windrush Gala celebrations on 22 June 2019 and to Brent officially becoming the London Borough of Culture from January 2020. He was particularly excited to be able to lead the Borough in celebrating the programme of events and projects which had been focussed on Brent's heritage and people, highlighting all that was special, intriguing and ground-breaking in 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 and support of his family it would be possible to achieve excellent results for local communities across Brent.

He ended his vote of thanks with the following thought, it had been nearly 25 years to the day that Nelson Mandela had been inaugurated as South Africa's first black President. Highlighting how much of an inspiration his inauguration had been, he finished by referring to the following quote from Nelson Mandela, which he advised he would seek to use as inspiration during his year in office:

"There can be no greater gift than that of giving one's time and energy to help others without expecting anything in return."

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 began by thanking Councillor Mahmood for the example he had set in terms of undertaking his civic duties during his time as Mayor, highlighting the number of engagements he had attended and fundraising activities in support of his charities. As this was the Annual Meeting of the Council she also advised it was an ideal 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 integral to the role of the bodies on which they served including Scrutiny, Audit & Standards and various health and education bodies and concluded by thanking all of the co-opted Members (including the long serving but recently retired Sheila Dar) for their work in supporting the Council's drive towards continuous improvement.

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

Councillor M Butt began by congratulating Councillors Ezeajughi and Colacicco on their appointment as Mayor and Deputy Mayor. Given their qualities, he advised he was proud to have them representing the borough during such an important year and advised that he was always impressed at how the mayoralty seemed to bring the best out of its incumbent. Councillor M Butt felt this had definitely been the case in terms of Councillor Mahmood's year in office with the role transforming him from one of the more unassuming councillors into an open armed, warm hearted champion for the borough and its many varied communities. Commending Councillor Mahmood for his commitment and dedication during his time in office, he also highlighted the legacy he had left in relation to his charity and fundraising efforts in support of the READ Foundation and SUFRA. He highlighted the vital support both organisations provided for individual and local communities across the borough given the impact of the current Conservative Government's austerity measures, highlighting the important and invaluable role community leaders such as Councillor Mahmood played in terms of their continued work to support such organisations.

The selfless and diligent work and achievements by Councillor Mahmood would, he felt, raise the bar in terms of standards for civic duty. Councillor M Butt ended by asking everyone assembled at the meeting to join him in offering their sincerest thanks to the work of Councillor Mahmood as Mayor of Brent during the 2018/2019 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 Ezeajughi on his election as the new Mayor and Councillor Colacicco on her appointment as Deputy Mayor and, on behalf of the Conservative Group, thanked Councillor Mahmood for his year in office. He praised the dignified way he had conducted himself and also the open and fair way he had conducted Full Council meetings during his time as Mayor and also took the opportunity to congratulate him for his significant fund raising efforts. He ended by extending his best wishes to Councillor Mahmood on the conclusion of his term of office.

Councillor Dixon also took the opportunity to congratulate Councillor Mahmood for the way he had conducted himself during his year in office, which she felt had demonstrated his hard work, diligence, commitment and compassion. Supported by his family, she felt it was no surprise Councillor Mahmood was held in such high esteem given his dedication to the role but also advised she would be delighted to welcome him back to his role as a fellow ward councillor.

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

Councillor Mahmood expressed his gratitude for having a final opportunity to give thanks and 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 Councillors Butt (as Leader of the Council), McLennan (as Deputy Leader), Mei Sim-Lai (as the Borough's Deputy Lieutenant) and his fellow Dollis Hill ward councillors Dixon and Ahmed for all the support they had provided during his time as Mayor along with the following key individuals who he invited to come forward to receive a small token of his thanks:

- Carolyn Downs (Chief Executive); and
- Kim Gordon (Civic Support Officer).

In addition, he also took the opportunity to specifically thank Brian Kennedy for his support as Mayor's Attendant throughout the year; Regina McDonald who manages the Executive Support Team and also Thomas Cattermole for his invaluable advice, support and guidance.

