



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

**Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
held on Monday 19 January 2015 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Kana Naheerathan

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Lesley Jones B.Ed MA

COUNCILLORS:

Agha	Ahmed
Allie	Bradley
Butt	Carr
Chohan	S Choudhary
A Choudry	Colacicco
Collier	Colwill
Conneely	Crane
Daly	Davidson
Dixon	Duffy
Eniola	Ezeajughi
Farah	Filson
Harrison	Hirani
Hoda-Benn	Hossain
Hylton	Kabir
Kansagra	Kelcher
Khan	Long
Mahmood	Marquis
Mashari	McLeish
McLennan	Miller
Moher	J Mitchell Murray
Nerva	M Patel
RS Patel	Pavey
Perrin	Shahzad
Ms Shaw	Ketan Sheth
Krupa Sheth	Southwood
Stopp	Tatler
Thomas	Warren

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: Councillors Aden, Denselow, Hector, Oladapo and Van Kalwala

1. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 December 2014 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting subject to the following amendments:

- Minute 1: Minutes of the previous meeting – that it be recorded that Councillor Warren moved an amendment to minute 6: Deputations, which was put to the vote and declared LOST.
- Minute 6: Report from the Leader or members of the Cabinet – 2nd paragraph, 8th line Wembley High Technology College corrected to read 'Wembley Primary School'.

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

None declared.

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

The Mayor began by wishing everyone a Happy New Year and good health for 2015. He welcomed the family of the late Bhiku Patel who were in attendance at the meeting.

He announced the sad news that Members were already aware of, that Councillor Bhiku Patel had recently passed away while in India. He expressed the shock felt by those that knew him of his sudden death. His thoughts were with the family at such a difficult time. The Mayor stated that Bhiku Patel was a committed family man with strong moral values and principles. He was very hard working with a caring ethos, and as a compassionate councillor the people of Kenton would certainly miss him. He referred to those in the Hall that had lost a very good friend.

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Members and all those present at the meeting stood in silence for one minute in memory of Bhiku Patel.

The Mayor invited members to speak on behalf of their groups. Councillors Kansagra, Colwill, Butt, Shaw and R Patel paid tribute to their former colleague.

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The Mayor also announced that former councillor, David Unwin, had recently passed away. David Unwin was first elected to the Council in 1971 and represented Church End ward and was also an active board member of BHP.

The Mayor reminded councillors that the Brent Holocaust and Genocide Memorial was being held on 27 January at 7.00pm at the Civic Centre. This was an opportunity to remember those who lost their lives during the Holocaust and those affected by genocide all over the world. It was a non-faith event which was open to all to attend.

The Mayor referred to the numerous recent tragic events that had occurred worldwide, the effects of which had been felt by everyone at the meeting and

beyond. He asked that everyone stand in silence for one minute to remember all those whose lives had been touched by terror, most recently the people of France.

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Members and all those present at the meeting stood in silence for one minute.

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The Mayor announced that new web casting arrangements were in place for meetings of Full Council.

The Mayor drew attention to the list of current petitions showing progress on dealing with them which had been circulated around the hall.

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

RESOLVED:

that Councillor Davidson be appointed to the Alcohol and Entertainment Licensing Committee in place of Councillor Warren.

5. **Report from the Leader or members of the Cabinet**

Councillor Butt reported on the proposed Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) for Old Oak Common. He stated that the Council been working hard with Hammersmith & Fulham and Ealing Councils to make sure the views of each borough were heard. For Brent this meant ensuring representations around Crossrail and the link to Wembley Central were kept high on the agenda. Two Housing Zone bids for Alperton and Wembley had been submitted which linked to making Wembley Central a critical transport hub. With the proposed provision of around 24,000 homes within the MDC the Council needed to make sure that different types of tenure were made available to maximise the provision of affordable housing. Councillor Butt added that efforts were also being made to ensure residents of Brent benefited from the potential jobs available.

