



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

Minutes of the ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL held as an online meeting on
Monday 14 September 2020 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT (in remote attendance):

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Ernest Ezeajughi

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Lia Colacicco

COUNCILLORS:

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

1. **Opening the Meeting**

Before formally opening the meeting, the Mayor took the opportunity to welcome everyone to the online Annual Council meeting and invited Carolyn Downs (as Chief Executive) to outline the programme for the evening and run through the guidance issued in relation to the conduct of the meeting. Having noted the outline provided, the Mayor then moved on to the formal agenda.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

The Mayor advised that direct apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Agha and Donnelly-Jackson.

3. **To elect the Mayor of the Borough for the Municipal Year 2020/2021**

Prior to handing over to the Chief Executive for the conduct of the election process, Councillor Ezeajughi began by asking Members for nominations to the Office of Mayor of the London Borough of Brent for the Municipal Year 2020/2021.

Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council) proceeded to nominate Councillor Ernest Ezeajughi. In moving the nomination, he highlighted the challenging nature of the year to date given the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the effect this had had on the civic year and activities of the Mayor. In view of the impact on his time in office, the Leader felt it was therefore only fair to nominate Councillor Ezeajughi to continue as Mayor through to the end of the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

Councillor McLennan (Deputy Leader of the Council) seconded Councillor Muhammed Butt's nomination for Councillor Ezeajughi to continue as Mayor through to May 2021 recognising his dedication and efforts as Mayor to date.

There were no other nominations and it was therefore **RESOLVED** that Councillor Ernest Ezeajughi be re-elected Mayor of the London Borough of Brent for the 2020/2021 municipal year.

Councillor Ezeajughi proceeded to sign the statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Mayor.

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

Councillor Ezeajughi, as Mayor, thanked Members for his nomination and re-appointment as Mayor. He then announced that he had re-appointed Councillor Lia Colacicco as Deputy Mayor for the remainder of the 2020/2021 municipal year.

Councillor Ezeajughi, as Mayor, then formally returned thanks for his re-appointment and in so doing, began by highlighting how fast his initial year in office had passed by.

Commenting on the huge honour and privilege in being nominated and re-appointed to continue serving as Mayor he recognised how difficult a year it had been for everyone as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic along with the impact this had also had on his civic year and fundraising activities. In terms of his ongoing

fundraising, the Mayor confirmed that he would be continuing to support his two chosen charities the Sickle Cell Society and Jason Roberts Foundation as well as continuing to raise awareness and support families and communities affected by the pandemic.

The Mayor also took the opportunity to thank everyone for their support and kindness over the previous year and to advise that he looked forward to continue working with everyone again over the course of the remainder of the current Municipal Year.

Reflecting briefly on his time as Mayor, to date, Councillor Ezeajughi outlined a number of highlights from his work engaging with residents as well as representing the borough both nationally and internationally. Prior to the lockdown restrictions coming into effect he informed members that he had been proud to attend 350 engagements with some notable events including:

- Being a part of the Rise event, as the spectacular opening to Brent's year as the London Borough of Culture;
- Winning first prize at the London New Year's Day parade and receiving £10,000 for his Mayoral charities;
- The visit of Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Cornwall to the Granville Centre in Kilburn;
- The Pride of Brent Awards;
- The Wembley Stadium Football tournament with the FA;
- Cutting the ribbon for the first rainbow crossing outside the Civic Centre;
- The opening of a new Brent Hub in Kilburn;
- Hosting the first Windrush celebration in Brent;
- The grand opening of the West London Vascular and Interventional Centre at Northwick Park Hospital;
- An awards ceremony hosted for NHS staff at Wembley Park Stadium;
- Visiting Yibin in China as a guest of the Mayor of Yibin;
- Visiting his home state as a guest of Governor His Excellency, Chief Willie Obiano and Her Excellency Ebelechukwu Obiano of Anambra state at the Caring Family Enhancement Initiative (CAFÉ) charity in Nigeria with whom he was collaborating on Sickle Cell Disease awareness.

In addition, the Mayor advised that within the rules during lockdown he had visited some of the mutual aid organisations that had been working hard to distribute food to many people in the borough, including the main Brent food hub. He had also been delighted to open London's first local Covid-19 test centre in Harlesden as well as being able (as the restrictions were changed) to once again start hosting citizenship ceremonies welcoming residents to the UK and to Brent.

