



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

**Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
held on Monday 10 September 2012 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Michael Adeyeye

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Bobby Thomas

COUNCILLORS:

Aden	Al-Ebadi
Allie	Arnold
Ashraf	Mrs Bacchus
Beck	Beswick
Brown	Butt
Cheese	Chohan
S Choudhary	A Choudry
Clues	Colwill
Crane	Cummins
Daly	Denselow
Gladbaum	Harrison
Hashmi	Hector
Hirani	Hopkins
Hossain	Hunter
John	Jones
Kabir	Kansagra
Kataria	Leaman
Long	Lorber
Mashari	Matthews
McLennan	Mitchell Murray
R Moher	Moloney
Naheerathan	Ogunro
Oladapo	BM Patel
CJ Patel	HB Patel
HM Patel	RS Patel
Pavey	Powney
Ms Shaw	Ketan Sheth
Krupa Sheth	Singh
Van Kalwala	

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: Councillors Baker, Green and J Moher

Upon the Mayor declaring the meeting open, there was disruption from some members of the public present in the chamber. In light of requests not to continue to interrupt the meeting being ignored, the Mayor ordered that the people concerned leave the Council Chamber. Upon this request also being ignored, the Mayor adjourned the meeting. The disturbance in the Council Chamber continued so the Mayor called for the meeting to be reconvened in another room and the meeting restarted at 7:45pm in the Marriage Room.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 July 2012 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

2. Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests

None declared.

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

The Mayor announced with regret that Sir Rhodes Boyson, former MP for Brent North, passed away on 28 August 2012. He was a Conservative MP for Brent North from 1974 until 1997. On behalf of the Council the Mayor had sent his best wishes to Sir Rhodes Boyson's wife, Lady Florette Boyson and family.

The Mayor announced with great sadness that, after a period of illness, Councillor Green's father had recently passed away. The Mayor passed on the Council's deepest sympathies to Councillor Green and his family.

The Mayor announced that Gareth Daniel was leaving the Council after 26 years service, 14 years of which were as Chief Executive. He wished him well for the future.

The Mayor was pleased to report that Councillor Baker was now on the road to recovery following a stroke he had at the start of August. The Mayor wished him a continued speedy recovery and looked forward to seeing him soon.

The Mayor gave notice that he would be holding his charity Christmas party on 30 November 2012. Tickets were available for purchase from his office.

The Mayor drew attention to a member development session on tackling procurement issues taking place on Wednesday 12 September, with a briefing from the Head of Procurement, Paul Davies. This topic had been requested by a number of councillors and so they were urged to support the session.

In accordance with Standing Orders a list of current petitions showing progress on dealing with them had been circulated.

Members stood for one minute's silence in memory of Sir Rhodes Boyson.

4. Procedural motions

Councillor Lorber moved a procedural motion that sought to require the Leader of the Council to make a statement on the position of the Chief Executive and allow other members to comment. Councillor Lorber asked that a recorded vote be taken. The procedural motion was put to the vote and declared LOST.

FOR Councillors Ashraf, Beck, Brown, Cheese, Clues, Cummins, Hashmi, Hopkins, Leaman, Lorber, Matthews, CJ Patel and Shaw

AGAINST Councillors Aden, Al-Ebadi, Arnold, Bacchus, Beswick, Butt, Chohan, Choudhary, Choudry, Crane, Daly, Denselow, Gladbaum, Harrison, Hossain, Hector, Kataria, McLennan, R Moher, Powney, John, Jones, Long, Hirani, Kabir, Mitchell Murray, Mashari, Moloney, Naheerathan, Oladapo, Ogunro, RS Patel, Pavey, Singh, Krupa Sheth, Ketan Sheth, Van Kalwala and Thomas

ABSTAINED Councillor Hunter

Councillor Beswick moved a procedural motion to suspend standing order 47(f) to allow councillors to vote from the seats they occupied following the relocation of the meeting.

RESOLVED:

that standing order 47(f) be suspended for the duration of the meeting.

5. Appointments to committees and outside bodies and appointment of chairs/vice chairs (if any)

RESOLVED:

that the following appointments be made:

Name	Appointment
Councillor Hopkins	To replace Councillor Allie as Chair of Budget and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Ashraf	To replace Councillor Green as first alternate to Councillor Hopkins on Budget and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Green	To replace Councillor Ashraf as first alternate to Councillor Brown on Budget and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Green	To replace Councillor Hopkins on Partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Hopkins	To replace Councillor Allie as second

	alternate to Councillor Clues on Partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Green	To replace Councillor Allie as second alternate to Councillor Cheese on General Purposes Committee
Councillor Sneddon	To replace Councillor Allie as second alternate for Councillor Cummins on Planning Committee
Councillor Beck	To replace Councillor Allie as second alternate to Councillor Lorber on Call-in Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Allie	To replace Councillor Kataria on Alcohol and Entertainment Committee and sub-committees
Councillor Allie	To replace Councillor Kataria as second alternate to Councillor J Moher on Employees JCC
Councillor Allie	To replace Councillor Kataria as second alternate to Councillor Van Kalwala on Budget and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Allie	To replace Councillor Kataria on Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee
Councillor Allie	To replace Councillor Kataria on Black and Minority Ethnic Forum
Councillor Allie	To replace Councillor Kataria on School Admissions Forum

6. Debate - West London Alliance progress report

This item was not taken.