Councillor Pavey updated Members on the budget consultation carried out in light of the Council having to make an additional £54M savings over the next two years. He reported that he was part of a delegation from Brent that had met with Minister for Local Government, Chris Hopkins, MP to explain the destructive impact this was having on Brent but there could be no change expected from the Government. The Council was working with the local community to decide which services to protect. This amounted to a genuine consultation exercise with £60M savings identified from which £54M was required.

Councillor Hirani reported from the first meeting of the Health Commission, chaired by Michael Mansfield, QC, jointly established with Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham and Hounslow Councils. Changes in the North West London health economy continued to impact local residents and so he submitted it was very important to look at what had gone wrong and what interventions needed to take place so that local people had a service that met their needs. Councillor Hirani updated Members on the implementation of the Care Act which would fundamentally change the way the Council delivered social care over next two years. Some aspects of the Act were positive but the financial elements were already starting to unravel to the

detriment of vulnerable people and councils were expected to make up shortfalls at the same time as being asked to make massive cuts.

Councillor McLennan reported that landlord licensing had become an enforcement issue from 1 January 2015. To date the Council had received 3,100 applications for licences and would be seeking to enforce the licensing provisions. There was a good dialogue being established with landlords and estate agents. She made reference to the crisis in the provision of temporary accommodation in the private rented sector and the shortage of council homes. The Council was out to tender for partners to provide temporary accommodation – two areas were being considered, a housing association lease scheme and provision of generic private rented housing. Councillor McLennan stated that joint work between the Children and Young People service and Property and Projects service was being carried out to provide the additional school places needed by expanding a number of schools within Brent. Finally she reported on the eco green deal for which the Council had been selected with Havering, Hounslow and Newham to participate in the London Mayor's energy grant scheme which had been launched that day.

Councillor Moher reported on a reduction in the number of children out of school with 98 children currently without a school place but only 26 of those having not been offered a place and this figure was expected to reduce. Further to Councillor McLennan's report, she stated that several school expansion projects were out for consultation with the schools under consideration being Byron Court Primary, Elsley Primary, Islamia Primary, Leopold Primary and Oakington Manor Primary. Councillor Moher reported that improvements had been made in the recruitment of social workers in an effort to reduce caseloads. She stated that the Council expected to be notified of an OFSTED inspection in the near future. Finally, she reported that through the innovations fund project the Children and Young People service would be improving the way children were kept safe and develop new ways of working with families.

6. Deputations (if any)

None.

7. Questions from the Opposition and other Non- Executive Members

Councillor Davidson stated that all Brent Conservatives - both within and outside the Council - welcomed the 37% fall in job seekers allowance claims (JSA) from 9,640 in 2010 to the latest figure of 6,060; also welcome was the consequent record level of employment in Brent. He asked if Councillor Butt welcomed this and if he would join in congratulating those Brent residents who had now found jobs for themselves and their families as a result of the Government's long-term economic plan? Councillor Butt replied that he was glad to acknowledge the achievements of the Council in working and delivering for local residents. The regeneration, employment and enterprise teams were working with the borough's major employers through skills and employment courses, trainee programmes, apprenticeship schemes and Wembley Works all helping to make sure that local residents were getting into employment.

Councillor Colwill asked how much the Council had paid out to top up the housing support scheme for those not able to pay their full rent? Councillor Pavey

responded that the question asked was not the one given notice of and so he undertook to arrange for a written reply to be sent to Councillor Colwill. In response to the question he had given notice of, which asked how much the Council expected to receive in 2015/16 in extra council tax payments from the new homes built across the Borough and from the projection of the future builds, or those in the process of being built, Councillor Pavey replied that it was anticipated that the Council would get an additional £0.5M Council Tax in 2015/16 from the construction of new housing and the same again in 2016/17. Over two years this would lead to an increase in revenue of more than a 1% increase in Council Tax which showed that building new homes was not just socially good but financially sound as well.

Councillor Shahzad stated that Northwick Park hospital had seen the longest waiting times in London for patients with the most severe conditions and asked if this was categorical evidence that the NHS was facing a crisis. Councillor Hirani replied that he agreed that the NHS was at crisis point and referred to waiting times at Northwick Park Hospital A&E continuing to be the worst in the country. He stated that more puzzling was that with the changes to urgent care and the triage system there were actually fewer individuals going through the A&E casualty unit as more people went to urgent care centres. His thoughts were with the dedicated NHS workforce who had gone through a tough top down re-organisation that was not wanted or needed. He added that what was needed was the whole person care alternative proposed by the Labour Party.

