

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

At an **ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL** of the **LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT** held at Brent Town Hall Forty Lane, Wembley, Middlesex on **Monday, 20th September 2004 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor A Shahzad

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor C Moloney

COUNCILLORS:

Allie	Kansagra
Arnold	Lemmon
Bellia	J Long
Beswick	Lorber
Mrs N Blackman	Lyon
R Blackman	McGovern
D Brown	Moher
V Brown	Nerva
N Colwill	O'Sullivan
R Colwill	B M Patel
Coughlin	H B Patel
Crane	H M Patel
Cribbin	R S Patel
Dromey	Rands
Farrell	Sattar-Butt
Mrs Fernandes	Sayers
Fiegel	Sengupta
Fox	Shah
Freeson	Singh
Halder	Steel
Harrod	Taylor
John	Thomas
Jones	Thompson
Joseph	Van Colle
Kabir	Wharton
Kagan	Zakriya

1. **Apologies for Absence**

The meeting noted that this was the first meeting of Full Council that Councillor D Long had missed in many years and passed on its wishes to him for a speedy recovery.

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Duffin, Gillani, Gladbaum, D Long, C J Patel and Ms Shaw.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Clarification was sought on whether the Council intended to conduct the business at this meeting on the basis of advice given under Clause 13 of the previous meeting's minutes namely that it was permissible for other councillors to submit alternative motions under the item 'Motions submitted by Leaders of the Opposition Group'. The Mayor stated that the position remained that Standing Order 47(a) permitted alternative motions to be moved. Some Members expressed concern that the application of Standing Order 47(a) did not allow Standing Order 46 to function as it had been intended.

In response to a question from Councillor Allie as to why his name had not been included in the list of members present at the previous meeting, the Mayor explained that this was because Councillor Allie had only entered the floor of the Chamber for a very short while, had not taken his seat at any time nor contributed to the meeting.

Procedural Motion

At this point in the meeting, Councillor Moher moved that the question be now put. This was put to the vote and CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the question be now put and that the minutes of the meeting of full Council held on 28th June 2004 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.
- (ii) that the concerns raised at the meeting regarding the operation of Standing Order 46 be referred to the Constitutional Monitoring Group.

[Councillors D Brown, V Brown, Lorber, Shah and Wharton wished their dissent from the resolution at (i) above to be recorded].

3. **Declarations of Interests**

At this meeting there were none.

4. **Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor reported with regret the recent death of Mrs Jean Chopping. Mrs Chopping was a former Conservative Councillor for Tokyngton Ward. The Leaders of the three Groups paid tribute to the work of Mrs Jean Chopping both as a Conservative Councillor and community champion.

The Mayor congratulated Naginbhai Mistry on his Queen's Award for services to the Asian community in Brent. Mr Mistry had been in charge of the Brent Indian Community Centre in Willesden for more than 30 years.

The Mayor reported on the Registrar's Service being the first in the country to begin operating seven days a week, thereby enabling people to get married or to register births and deaths on a Sunday.

The Mayor reported that the Council had received two very good inspection reports from the Audit Commission. Cultural Services had received a 2 star rating with good prospects and the Planning Service had received a 2 star rating with excellent prospects. On behalf of the Council he congratulated the staff in both service areas.

The Mayor referred to the motion circulated in his name which sought to condemn the atrocity carried out in the Russian town of Beslan and extend the Council's sympathy to those involved and to families of the victims of Hurricane Ivan. He formally moved his motion.

Councillor Lorber moved an amendment to the motion which sought to add the Council's regret over the growing loss of life and serious casualties in Iraq. It also added regret over the post-war situation in Iraq. This was put to the vote and declared LOST.

Council John moved an amendment to the Mayor's motion which also sought to add the Council's regret over the growing loss of life in Iraq. This was put to the vote and CARRIED.

The motion submitted by the Mayor as amended was then put to the vote and CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

that this Council condemns the atrocities carried out in the Russian town of Beslan. Our deepest sympathies go to the families of the

victims and the survivors of the school siege and we hope that the wounded will recover rapidly.

We have all been shocked by the pictures we have seen in the media since the tragedy and denounce this meaningless violence against innocent children and adults.

This Council condemns such violence and we hope that the perpetrators of this crime will be swiftly brought to justice.

We also regret the ever growing loss of life and serious casualties amongst:-

- innocent Iraqi adults and children
- diplomatic personnel from around the world
- innocent contractors
- military personnel obeying orders

Furthermore, this Council would like to extend its sympathy to those affected by the hurricanes that have swept across much of the Caribbean and the Southern coastal regions of the United States.