7. Report from the Leader or members of the Executive

This item was not taken.

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

Councillor Shaw asked what the Executive and the Council planned to do to address the problem of social landlords who did not take their responsibilities seriously in dealing with the problem of anti social behaviour by their tenants. Councillor Beswick (Lead Member for Crime and Community Safety) replied that the Council already worked with the Registered Social Landlords in the borough on anti social behaviour issues and this included working with Brent Tenants Rights Group and addressing their responsibilities to curb the behaviour of some tenants. Regular meetings took place but if there were specific cases that came to the attention of councillors, Councillor Beswick invited them to escalate them to him. Councillor Shaw pointed out that Brent Tenants Rights Group covered only a small

part of the number of tenants in the borough and the work undertaken needed to be broader than this.

Councillor Brown asked if the Leader had full confidence in Councillor Powney as Lead Member for Environment and Neighbourhoods or was it time for him to leave the Executive. Councillor Butt (Leader) replied that his Executive worked very hard to serve the residents of Brent and that he had every confidence in all the Executive members to deliver services to all Brent residents. Councillor Brown responded that the Leader had not mentioned Councillor Powney by name and he did not consider his answer very convincing. He felt the Executive was pulling in different directions and there was a paralysis in decision making within the Council.

Councillor Ashraf referred to the decision taken by the Council to reduce the number of school crossing patrols. He asked how many patrols there were in place at the start of the school term and why there was not a patrol at Our Lady of Grace Junior School during the last week. Councillor Powney (Lead Member for Environment and Neighbourhoods) replied that he would have to write to Councillor Ashraf to let him have the figures he was asking for. However, Councillor Powney pointed out that during 2011 the Council had received transport related awards that included recognition of the work the Council had done to provide school crossing patrols and introduce a broad range of road safety measures. With reference to Our Lady of Grace Primary School, Councillor Powney explained that, as had been reported before, some sites encountered recruitment difficulties. He undertook to include details of this in his written answer to Councillor Ashraf. Councillor Ashraf responded by expressing his dissatisfaction with the answer saying that he felt young people were being put at risk and that the indication given by the new Leadership that the situation would be reviewed had not been fulfilled.

Councillor Cheese asked what the Council had provided for the library campaigners since the Leader promised in June to review the actions taken by the Council. Councillor Powney (Lead Member for Environment and Neighbourhoods) replied that the newly refurbished Kilburn Library had that day re-opened following an investment of £650,000, despite the view being expressed by the Leader of the Opposition that the library was not needed because Camden had one nearby. Councillor Cheese responded that it appeared that the offer by the Leader to look again at the library programme was a cynical move because there was no intention to change anything.

Councillor Lorber stated that Councillor Powney had recently indicated full confidence in the Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team but asked if he had the same confidence in members of the Executive. Councillor Powney (Lead Member for Environment and Neighbourhoods) replied that he had complete confidence in all members of the Executive. Councillor Lorber responded by saying that he had never heard of a situation before where a lead member had more confidence in the Chief Executive than he did have in his fellow lead members.

Councillor Colwill referred to the disruption in the Council Chamber that had caused great inconvenience to councillors and had required the meeting to be reconvened in another room. He asked how the situation had been allowed to happen and what would be done to ensure it did not happen again. Councillor Butt (Leader) accepted the point made by the question and asked that the Director of Legal and

Procurement address the issues raised and take whatever action was necessary to tighten up procedures. Councillor Colwill accepted the answer given.

Councillor Mashari asked what effect the changes made to English exam grades had had on the pupils in Brent. Councillor Arnold (Lead Member for Children and Families) replied that the lowering of expected C grades to D grade in English would have a crucial effect on pupils who could now lose higher education opportunities. She felt it was immoral to change the grade boundaries mid-way through the year and that this had ruined the position some pupils had been aspiring to. In spite of this, Councillor Arnold was pleased to report that the provisional 'A' level results for pupils in Brent appeared to be very good. Councillor Mashari stated that the change of goal posts mid-way through the year was a reckless action to take that affected the future of young people and hoped the Council would join with the shadow Education Minister to lobby government to review the situation.

