

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, 28th November 2005 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor C Moloney

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor H Gladbaum

COUNCILLORS:

Arnold	Lemmon
Bellia	D Long
Beswick	J Long
Mrs N Blackman	Lyon
R Blackman	McGovern
D Brown	Mendoza
V Brown	J Moher
N Colwill	R Moher
R Colwill	Nerva
Crane	O'Sullivan
Cribbin	C J Patel
Coughlin	H M Patel
Duffin	H B Patel
Farrell	R S Patel
Fiegel	Sattar-Butt
Fox	Sayers
Freeson	Shah
Halder	Ms Shaw
Harrod	Singh
John	Steel
Jones	Thomas
Joseph	Thompson
Kagan	Van Colle
Kansagra	Wharton

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Davies, Dromey, Mrs Fernandes, Gillani, Kabir, BM Patel, Rands, Shahzad and Zakriya.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 31st October 2005 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

3. **Declarations of Interests**

Councillors Arnold, Bellia, R Blackman, N Colwill, Duffin, Farrell, Fiegel, Fox, Gladbaum, Harrod, Jones, Kagan, Mendoza, J Moher, R Moher, HM Patel, R Patel, Sattar-Butt, Singh and Wharton declared their membership of school governing bodies in respect of the item on a new primary and secondary school included in the report from the Executive.

Councillor Lyon declared his interest as a resident of The Avenue in respect of the item raised by Councillor Gillani.

4. **Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor was pleased to report that that the fundraising event for the South Asia earthquake held on 18th November in the Town Hall had raised £5,200. He thanked everyone who had supported the event.

The Mayor reminded Members that they were invited to the Council's Annual Staff Achievement Awards ceremony taking place in the Town Hall on 1st December 2005.

The Mayor congratulated South Kilburn New Deal for Communities who, in partnership with Brent Council, won the Excellence in Regeneration Award at the UK Housing Awards earlier that month. He reported that amongst other things, the judges had made special mention of South Kilburn's innovative approach to community consultation and he congratulated all those involved in winning this prestigious award.

The Mayor was happy to announce that Martin Cheeseman had been formally appointed to the new post of Director of Housing and Community Care and on behalf of Members wished him well in his important new role.

The Mayor announced that there were a limited number of tickets available for his Charity Christmas Party taking place in the Paul Daisley Hall on 10th December.

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

At this meeting there were none.

6. Procedural Motions

The Council considered two procedural motions that were circulated and moved by Councillor Moher.

RESOLVED:-

Proposed revisions to Brent's Constitution

That in respect of Summons item 6, Proposed revisions to Brent's Constitution and Summons item 7, Capital Strategy 2005/2010, the Liberal Democrat Group, the Conservative Group and the Labour Group, called in that order, be allowed one member each to speak for up to three minutes on each of the items before moving to the vote.

1st Reading Debate – 2005-06 to 2009-2010 Budget

That in respect of Summons item 11, the time allowed for the 1st reading debate be extended to up to 60 minutes with the Leader being given up to five minutes to present the reports, to be followed by a general debate with the Leader being called to make a final contribution to close the debate.

7. Proposed Revisions to Brent's Constitution

The Council considered the report which set out proposed changes to the Constitution as a result of changes to legislation and other changes recommended by officers.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the changes to the Constitution, as shown in the appendix to the report, be agreed;
- (ii) that Councillor Singh be appointed to the newly constituted Adoption and Permanency Panel.

8. Capital Strategy 2005-2010

This report presented the Capital Strategy 2005 – 2010 to Full Council for approval.

RESOLVED:-

that the Capital Strategy attached as Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

9. **Items Selected by Non-Executive Members**

(i) *The Avenue Traffic Conditions*

Councillor HM Patel introduced the item raised by Councillor Gillani which asked the Executive to consider a 20mph zone along The Avenue. This was felt to be necessary because of the children and the elderly who needed to cross the road. It was appreciated that traffic calming measures needed to be subject to consultation with residents and it was acknowledged that Councillor Duffin as a fellow ward councillor had been discussing this. However, it was felt that the slowing of traffic by the placing of new speed signs and road markings would be a low cost solution to improve safety for local residents.