Hurricane Ivan has claimed the lives of at least 80 people and we know that many Brent residents will have had friends and family affected by these hurricanes. We hope that those affected will be able to rebuild their homes and lives as speedily as possible.

5. Appointments to Committees/Appointments of Chairs/Vice Chairs

At this meeting there were none.

6. Items Selected by Non-Executive Members

(i) Northwick Park Golf Course

Councillor Rands introduced the item he had raised which referred to the long time since plans for the golf course had been agreed and that it had still to be completed, with little evidence of any work taking place on the site. He referred to the recent success of the European Ryder Cup team and the interest this generated in the game and yet local residents were denied using this local facility. He added that there were still a number of unfinished parts to the golf course and asked that increased pressure be put on the developer to complete the works.

Members referred to the history of the project under previous Council Administrations. It was suggested that it was the present Administration that had managed to get action taken to create the golf course. However it was also pointed out that many years later it was still not

complete. Councillor Lorber questioned the motive behind developing the site as a golf course.

Councillor Jones responded by saying that works on the clubhouse were supposed to have started during the summer and the Parks Manager was trying to find out why this had not happened. As far as she was aware the finances were in place and there should be no reason for further delays. Nevertheless, Councillor Jones pointed out that the course had had a lot of money spent on it and was looking good. She suggested that regular progress reports be submitted to the Quality of Life Scrutiny Panel to which Councillor Rands agreed.

RESOLVED:-

that regular progress reports on the completion of the Northwick Park Golf Course be submitted to the Quality of Life Scrutiny Panel.

(ii) ***Provision of Swimming Facilities***

Councillor Freeson introduced the item he had raised which asked that better sports facilities be provided in the borough, particularly for swimming. He stated that, given the importance of sport to people's health and to London's Olympic bid, the Council needed a plan for identifying suitable sites for swimming pools and to work with partner agencies to deliver the facilities the borough needed.

It was pointed out that circumstances were different today compared to the past. Many people now preferred to join private health clubs. Nevertheless the Council had succeeded in providing swimming opportunities for the elderly and children and the new pool at Willesden would enhance facilities within the borough. The view was put that there was not enough for the youth of today to do in order to keep some of them from causing trouble. It was said that there was little the Council could do in terms of providing swimming facilities because running swimming pools was generally unviable. It was submitted that there were many Government initiatives to provide the capital funding for sports facilities but that the Government failed to back this up with the revenue funding required to run them. Councillor Lorber asked that the Executive specifically look at ways of ensuring that the revenue required to support the building of new sports facilities could be found. Councillor Nerva pointed out that the Council's sports strategy had been discussed at the area consultative forums and suggested that if Members wanted to pursue developing a strategy for the provision of new sporting facilities they should use the Overview and Scrutiny structure to develop proposals.

Councillor Jones responded by highlighting the developments taking place in the borough that would lead to better sporting facilities. These

included the rebuilding of Willesden Sports Centre, continuing negotiations over the provision of a swimming pool on the old Kingsbury Pool site, the production of a sports strategy, identifying opportunities arising from the Wembley regeneration using Section 106 monies, pursuing opportunities in South Kilburn, working with the Education Service to improve the availability of sports facilities to the community, improving sports pitches in parks and supporting the London Olympic bid. Councillor Jones asked the Council to welcome the progress made by the sports service over the last 2 years. She suggested that other larger scale developments were best pursued with the Mayor of London and supported the reference to Overview Committee looking at the issues.

RESOLVED:-

that the Overview Committee be requested to consider the provision of sporting facilities in the Borough.

(iii) ***Litter Bins and Recycling Facilities***

Councillor Lorber introduced the item he had raised by stating that litter was the number one concern of local residents. Residents were concerned with the lack of litter bins, insufficient emptying of bins, the untidy condition of the areas around the bins and the lack of effective management of the street sweeping service. He urged a programme of providing many more litter bins after which a public education programme could be launched along with better enforcement and provision of a more efficient service.

Councillor Nerva submitted that this item took no account of the actions the Council was already taking. He stated that there was an existing task group looking at recycling and the green box scheme was proving a success. There existed the opportunity to contribute to the work the Council was already doing. Some Members endorsed the call to improve the appearance of the recycling bins and increase the frequency they were emptied. However it was felt that more targeted action in the provision of litter bins was needed so that areas of high pedestrian movement such as shopping centres and outside schools were provided with adequate litter bins. It was submitted that the problem of litter was a London-wide one. Councillor John felt the Council's response to reported fly tipping was good and that litter bins were already provided where they were most needed. The comment was made that many litter bins had been removed in recent years as a response to the dangers of terrorist attacks and the public needed to be re-educated into using those that were provided. Reference was made to Kilburn High Road and the attractive design of the litter bins provided along this road.