Councillor McLennan asked what progress had been made on the library transformation programme. Councillor Powney (Lead Member for Environment and Neighbourhoods) replied by restating that the programme was intended to provide investment in the six libraries in the borough in order to ensure they were all of an excellent standard and open seven days a week. He stated that each of the libraries had either been refurbished or were undergoing works. The overall book stock had been maintained and the home learning service improved. There was also now an enhanced outreach service in the Kilburn area. Councillor Powney anticipated the visitor numbers for August would show a pleasing rise. Councillor McLennan was very pleased to hear the progress that had been made.

Councillor Choudry asked what the latest position was on the efforts being made to provide a school place for all children in Brent who needed one. Councillor Arnold (Lead Member for Children and Families) replied that this was a top priority issue for the service. All applications for reception age children received by the closing date had been offered a place. Since the closing date, 671 applications had been received. This totalled 4,783 applications of which 599 were from outside the borough, which showed the level of popularity of Brent schools. There were still 176 children that had yet to receive an offer but there would soon be an additional 256 places available. Councillor Choudry thanked the Lead Member for her reply.

Councillor Naheerathan asked what the impact would be of the coalition government's introduction of Universal Credit. Councillor Long (Lead Member for Housing) replied that for many it would have a devastating effect and stated that it would amount to social cleansing in Brent because many poorer families would no longer be able to afford to live in the borough. She added that these reforms, which had been supported by the Liberal Democrats, would lead to the Council being unable to offer suitable accommodation to people within Brent. She warned councillors not to make promises about housing that the Council would not be able to deliver on.

9. Reports from the Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees

This item was not taken.

10. Motions

10.1 **Ward working**

Councillor Hopkins moved the motion circulated in her's and Councillors Lorber, Beck and Brown's names which asked the Council to reaffirm that ward councillors should be able to consider all applications submitted to the ward working scheme and that decisions made by councillors should be respected and adhered to. She added that this was a matter that affected all councillors and was about local democracy. Councillor Hopkins stated that the decisions being taken by councillors were being ignored by officers when the process was meant to provide for ward councillors to determine local priorities for officers to review and refer back to them. Instead there were cases where officers were rejecting proposals without discussion. She asked how councillors were expected to represent residents when they were not being kept informed of what was happening.

Councillor Jones responded by saying that the ward working scheme involved all councillors and was successfully delivering many projects to many residents across the borough. However, if a project did not meet the criteria then it could not be funded. This included any project that was designed to overturn a decision taken by the Council. She refuted any allegation that councillors were not being kept informed and stated that councillors should be aware of all the projects being submitted for funding.

Councillor Colwill recognised that the ward working scheme could not make up for decisions taken by the Council on libraries or festivals but added that of the many projects he had seen submitted he was aware of only one being stopped. His experience of working with the scheme was good and he urged all councillors to ensure their ward working funding was spent.

Following a vote the motion was declared LOST.

10.2 **Free schools**

Councillor Kansagra moved the motion circulated in his name which sought to promote the idea of free schools and increase their number within Brent. He took the opportunity to remember Sir Rhodes Boyson who had been a headteacher within the borough and had made schools successful. Councillor Kansagra stated that 24 free schools had opened around the country during the previous year, with about 50 opening in the current year and some 200 due to open during next year. He urged the Council to promote and encourage the establishment of free schools within the borough.

Councillor Arnold referred to the new Education Minister, David Laws, as not having much education experience. She supported choice for parent to send their children to excellent schools but stated that the government had not provided enough funding for schools and had instead redirected funding into a political driven project to provide free schools that were often established in the wrong areas and without proper consultation. Councillor Arnold added that the Council needed to generate more school places and so had taken the decision to find suitable partners with whom the Council could work to provide new schools but free schools were only one option for this.

No member of the Liberal Democrat Group chose to speak on this motion.

Following a vote the motion was declared LOST.

10.3 **Loan sharks**

Councillor Pavey moved the motion circulated in his name by emphasising the exploitative nature of loan sharks and the huge APR rates they levied on loans. He stated that this was something that was hurting many residents of Brent. Councillor Pavey referred to an increase in debt related enquiries being received by advice agencies and urged greater support for promoting credit unions which would help remove the blight on the borough caused by loan sharks.

Councillor Pavey was congratulated on his inaugural speech to the Council.

In supporting the motion, Councillor Lorber referred to what he saw as a lack of consistency on many issues regarding debt, one being the expansion of gambling outlets on the high streets. He stated this aspect also needed to be tackled and felt that it was a shameful error on the part of the last government to allow the proliferation of gambling outlets.