He also thanked Councillor Ezeajughi for his support as Deputy Mayor and wished him well for his coming year in office, highlighting the commitment he knew he would bring to the role. He also wished Councillor Colacicco well in her role as Deputy Mayor, highlighting the fine support he felt she would be able to provide for the Mayor.

Looking back on his year in office, Councillor Mahmood 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 various visits to a wide range of community groups, faith groups and residents' associations; attending the New Year's Day London Parade and various other London Lord Mayor and London Mayoral events; hosting various international delegations including from Albania, China, India, Algeria, Romania and most recently the High Commissioner of Pakistan. He was also particularly pleased to have been able to promote the Borough internationally including on a recent personal visit to Pakistan where he had been able to meet the Mayors of Islamabad, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Sialkot and his own birth place – Gharmala Jhelum where he was able to meet many high ranking police officers, Deputy District Commissioners and his counterpart the Chairman of the City of Jhelum. He advised that everyone he had met had been impressed by the services the Council continued to deliver for its residents in challenging times. He also thanked the local press for their assistance in covering so many of these events and in helping to raise the profile of the Mayoralty.

Councillor Mahmood then moved on to reflect on his fundraising activities over the year in support of his two chosen charities – Sufra North West London and the READ Foundation. He highlighted the fantastic work carried by both organisations and advised he was proud and delighted to confirm that the final amount he had raised so far in support of both organisations was approaching £80,000. He thanked everyone who had been involved in supporting and sponsoring his fundraising efforts over the year including the following members of his charity committee – Berrun and Rajesh from Sufra and Asad from the READ Foundation. The Council paused to recognise the support and work undertaken by each organisation and Mayor's fundraising achievements with a round of applause.

Concluding, the outgoing Mayor highlighted how much he had enjoyed his time in office and what an honour and 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, children and grandchildren and other friends and family members for their continued love, patience and support throughout a year he had hugely enjoyed.

6. Mayors Announcement

Councillor Ezeajughi, as newly appointed Mayor, once again thanked Councillor Mahmood and advised that the ceremonial part of the meeting had now concluded.

Before moving on to deal with the remainder of the agenda he advised that he wanted to take the opportunity to congratulate all those involved in the Council once again having been awarded the Member Learning and Development Charter Award. He highlighted the significant effort which had gone in to the Council retaining its Charter Award and welcomed Councillor Andy Hull from the London Borough of Islington to the meeting who had carried out the assessment and was attending in order to officially present the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council with the Charter Award.

The award was then presented to the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive with all members joining a round of applause in congratulations.

7. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests declared by Members.

8. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous Council meeting held on 25 February 2019 be approved as a correct record.

Before moving on Councillor Kabir, whilst not seeking to challenge the accuracy of the minutes, sought clarification from Councillors Abdirazak and Chan regarding their voting intention on the budget proposals given their absence at the time of the vote undertaken at the last meeting. The Chief Executive advised that as the minutes had been confirmed as an accurate record it would not be appropriate to consider this matter in any more detail at the meeting and the Mayor subsequently moved on to the next item.

9. **Member Long Service Awards**

As the next item on the agenda, the Mayor announced that it gave him great pleasure to be able to present long service award to two councillors in recognition of their dedicated service as members of the Council for over 25 years.

The first award was to Councillor Reg Colwill. Before presenting him with the award, the Mayor invited Councillor Kansagra to pay a short tribute to Councillor Colwill. Councillor Kansagra advised that he was honoured to have known Councillor Colwill as a friend and colleague for over 30 years and took the opportunity to pay tribute to the work he had undertaken in representing the local residents of Kingsbury and Kenton as the wards he had served since being elected to the Council in 1994 and more widely across the borough as Leader of the Conservative Group. Acknowledging his dedication and public service, Councillor Kansagra advised he was also pleased to see Councillor Colwill's family at the meeting, recognising the support they had also provided during his time in office and finished by highlighting how deserved he felt the award had been.