Councillor Jones responded by pointing out the huge cost of providing and emptying the number of bins being proposed by Councillor Lorber. She stated that they were already provided in heavy pedestrianised areas. She accepted that the Council needed to ensure the contractor was fulfilling the terms of the contract by regularly emptying the bins and this was being done. She referred to a current Government initiative which was out for consultation that would make it easier to issue fixed penalties against people dropping litter. The Council already took action against those that dumped rubbish in the borough and Councillor Jones did not support the item being referred to the Executive.

RESOLVED:

that the item submitted by Councillor Lorber be not referred to the Executive for further consideration.

7. **Reports from the Executive**

(i) ***The Treasury Management Annual Report 2003/04***

Councillor Coughlin introduced the report and pointed out that it showed that the restructuring of the Council's long term loans had saved the Council over £2M. He also drew attention to the fact that the Council's in-house treasury management team had out-performed the external managers and he asked that the Council's thanks to the team be placed on record.

(ii) ***Corporate Strategy Roadshow***

Councillor John referred to the roadshows that had provided the opportunity to remind staff of the Council's strategic goals and how the Improving Brent programme would help achieve them.

(iii) ***Local Government Conference***

Councillor John referred to the conference that had taken place in Bournemouth and reported that she had addressed a meeting on community cohesion.

(iv) ***Awaydays and 2005/06 budget process***

Councillor John stated that the budget process adopted by the Council was being increasingly seen as an example of good practice. The Council's external auditors had been present and other outside contributions had been made during the days, which again had produced good outcomes.

(v) ***Update on Wembley***

Councillor John reported that good progress continued to be made on the redevelopment of Wembley Stadium and that a 'Topping Out' Ceremony had taken place on 1st September. She referred to the change in the London skyline brought about by the Wembley arch and to an event to promote the wider aspirations for arts and culture around the Wembley redevelopment that took place at the London Eye on 9th September.

Councillor RS Patel added that construction was still ahead of schedule with a completion date of September 2005. He added his comments on the topping out ceremony and the event at the London Eye.

(vi) ***Launch of Black History Month***

Councillor John highlighted the launch of Black History Month that took place on 13th September and urged all Members to attend some of the events taking place.

(vii) ***The Connexions Service in Brent***

Councillor Lyon reported that the Executive had agreed to the Council becoming the accountable body for the delivery of Connexions in Brent. The other five West London Boroughs had agreed to this change and a grant of £2.4M would be provided to cover the costs with the service being run by the Education Service.

8. **Report from Chair of Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor Taylor submitted his report and pointed out that it contained the work programmes of the various panels and select committees. He referred to the latest edition of the Newsletter that had been circulated to all Members and to the positive feedback he had received on it. The Annual report for 2003/04 had also been circulated. He added that a visit to the Greater London Authority was being planned and it was intended to visit another local authority to look at how it ran its scrutiny function.

9. **General Debate**

Members debated the items included under the report from the Executive.

Councillor Lorber moved a motion circulated in his name which noted the practice of having awaydays in venues outside the Borough, involving Members who were not members of the Executive, the cost, that the matter had been referred to the Auditor and asking that future

awayday events be restricted to Executive members only, be held at a venue in the Borough and not include the provision of wine.

Whilst appreciating the value of the awaydays, the point was made that other Members did not receive feedback on the outcomes. It was submitted that there was a strategic argument in favour of organising awaydays in the way the Council did.

Some Members expressed concern that only Councillor John as Leader had been invited to the Wembley Stadium Topping Out Ceremony, excluding even the Mayor. It was felt this had been a major breach of protocol. The view was put that if the support of local people was to be retained there needed to be greater consideration to observing the usual protocols at such events in the future. Reference was made to the trade dispute on the site of the Wembley Stadium redevelopment. The wider issues surrounding the redevelopment of the stadium were raised. The arch was a symbol of the return of football to Wembley but the vision was also about how the redevelopment could translate into benefits for local residents. Issues around the provision of toilets and where they were to be located within the development were raised. It was submitted that this was an important issue for local residents. It was also submitted that local residents were having to put up with the inconvenience of station closures around Wembley which reflected on the Government's poor performance in not investing earlier in the transport infrastructure within the Borough.