Councillor Southwood referred to the Government announcement that it was to cease all support to the most vulnerable members of the community by abolishing Local Welfare Assistance from April this year. She asked which Brent residents would suffer the most from this decision and what steps the Council was taking to protect them? Councillor Mashari replied that the scrapping of local welfare assistance formed part of the Government's assault on the provision of help and assistance to the most vulnerable members of the community. Many authorities would feel the impact and instead of scrapping in-work benefits the Government could help incentivise employers to pay the living wage. The Council had budgeted to continue to deliver the present scheme for the current year so as to avoid any sudden withdrawal of assistance and would be carrying out a fundamental review of the scheme alongside the Council Tax Support Scheme to maintain a safety net as far as the Council could. She added that the suggestion by Government that the impact could be covered by the Council's general budget given the scale of cuts the Council faced was simply ludicrous.

Councillor McLeish submitted that the regeneration of Harlesden town centre was really improving the appearance of the local area and asked for confirmation of when the scheme would be complete and when the Jubilee Clock would be returned to its rightful place at the heart of the community. Councillor Crane replied that work on the Harlesden Town Centre regeneration scheme started in May 2013. It was a £4M programme designed to make Harlesden a more pedestrian friendly environment and followed extensive consultation. The Jubilee Clock was to be relocated a few metres from its original location on 7 February 2015. The clock dated back to 1887 and had been completely renovated. Councillor Crane was impressed with the scheme but acknowledged one or two teething problems especially on introducing the new parking restrictions. The official unveiling of the clock would take place on 14 February between 10am and 4pm. He extended a

welcome to all members of the council at the actual unveiling at 3pm to celebrate the job done in Harlesden.

Councillor Dixon stated that 20 million people currently had to wait over a week for a GP appointment and asked if it was agreed that Labour's pledge to guarantee a GP appointment within 48hrs would make a real difference to the health and well being of Brent residents. Councillor Hirani agreed absolutely and referred to his answer earlier in the meeting to Councillor Shahzad. He stated that people could not get an appointment with their GP and this resulted in more people presenting themselves at urgent care centres and A&E units. He stated that this situation was made worse by the top down re-organisation and complicated funding arrangements put in place. The Labour alternative would be to move these arrangements to a local footing.

Councillor Choudry asked if, despite the Government's assertion that its economic policy had improved the situation in the country, Brent would be facing such a harsh budget settlement if the Government's economic strategy had not been such a failure. Councillor Pavey replied that if the Government had met its targets to balance the books this year then no further cuts would have been necessary. Instead the Government was borrowing £90B extra this year and making the people of Brent pay the price for this by cutting the Council's budget by £54M. He stated that the country was subject to the slowest of economic recoveries with real wages falling and whilst there might be a statistical economic recovery, the people of Brent were not feeling it.

Councillor Kelcher stated that the Government had outlined its plans that would take local government spending back to 1930s levels. He asked for an outline of the services provided to Brent residents today which councils did not provide in the 1930s and whether Brent residents would like to return to this level of service provision. Councillor Butt replied that that none of the borough's residents would want to go back to the 1930's but public spending was predicted to fall to its lowest level as a proportion of GDP since the 1930's. He stated that the Government had taken the country backwards by 100 years to the point where the NHS did not exist. There had been a drastic rise in the use of food banks. He expressed a fear of what the Government was doing with the cutbacks on council spending affecting the most needy. Services under threat included children services, health, adults social services, housing and the environmental services. However, as a Labour Administration, the Council was seeking to protect these services for the most needy.