During the lockdown, Councillor Ezeajughi advised members that he had also been delighted, as Mayor of Brent, to join in the weekly clapping in recognition of the work being undertaken by carers and key workers. These included many Council staff working in key front line roles who he also took the opportunity to pay tribute to for their efforts.

Highlighting the uncertain times in which everyone was now living and how much had changed since March 2020, the Mayor also took the time to express his

condolences to all those who had lost friends and family as a result of the pandemic and to pass on his thoughts and prayers to all those affected.

Reflecting on the way the Borough had managed the pandemic, the Mayor felt this was something the Council's officers and councillors could be proud of along with local communities across the borough, many of whom had been amongst the hardest hit by the disease and its economic impact. Referring to the support shown across different communities, he felt it was times like these, which highlighted what an amazing borough Brent remained, especially in times of adversity.

Whilst noting the challenges still to be faced over the coming weeks and months he highlighted the importance in everyone continuing to stand together in order to support each other during such uncertain times. He ended by urging everyone to ensure they continued to follow the current restrictions in relation to social gatherings and to stay safe.

5. Vote of Thanks

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

Councillor McLennan began by thanking Councillor Ezeajughi for the example he had set in undertaking his civic duties during such a challenging time as Mayor, and wished him well in continuing these along with his fundraising activities during the remainder of the year. As this was the Annual Meeting of the Council, she also advised it was an ideal opportunity to again highlight the valued work of the Council's co-opted and independent 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 the various health and education bodies and concluded by thanking all of the co-opted Members for their work in supporting the Council's drive towards continuous improvement.

Councillor Kansagra advised that he would like to second the vote of thanks moved by the Deputy Leader and in so doing also took the opportunity to congratulate the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for their re-appointment (making them the longest serving Mayor and Deputy Mayor). He thanked them for the way they had not only conducted themselves during such challenging times but had also chaired the Council meetings.

The Mayor once again thanked all Members and advised that as the ceremonial part of the meeting had now concluded he would move on to deal with the remainder of the agenda.

6. Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared by Members.

7. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous Council meeting held on Monday 13 July 2020 be approved as a correct record.

8. **Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor made the following announcements:

(i) 75th Anniversary of VJ day

The Mayor advised that he, along with the Mayoress and Leader of the Council had been honoured to attend a wreath laying Ceremony on Saturday 15 August in order to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of Victory over Japan Day. The ceremony, which had been held as a short socially distanced event at the memorial site in Barham Park had been organised by the British Legion and Mei Sim Lai as Deputy Lieutenant.

(ii) Former Councillor Tom McNicholas

The Mayor announced that it was with regret he had to advise members of the death of former Councillor Tom McNicholas, who had passed away during the lockdown period just before his 92nd Birthday. He had served as a member of the Council in the 1970's and 1980's, with sincere condolences passed on to his family on behalf of Brent Council.

The Mayor then invited everyone to observe a minute's silence in tribute and memory to former Councillor Tom McNicholas.

The online meeting was then paused to observe a minute's silence

(iii) 100th Birthday Celebration

On a happier note, the Mayor then moved on to congratulate Mrs Hilda Tichauer whom, he had been informed, had celebrated her 100th Birthday on Tuesday 25th August.

The Mayor advised that Mrs Tichauer and her sister (who had also lived to celebrate her 100th birthday) had first come to England in February 1939 as refugees from Berlin and had lived in Kenton for over 61 years.

(iv) Face Mask social media campaign

In concluding his announcements, the Mayor advised that he had recently filmed a short video organised by the Council's communications team, highlighting the importance of wearing a face covering which had been used to reinforce the message on social media outlets.

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

The Mayor then moved on to invite the Leader of the Council (Councillor Muhammed Butt) to introduce the report from the Chief Executive, which Councillor

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

The Mayor then invited any other members to speak on the report, with the following contributions made at the meeting.

Councillor Georgiou, highlighting his role as the sole representative of the Liberal Democrats on the Council, felt there was a need to recognise (given the large majority of the current Administration) the importance in ensuring in-depth, progressive, unfiltered and independent scrutiny of the Council. He felt this was important not only in terms of pursuing the best possible outcomes for the boroughs residents but also given the decisions needing to be made in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and in addressing the inequalities this had identified across the borough. A request was therefore made for consideration to be given to his membership on the Council's scrutiny function in order to ensure he was able, on behalf of the residents he represented in Alperton and across the borough as a whole, to contribute towards the decision making process and in holding the Administration to account.