Councillor HB Patel stated that it was recognised how some debt was bad and that this could be seen in the perspective of the legacy of the last government that had promoted a something for nothing culture. Councillor Patel added that the present government was doing its best to tackle the situation by supporting industry, cutting taxes and keeping interest rates low.

The motion was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

that Council:

- (a) notes and welcomes the UK-wide campaign to end 'legal loan sharking' and the work being done in Brent to tackle the problem locally;
- (b) believes that the lack of access to affordable credit is socially and economically damaging. Unaffordable credit is causing a myriad of unwanted effects such as poorer diets, colder homes, rent, council tax and utility arrears, depression (which impacts on job seeking behaviour and poor health);
- (c) further notes that unaffordable credit is extracting wealth from the most deprived communities;
- (d) believes it is the responsibility of all levels of government to try to ensure affordable credit for all, and therefore pledges to use best practice to promote financial literacy and affordable lending. This will help to ensure that wealth stays in the local economy;
- (e) pledges to promote credit unions in Brent, community based organisations offering access to affordable credit and promoting saving;
- (f) calls on the government to introduce caps on the total lending rates that can be charged for providing credit;
- (g) calls on the government to give local authorities the power to veto licences for high street credit agencies where they could have negative economic or social impacts on communities.

10.4 **Olympics and paralympics**

The motion circulated in the names of Councillors Lorber, Brown, Hunter, Hashmi, Cheese, Shaw, Cummins and Beck was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that tribute be paid to all those involved in the successful delivery of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, including council staff and many Brent residents;
- (ii) that Council congratulates and celebrates the hard work and successes of the British team, in particular those who were brought up or live in the vicinity of Brent, including time-trial gold-medallist Bradley Wiggins;
- (iii) that, in particular, thanks goes to the many volunteers, from Brent and beyond, who worked as Gamesmakers or London Ambassadors or in other capacities during the Games, their goodwill, enthusiasm, skill, cheerfulness and dedication ensured that the Olympic and Paralympic Games were enjoyed by spectators and athletes alike and made an enormous contribution to the success of the Games;
- (iv) that the importance of volunteering in Brent throughout the year be acknowledged, and the dedication of thousands of unsung heroes who work hard for no financial reward to support others and improve the community in which they live;
- (v) that those who are prepared to devote their time and effort to the local community in this way be supported and encouraged.

10.5 **Luke's Lions FC**

The motion circulated in the names of Councillors Ashraf, Beck and Hopkins was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the shocking murder of Luke Fitzpatrick in Dollis Hill in May be recalled with sadness;
- (ii) that the members of Luke's Lions FC – a football club of which Luke Fitzpatrick was a founder member and which his teammates have renamed in his memory – be congratulated on their efforts to create a positive legacy out of this tragic event, and in particular on their plans to expand the club to incorporate under-16 boys and girls teams;
- (iii) that the Council applauds the club's intention to engage with young people who might otherwise slip into anti-social behaviour and crime and provide them with clear objectives and physical activity.

10.6 **School sports coordination service**

The motion circulated in the name of Councillor Crane was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

that Council:

- (a) warmly congratulates team GB medal winners and competitors for their inspirational efforts that helped make such a successful Olympic games in London;
- (b) wishes to place on record our thanks and appreciation for all the volunteers, games makers and ambassadors from Brent and across London who made the Olympic Games so enjoyable for the visiting public;
- (c) supports Lord Moynihan in his call for the Olympic Legacy to support sport in schools and asks the borough's MPs to campaign to reverse the Government cuts in SSCO (School Sports coordination service).

10.7 **Office for National Statistics census 2012**

The motion circulated in the name of Councillor J Moher was presented by Councillor Choudry and was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

that Council:

- (a) notes that on 16 July 2012 data for Census 2011, which is crucial for local authorities for calculating their financial settlements from government, was published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), that it showed a scale of inaccuracy that affected all councils adversely, but London and Brent particularly severely, that the divergence between what the ONS said London's population was and what it actually was appears to be around 500,000 and in the case of Brent, the release showed that the total population was now 311,200 rather than the 257,000 on which settlements have been based, yet in the period since 2010 alone, government grant to Brent Council has been cut by about £68m, a figure that is expected to rise to £110m by 2014;
- (b) notes with deep concern that the ONS statistical error has called into question the reliability on which government decisions affecting our most vulnerable sections of the community are based;
- (c) calls for an immediate review of the methodological basis of the ONS census compilation to ensure that these errors do not recur;
- (d) calls on the Government to compensate those councils adversely affected by the under enumeration for the years since 2010.

11. **Urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm

COUNCILLOR MICHAEL ADEYEYE
Mayor