8. Report from the Chair Scrutiny Committee

No written report had been submitted but Councillor Choudry reported on the work undertaken by Councillor Nerva and his colleagues on the Individual Electoral Registration task group and looked forward to comments and feedback once the report had been published. He also referred to the work undertaken by Councillor Southwood and her colleagues on the Pupil Premium task group which would soon be publishing its interim report. Councillor Choudry referred to the ongoing work by Councillors Daly, Colwill and others looking into aspects of the NHS. Members had been to see the new A&E unit at Northwick Park hospital and had discussed issues with the London Ambulance service. It was clear that there was still a lot of work to

do, especially during the winter pressure period. Councillor Choudry concluded by stating that the scrutiny function was covering a lot of issues and working well.

9. Wembley Area Action Plan

The report before Members explained that the Council had received an Inspector's report into the Examination of the Wembley Area Action Plan Development Plan Document and that the Inspector had found the document sound, subject to recommended changes being made.

RESOLVED:

that the Wembley Area Action Plan Development Plan Document be adopted with the recommended changes set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

10. Sudbury Neighbourhood Plan

The report submitted provided an overview of the process which Sudbury Town Residents' Association had followed to date in producing the draft Sudbury Town Neighbourhood Plan. On 13 October 2014 the Cabinet agreed the draft Sudbury Town Neighbourhood Plan for public consultation and then, subject to Full Council approval, to submit the draft Plan for examination. The consultation period had now closed and details of comments received were summarised at Appendix B to the report.

Members congratulated the Sudbury Town Residents Association, some of whom were present at the meeting, for their hard work in getting the plan to the stage it was now at and commented that it was one of the first of its kind in the country

RESOLVED:

that an independent examiner be appointed and that the draft Sudbury Town Neighbourhood Plan be submitted for examination.

11. Shared Internal Audit Services

The Mayor submitted that the report before Members should be withdrawn to allow officers to conduct further research and carry out a fuller review of all the options available.

RESOLVED:

that the report be withdrawn.

12. Proposed Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2015/16

The report before Members set out a recommended Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2015/16 based on the experience from the first two years of the local scheme and continuing to achieve a financially neutral position.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the Local Council Tax Support Scheme remains unchanged in year 3 of the scheme (2015/16) except for the provisions in paragraph 2.1.4 of the report;
- (ii) that in approving the recommended scheme for 2015/16, the applicable amounts, allowances and non-dependant deductions (not relating to pensioners) be not uprated in the local scheme;
- (iii) that any upratings to the government-prescribed scheme (i.e. for pension-age claimants) be actioned;
- (iv) that the changes introduced in 2014 for Housing Benefit in respect of EEA nationals be mirrored in the CTS scheme from April 2015;
- (v) that a fundamental review of the scheme be undertaken during 2015 with the revised scheme having an implementation date of April 2016.

13. **Updates to the Constitution**

The Protocol for Member/Office Relations and the Local Code of Corporate Governance had been reviewed and some amendments were proposed. The report also proposed some minor amendments in relation to Contract Standing Orders concerning the procurement of Low Value Contracts.

Councillor Warren moved amendments to the recommendations seeking to amend the proposed Protocol for Members/Officer Relations and stated that he believed his proposal would give staff more confidence in moving forward. This was put to the vote and declared LOST.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the changes made to the Protocol for Member/Officer relations attached as Appendix 1 to the report be agreed;
- (ii) that the changes made to the Local Code of Corporate Governance attached as Appendix 2 to the report be agreed;
- (iii) that the changes to the Contract Standing Orders attached as Appendix 3 to the report be agreed.

14. **Motions**

14.1 **Housing**

Councillor Miller moved the motion circulated under Councillor Conneely's name by wishing councillors a happy rent freedom day which was to be held on 4 February. He referred to his ward of Willesden where 48% of residents rented privately and drew attention to the high cost of property in the borough and the lack of affordability for local people. He stated that there was a crisis of housing supply and a price bubble and that the Labour Party's proposals would help alleviate the situation. Councillor Warren compared the number of housing completions in the last year of the last Labour Government with the higher figure for those completed

in 2014. He accepted more houses needed to be built but submitted that this had to be within a strong economy which the current government had now created. Councillor Kansagra also compared the record of the last Labour Government which he submitted failed to meet its targets against the present government's achievements. He stated that the Government had put in place a range of measures to get the housing market building again.

