



## **MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

### **Tuesday 19 March 2019 at 4.30 pm**

**PRESENT:** Councillor M Butt (Chair), Councillor McLennan (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Agha, Colwill, Hirani, S Choudhary and Tatler

**Also Present (speakers):** Councillors Nerva, Long, Shahzad, Dar, Colacicco, and Tessa Van Gelderen (LCF Chair)

#### **1. Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members**

Apologies for absence was received from Councillors Krupa Sheth, and Farah (lateness and potential absence), Councillor S Choudhary substituted to attend in place of Councillor Krupa Sheth.

#### **2. Declarations of interests**

There were no declarations of interests made by Members.

#### **3. Deputations (if any)**

There were no deputations received.

#### **4. Minutes of the previous meeting**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 February 2019 be approved as an accurate record.

#### **5. Matters arising (if any)**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

#### **6. Revoking a Byelaw to Enable Cycling In Parks and Open Spaces**

The Committee received a report from the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment informing Members of the steps necessary to revoke the no cycling byelaw which currently prohibited cycling in Brent's parks and open spaces, as well as, the benefits to cyclists and others for such an action. The report also included a regulatory impact assessment relating to the making of any byelaw in order to revoke the no cycling byelaw.

Sandor Fazekas (Highways & Infrastructure) when introducing the report advised that the proposal had been raised at the Brent Active Travel Forum with Brent Cyclists, the Local Group of the London Cycling Campaign in Brent, having highlighted the issue of the byelaw prohibiting cycling in parks and open spaces as being contradictory to transport policy objectives and a potential 'barrier' to

encourage cycling. At the same time, he also highlighted that the Council had recognised the need to ensure that the views of other park users were taken into account with the report setting out the approach, considerations and process to enable cycling in parks and open spaces in order to facilitate its transport objectives.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The current situation in relation to dedicated cycle routes/shared use paths and current inconsistency in the existing byelaw regulation and transport policy.
- In terms of the potential impact of cycling on other park users, these had been set out in section 3.9 of the report alongside potential mitigation measures as detailed within section 3.10 of the report.
- In terms of mitigation measures, Members highlighted the potential to consider completely separate lanes for children and adults and were also keen to look at ways in which any speed limits could be more strongly enforced.

In relation to concerns around speeding measures included clear signage and if there were specific and consistent problems in a particular area, for the Council to undertake a specific review. In summing up, the Chair advised that, subject to approval, the proposals would then be open to a formal public consultation process during which time it would be possible to submit further comments, suggestions and concerns about the proposed change. He felt the key issue needing to be addressed, however, was the need to reflect the current position and Council's wider transport policy objectives whilst seeking to ensure a proper and fair balance between different park users.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) Having considered the regulatory impact assessment of making a byelaw to revoke byelaw 7(ii) as detailed within the report General Purposes Committee agree:
  - (a) to propose the making of a draft revocation byelaw;
  - (b) to authorise the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment to proceed with the process and to consult on revoking byelaw 7 (ii); and
- (2) To note that a further report following consultation will be presented to Full Council in July 2019 for consideration before a final decision made on the revocation.

#### **7. Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) draft recommendations for the new electoral arrangements for Brent Council**

The Committee received a report from the Chief Executive detailing the draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Brent as proposed by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) on which comments and feedback were being sought.

Carolyn Downs (Chief Executive), in introducing the report, highlighted that the key principles, which any comments and feedback were provided would need to focus upon the following statutory criteria that the LGBCE had based their recommendations on:

- electoral equality;
- community identity; and
- effective and convenient local government.

The Committee noted the key draft recommendations made by the LGBCE, as detailed in section 4 of the report, which were now subject to a public consultation process due to close on 15 April 19.

Councillor M Butt (Chair) added that, in light of the criteria established by the LGBCE, he was keen to encourage the Committee to reach a consensus view taking a council-wide approach, wherever possible.

Carolyn Downs (Chief Executive) reminded the Committee that no formal Council submission had been made to the original consultation on warding patterns as it had not been possible to reach a consensus of opinion.

Carolyn Downs (Chief Executive) stated that a number of individual submissions had been made from serving Councillors, and from the Brent North Conservative Association which it appeared the LGBCE had reflected within draft recommendations. The Committee noted the Chief Executive's intention to respond, as Returning Officer, to the Commission with her views on the draft recommendations.

In addition to the Committee Members, further contributions during the discussion were received from Councillors Nerva, Long, Shahzad OBE, Dar MBE, Colacicco, together with, the Chair of Brent Labour Party's Local Campaign Forum (LCF), Tessa Van Gelderen.

During a comprehensive discussion, the following key points were noted:

In terms of comments raised by Committee Members:

- Councillor Agha stated that, based on the feedback, the Council should aim for an agreed Borough-wide response instead of ward-based comments;
- Councillor S Choudhary expressed concern that it appeared the LGBCE had ignored the natural boundaries of various wards as it arbitrarily incorporated significantly differing variances, ranging from 3% to 9%, within some of the newly proposed ward boundaries in their draft recommendations;
- Councillor Tatler emphasised the need for a strong collective voice. She added that the new 'Kingsbury' ward name was a better representation of the area and its identity instead of existing 'Fryent'. However, she was of the view that the Kingsbury Underground station must be within the final boundary of the newly named Kingsbury ward which was currently not the

case in the draft recommendations. Thomas Cattermole (Head of Executive and Member Services) stated that the Elections team would need to ascertain whether any boundary changes affected the electorate size of the proposed wards;

- Cllr McLennan stated that, as a long-standing resident of Willesden Green, she felt that the newly proposed name of 'Roundwood' did not really mean anything to the local community in terms of community identity and local heritage - one of the criterion set out itself by the LGBCE; and
- Councillor M Butt (Chair) reminded everyone present that it was about building consensus and reaching a compromise by working together, wherever possible. It was therefore essential to ensure that local representatives and community stakeholders wrote to the LGBCE to demonstrate the strength of collective feeling for or against a particular proposal in the draft recommendations in order for the LGBCE to have due regard.