Whilst understanding the frustrations expressed, Councillor Kansagra highlighted the need to recognise that the requirements in relation to political representation on each committee reflected the current statutory regulations. He pointed out, however, that this would not prevent Councillor Georgiou being able to attend meetings as an observer and requesting to speak, where appropriate.

The opportunity to engage with the scrutiny function was also highlighted as an opportunity by Councillor Mashari, as newly appointed chair of the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee who pointed out he would be welcome to attend and request to speak, time permitting, at scrutiny meetings.

As no other members indicated they wished to speak, Councillor Muhammed Butt, in exercising his right of reply, highlighted the democratic mandate provided for the Labour Administration and their focus in ensuring the voice of all residents across the borough was heard. He therefore commended the outcome of the review to all members, highlighting the recommendations were in accordance with the necessary statutory requirements regarding political proportionality.

The Mayor thanked all members for their contributions and then put the recommendations to the vote 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 meetings of the General Purposes Committee and Licensing Committees scheduled following the Annual Council Meeting.

10. **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 Muhammed 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 2020-2021 municipal year.

In introducing the report Councillor Muhammed Butt drew members' attention to a change in membership on the Audit & Standards Advisory and main Committee, with Councillor Mitchell Murray replacing Councillor Donnelly-Jackson as a full member on the Committee and Councillor Donnelly-Jackson becoming an alternate member.

Having invited contributions from any other members who wished to speak, the Mayor noted the comments from Councillor Mitchell-Murray thanking the Leader and officers for confirming the change in membership on the Audit & Standards Advisory and main Committee.

As no other Members indicated that they wished to speak and the Leader advised he did not wish to exercise his right of reply, the Mayor put the recommendations in the report to a vote and they were declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- (1) The proposed appointments of members, co-opted members and substitutes to Council Committees and Outside Bodies for the 2020-2021 Municipal Year, as detailed within Appendix 1 of the report, subject to the following change:
 - (a) Councillor Mitchell-Murray to replace Councillor Donnelly-Jackson as a full member of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee & Audit and Standards Committee with Councillor Donnelly-Jackson replacing Councillor Mitchell-Murray as a substitute member on both bodies.
- (2) The proposed appointments of Chairs and Vice Chairs to Council Committees for the 2020-2021 Municipal Year, as detailed within Appendix 1 of the report.
- (3) To approve the extension of the term of office for the Council's three Independent Persons and Independent co-opted member on the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee (following their terms of office having expired) to the Annual Council meeting in May 2021, for the reason detailed in section 3.4 of the report.
- (4) To note the appointments:
 - (a) of the Cabinet, Cabinet Committees and Joint Executive Committees and their respective Chairs and Vice Chairs for the 2020-2021 Municipal Year, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report.

- (b) to be confirmed by the General Purposes Committee for the 2020-2021 Municipal Year, as detailed in Appendix 3 of the report.
- (c) to be confirmed by Licensing Committee for the 2020-2021 Municipal Year, as detailed in Appendix 4 of the report.

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

11. **Calendar of Council Meetings for the 2020/2021 Municipal Year**

The Mayor then invited the Leader to introduce the report from the Chief Executive, which Councillor Muhammed Butt advised presented the final calendar of meeting dates for Full Council and other meetings during the remainder of the 2020-2021 municipal year.

As no Members indicated that they wished to speak the recommendations in the report were t put straight to the vote by the Mayor and declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- (1) To confirm the dates for Full Council and other meetings to take place up to the next Annual Council meeting in May 2021, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.
- (2) That the Head of Executive & Member Services be authorised to make any alterations deemed necessary to the Municipal Calendar during the course of the year having consulted with the Leader of the Council, Leader of the Opposition Group and Chair of the affected meeting

12. **Urgent Business**

As there was no other urgent business to be transacted the Mayor declared the Annual Meeting closed and advised that he looked forward to seeing all members at the next virtual Council meeting on Monday 23 November 2020.

The meeting closed at 6.45 pm

COUNCILLOR ERNEST EZEAJUGHI
Mayor