The motion was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

(i) Council notes:

- that there is a housing crisis in Britain, London and Brent, with housing completions falling to their lowest annual figures in this Parliament since the Second World War;
- that the price of the Government's failure is being paid for by the people of Brent, where almost 10,000 households are on social housing waiting lists;
- that the result is that working families are forced into an overheating private rental sector, whose rising rents cannot be covered by Housing Benefit; that when they cannot make ends meet, they are forced to leave the borough and relocate to as far as Luton, Coventry and Birmingham; that families are torn from communities, working parents are forced to abandon jobs and children's schooling is disrupted with all the potentially damaging consequences that entails;
- that as the Conservatives' and Liberal Democrats' economic plan has failed to rebalance the economy and close the deficit, their policy of encouraging private borrowing – through quantitative easing and the help to buy scheme – has further inflated house and rental prices, making the situation for Brent families even worse;

(ii) that Council welcomes the Labour Party's recognition that the only way out of this crisis is to build more homes, and to ensure that by 2020 at least 200,000 homes are being built per year in this country; that under such a plan, tens of thousands of new homes would be built in London, including Brent, each year and only action such as this will help to lead to more affordable housing, and the stability Brent's working families need to thrive.

14.2 **No confidence vote in Councillor Butt**

Councillor Warren moved the motion circulated in his and Councillors Davidson and Shaw's names by referring to the four Labour leaders he had faced during his spells on the Council. The motion sought to criticise Councillor Butt as Leader of the Council and to encourage other councillors to remove him. It also sought to remove Standing Order 13. Councillor Stopp responded by contrasting the motion from three councillors who had split from their own party and asked who they had confidence in. He referred to the difficult times the Council was going through and the challenges this presented to the Leadership. He sought to unite as Brent

Council to protect local hard working people. Councillor Davidson supported the proposed motion by emphasising what he saw as a concentration of power and a resistance to any opposition. Councillor Kansagra submitted that it was a democratic society and that the Labour Group had agreed to appoint the Leader for four years and, if it decided to change this, it would. The position was up to Labour and the Council did not need to interfere.

The motion was put to the vote and declared LOST.

In accordance with Standing Order 47(c) Councillor Warren called for a recorded vote which was recorded as follows:

In accordance with standing order 47(c), Councillor Warren called for a recorded vote on his proposal and voting was recorded as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Councillors Davidson, Shaw and Warren (3)	Councillors Agha, Ahmed, Allie, Bradley, Butt, Carr, Chohan, Chouhary, Choudry, Colacicco, Collier, Colwill, Conneely, Crane, Daly, Dixon, Duffy, Eniola, Ezeajughi, Farah, Filson, Harrison, Hirani, Hoda Benn, Hossain, Hylton, Jones, Kabir, Kansagra, Kelcher, Khan, Long, Mahmood, Marquis, Mashari, McLeish, McLennan, Miller, J Mitchell Murray, Moher, Nerva, M Patel, R Patel, Pavey, Perrin, Shahzad, Ketan Sheth, Krupa Sheth, Southwood, Stopp, Tatler and Thomas (52)	The Mayor and Deputy Mayor (2)

14.3 Friends of Preston Library

Councillor Kansagra moved the motion circulated in his and Councillor Colwill's names saying that it was submitted in light of discussion taking place between the Council and the Friends of Preston Library. The motion sought to begin the process of handing the Preston Road library over to the group. Councillor Warren expressed his support for the motion and criticised the library closure programme carried out by the previous Council administration. Councillor Mashari responded that the process of handing over the building had already started. Discussions had been held with the Friends of Preston Library, the building had been refurbished to provide additional temporary classrooms for Preston Park Primary school but the

permanent expansion of that school was now complete so an assessment was now being carried out on whether the building was still needed for additional school places. If it was decided that the building was surplus to educational requirements then there was the option to use the building as a community asset.

The motion was put to the vote and declared LOST.

15. **Urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm

COUNCILLOR KANA NAHEERATHAN
Mayor