In terms of other Members present at the meeting:

- a. Councillor Nerva (Queen's Park), while highlighting various other points, felt that there were difficult and complicated boundaries in Brent. He felt that the proposed recommendation by the LGBCE broadly addressed the geographical challenge and was a granular approach. He said that it was important 'not' to have great inequality between the North and the South of the Borough, now that Brent would have a reduced number of councillors. He added that he was particularly disappointed about the proposed change to the name of 'Queen's Park' ward given its clear identity and prominence and therefore the name of 'Queen's Park' ward ought to be kept in his view. He ended by stating that the proposed boundary changes - between 'Willesden Green' and 'Harlesden' wards - with the newly proposed 'Roundwood' ward also did not make any sense;
- b. Councillor Long (Dudden Hill) stated that, despite some reservations, she and local residents generally supported the changes subject to their comments about the name changes be incorporated - i.e. the ward name should be 'Dudden Hill and Willesden', and not 'Dollis Hill'. She argued that the local petrol station construction on Dudden Hill Lane ought to naturally go into the newly proposed 'Dudden Hill' ward. She added that the newly proposed name of a neighbouring ward 'Gladstone' ward was quite confusing for some because such an electoral ward, i.e. Gladstone, used to exist in another part of Brent hence the new ward name should be anything other than Gladstone to avoid the confusion - perhaps it could be called Neasden. Councillor Hirani (stated that the name 'Dudden Hill' was not widely recognised as a proper place as such and it would be better described as 'Willesden and Dollis Hill' ward since Dollis Hill had its own enduring identity along with a well-established London Underground station. Carolyn Downs (Chief Executive) underlined that the two views expressed by Members seemed at odds with each other which perhaps demonstrated the difficulty faced at times in reaching a council-wide consensus;
- c. Councillor Shahzad (Mapesbury) stated that the draft recommendations proposed by the LGBCE about Mapesbury ward were unacceptable to the

local electorate and its ward councillors. He informed that the local community and all key stakeholders had signed a strongly representative petition protesting the draft recommendations. He informed the Committee that all three ward councillors have reached a local consensus about the new ward name called 'Cricklewood Mapesbury' ward and felt that it must keep the boundaries as explained at the previous Brent Council consultation meeting - i.e. ensure all CMA3 were in the ward boundary, and included Riffel Road, Chandos Road, Kenneth Crescent, Jeymer Avenue and Marley Walk with Park Avenue North as the ward boundary. Councillor Shahzad identified that the local opposition to the draft recommendation was based on the calculation that 1,100 local electors would have to be unnecessarily removed as a result of the change proposed by the LGBCE. He added that this proposed change was not only contradictory to the local consensus, at odds with the community benefit, against the natural boundary lines of the ward but the draft recommendation was also incongruous to its own fundamental principles set out by the LGBCE. He handed in copies of a signed petition to Thomas Cattermole (Head of Executive and Member Services) which had been signed by local residents and all stakeholders that included local businesses, faith groups, public house, community organisations, as well as, the MEPR - the 900-strong local residents' association. Cllr Shahzad was reminded to ensure that this petition - together with any other local objection or suggestion letters - was sent directly by the concerned parties to the LGBCE - a reminder which was also highlighted to all about their respective submissions and local community views in relation to the draft recommendations by the LGBCE;

- d. Councillor Dar (Mapesbury) stated that he had lived in Cricklewood for the past 53 years. He highlighted the historical importance, community identity and vibrant diversity of Cricklewood. He confirmed that 'Cricklewood Mapesbury' ward name was agreed as a compromise to reach a local consensus;
- e. Councillor Lia Colacicco (Mapesbury) emphasised that the draft recommendation by the LGBCE, if adopted in current form, would result in the local church and public house being removed from her ward which she felt was unacceptable in terms of the criteria relating to community identity and of concern for the local community; and

In terms of other representatives present at the meeting, Tessa Van Gelderen, (LCF Chair, Brent Labour Party) stated that she was broadly supportive of the draft recommendations, subject to views about the new ward names being incorporated in the final proposals. She felt that two of the new wards should be called 'Harlesden and Kensal Green' and 'Queen's Park and Kensal Rise'. She added that many people who were happy with the proposal often remained silent in her view which should be understood as those people may not come forward to have their say or submit responses.

Councillor M Butt (Chair) reminded those present that the number of responses submitted for or against a given proposal was significant as the volume of comments would be an important factor in the LGBCE's final determination.

Thomas Cattermole (Head of Executive and Member Services) also reminded Members of the need to encourage responses from the local community as a means of further being able to influence the final recommendations from the LGBCE

After a comprehensive discussion, Councillor M Butt (Chair) reminded everyone of the need to ensure their views and comments were submitted to the Commission before the deadline of 15 April 2019 - the final recommendations from the LGBCE would then be published in July 2019.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) To note the content of the report and comments highlighted during the meeting
- (2) A summary of the views and comments highlighted during the meeting would be produced and circulated to the Committee for final approval, prior to being submitted to the LGBCE in response to their current consultation process.

**8. Appointments to Sub-Committees / Outside Bodies**

There were none.

**9. Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 5.36 pm

Councillor M Butt  
Chair