The Mayor and Chief Executive then presented Councillor Colwill with his long service award with all members joining a round of applause in congratulations.

The Mayor then announced that the second award was to Councillor Janice Long. Before presenting her with the award, the Mayor invited Councillor Choudry to pay a short tribute to Councillor Long. Councillor Choudry began by highlighting the support he felt he had been fortunate to receive from Councillor Long as a fellow ward councillor and her hard work in representing local residents from the Mapesbury, Harlesden and Dudden Hill wards she had served since also being elected to the Council in 1994. Highlighting her friendship, advice and support, local knowledge, straight talking nature, energy and dedication he felt the award was well deserved.

With the approval of the Mayor, Councillor Knight also paid tribute to Councillor Long highlighting the support she had provided for her as a new councillor,

dedication and public service over the 25 years on which she had served as a member of the Council and for which she felt she had been rightly honoured.

The Mayor and Chief Executive then presented Councillor Long with her long service award with all members again joining a round of applause in congratulations.

10. **Changes to the Constitution**

The Mayor then moved on to invite Councillor M 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 M Butt advised that the report set out a number of proposals designed to streamline and increase the openness of the Council's decision making arrangements including changes to committee memberships, officers delegated powers, the introduction of a specific financial threshold for key decisions and new category of recordable executive decision. The report also proposed a number of other minor updates to the Constitution arising from the annual review process.

The Mayor then invited any other Members to speak, with Councillor Abdirazak expressing concern regarding the frequency of changes being proposed to the Constitution and at what he felt to be the limited consultation with Members on them. In exercising his right of reply, Councillor M Butt highlighted the importance in ensuring that the Constitution was subject to regular review, reminding Members that the proposals being recommended for consideration had been designed to increase the transparency of the Council's governance arrangements whilst ensuring that the Council was able to undertake its business as efficiently and effectively as possible.

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.

11. **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 M Butt advised fulfilled the Council's duty to review and determine the representation of different political groups on certain Committees at its annual meeting.

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**:

- (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 would be reviewed at the first meeting of the General Purposes Committee and Licensing Committees.

12. **Appointment to Committees and Outside Bodies & Appointment of Chairs & Vice-Chairs**

The Mayor then moved on to invite the Leader to introduce the report from the Chief Executive, which Councillor M 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 2019-2020 municipal year.

No Members indicated that they wished to speak and the proposed recommendations in the report were therefore put to a vote by show of hand 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 2019-2020 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 2019-2020 municipal year be agreed, as detailed in Appendix A of the report;
- (3) Council confirm the following:
 - (a) the re-appointment of Mr David Ewart as independent chair of both the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee and Pension Board for a two-year term of office effective from 11 July 19;
 - (b) the appointment of Robert Wheeler as a replacement for Euton Stewart (following his retirement) as GMB Scheme Member representative on the Pension Board and to Chris Bala replacing Trevor Dawson (following his

term of office having expired) as the Pension Scheme Member representative on the Pension Board;

- (c) the appointment of Dinah Walker as a Parent Governor co-opted (voting) member on the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee for a three-year term of office effective from 1 May 2019.

(4) Council note the appointments:

- (a) notified by the Leader of the Council in relation to the Cabinet and Cabinet Committees and their respective Chairs/Vice-Chairs for the 2019-20 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 2019-20 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 2019-20 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 were circulated before the meeting).

13. Calendar of Council Meetings for the 2019/2020 Municipal Year

The Mayor then invited the Leader to introduce the report from the Chief Executive, which Councillor M Butt advised detailed the proposed calendar of meeting dates for Full Council and other meetings and major civic events during the 2019-2020 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 2019-2020 municipal year be agreed as detailed within Appendix A of the report;
- (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

14. 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 7.23 pm

COUNCILLOR ERNEST EZEAJUGHI
Mayor