Reference was made to a staffing issue within an Environment Service Unit on which Members had not been given any information. Given the huge public consultation exercise on parking issues around the Wembley redevelopment it was expected that the Executive would have informed other Members of what impact the staffing situation would have on this and other parking issues under consideration within the Borough. The situation concerning a Member of the Council was also raised.

Whilst the issue of litter was an important one it was put that discussion of it at Full Council took up time that could otherwise be spent debating issues concerning the future of local government.

In connection with the redevelopment of Willesden Sports Centre, it was pointed out that the pool should be fully accessible with the provision of a ramp and not a hoist.

Concerning the Treasury Management Annual report, concern was expressed at the Council's high level of debt. It was suggested that proper management of this could have saved money. Attention was also drawn to some of the issues raised by the auditors.

One issue to be discussed at the Local Government Conference was the need to expand the range of people serving as Councillors. A view was expressed that it should be welcomed that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister had issued a consultation paper on easing the restrictions that applied to people in the public sector serving as councillors.

Councillor John responded on behalf of the Executive to some of the points raised in the general debate. She sympathised with some of the views put on the breach of protocol around who was invited to the Wembley topping out ceremony. This had been taken up. She reported that the trade dispute on the Wembley redevelopment site had been resolved. Councillor John made reference to the 2000 plus toilets to be provided as part of the Wembley redevelopment and that £600,000 of Section 106 monies had been earmarked for the provision of toilets. She confirmed that the Willesden Sports Centre redevelopment was wholly compliant with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. Regarding the Environment staffing issue, Councillor John submitted that it was not for the Executive to get involved in such matters but to ensure the service was delivered. She asked the Chief Executive to brief the Leaders of the Opposition Groups. She also understood that a Councillor had prepared a press statement regarding allegations made against him which he could make available.

The motion submitted by Councillor Lorber was put to the vote and declared LOST.

(Councillors Allie, D Brown, V Brown, Lorber, Shah and Wharton wished their assent to the above motion to be recorded).

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the Treasury Management Annual Report 2003/04 be received;
- (ii) that the report by the Chair of Scrutiny Committee be noted.

10. **Motions Selected by Leaders of the Opposition Groups**

(i) ***Wembley Arch TV Reception***

Councillor Blackman introduced his motion which dealt with the disruptive effect on TV reception in the area caused by the Wembley arch. He stated that when this had been raised with the stadium developers the response had been that it would be rectified in due course as the project neared completion. He felt this to be unacceptable and that pressure needed to be brought to deal with the situation sooner.

Councillor John responded by acknowledging that the reception for many residents was not good. She explained that the developer had been asked to undertake an impact assessment because the Council had already been aware that TV reception in the area was not good, even before the arch went up. Her understanding was that the broadcasting authorities had to issue licences before the developer could install the necessary boosters and an application had already been made. Also they could not be installed until construction had reached a particular stage of completion.

Councillor Lorber moved an amendment to the motion that in order to put pressure on the developer the Council should not participate in any official ceremony to do with the stadium until the issue was resolved. This was put to the vote and declared LOST.

The motion submitted by Councillor R Blackman was put to the vote and declared LOST.

(The Mayor decided to call for a second vote on the above item, the outcome of the first being considered unclear. Councillor Steel asked that his dissent from the decision to take a second vote be recorded).

(ii) ***Public Toilet Provision in Brent***

Councillor Lorber introduced his motion by stating that many parts of the Borough were not served by public toilets and those public toilets that were provided were often not properly maintained. He suggested that it should be an automatic requirement of any new major development that public toilets had to be provided.

It was put to the meeting that it should not just be for the Council to provide public toilets. Many shops could do so and provision already existed in libraries and one stop shops. It was suggested that this was an issue the Quality of Life Scrutiny Panel could investigate. Reference was made to the nine toilets in the Borough currently maintained by StreetCare and to the fact that the Council was a member of the British Toilet Association.

The motion submitted by Councillor Lorber was put to the vote and declared LOST.

(The Liberal Democrat councillors present asked that their assent to the above motion be recorded).

Councillor Coughlin moved an alternative motion circulated in his name which was put to the vote and CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that this Council notes and welcomes the provision of many new toilets along the national stadium routes in addition to the 15 already maintained across the borough by the Council;
- (ii) that this Council therefore agrees that Brent residents' justifiable concerns over the safety and associated crime should be taken into account when deciding future provision and notes that a public toilet strategy for Brent is planned to be considered by the Executive at its meeting on 13th December 2004.

(The Liberal Democrat councillors present asked that their dissent from the above motion be recorded).

The meeting ended at 10.15pm

A Shahzad
Mayor

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