Councillor Duffin confirmed that he had been in discussions with officers about this and that a speed survey had been carried out. It was his understanding that any further measures would have to be subject to consultation with local residents but he felt a 20mph zone was needed. It was pointed out that The Avenue was a long straight road that encouraged fast traffic. It was also pointed out that a school crossing patrol had recently been introduced on this road.

Councillor Jones responded by acknowledging that The Avenue was susceptible to speeding traffic and that all three ward councillors had been involved in discussing the issue. A Controlled Parking Zone had been implemented in the area in order to deal with some of the traffic issues. Recent consultation had been carried out on changing the hours of control but these had been rejected. The feasibility of a 20mph zone could be investigated but Councillor Jones pointed out that there were no accidents recorded to make this a priority area. Councillor Jones accepted that this matter should be referred to the Highways Committee for further consideration.

(ii) *Ward Working*

Councillor Crane introduced the item he had raised by saying that he felt that the Council needed to take forward this very successful scheme. He stated that his own ward had benefited greatly from ward working and that Northwick Park and Alperton wards were missing out. He felt that local ward members should be engaged in such activities and asked the Lead Member for

Democracy and Consultation for assurances that the scheme would be rolled out across other wards.

Councillor Fiegel reported that he had his doubts about the scheme and felt it was already fairly clear to local councillors what residents wanted. However, he and his fellow Northwick Park ward councillors had met with officers and reached a position on a way forward that would benefit residents.

Councillor Kagan responded that she was glad to hear the ward working pilot was working so well in Fryent ward and felt it was unfortunate for the people of Alperton that it had not been taken advantage of. She now hoped for better things in Northwick Park from what she had just heard. She did not feel it was necessary to refer the matter to the Executive.

(iii) *Violent Crime Reduction Bill*

Councillor Joseph introduced the item raised by Councillor Dromey which asked the Executive to consider the impact of the proposals contained in the Violent Crime Reduction Bill on gun crime in Brent. She added that she was very surprised to see that Liberal Democrats had spoken against the Bill and called on all MPs to support the Bill.

Councillor Beswick responded by saying that he did not see the Liberal Democrats doing anything to deal with gun crime in the borough other than to appear at public demonstrations. He supported the item raised by Councillor Joseph and undertook to ensure the Executive evaluated the Bill in due course.

10. Report from the Executive

Councillor John introduced the report from the Executive. She explained Councillor RS Patel would update the Council on regeneration issues around Wembley.

(i) *Wembley Update*

Councillor R S Patel reported that work was progressing well on the roof and internal fit out of the stadium with 3000 workers currently on site working around the clock. The pitch would be laid as soon as the roof was complete. The contractor continued to assert that the stadium would be ready to hand over for testing and ramp up events by the end of March. Details of the ramp up events had yet to be announced. He added that the Building One Stop Shop had placed over 100 unemployed Brent residents into work on the stadium and that Brent in2work had negotiated guaranteed interviews for clients with Delaware North, the catering company.

Councillor RS Patel reported that work on the refurbishment of the Wembley Arena was due to be completed to enable its first concert to be held on 2nd April 2006. The temporary arena would then be removed by the end of the year to make way for new car and coach parking.

Councillor RS Patel reported that the final surfacing materials were being laid for Arena Square.

Councillor RS Patel reported that a detailed planning application was received by the Council on 17th October for the first new build block within the approved Quintain development. This would provide 280 new homes together with an employment centre, retail space and a nursery. It was anticipated that work would start in March 2006.

With regard to works on the three rail stations, Councillor RS Patel reported that Wembley Park station was now operational and no more closures would be necessary. Further improvements would be made to Olympic Square by May/June 2006. The White Horse Bridge was now substantially erected at Wembley Stadium station with all improvement works due to be completed by February 2006. The new bridge deck at Wembley Central station was being put in place. The Section 106 Agreement for the Wembley Central shopping centre scheme was now complete, with work on the demolition of the central office block in the square soon to commence.

Finally, Councillor RS Patel reported that the Stadium Access Corridor was due to be completed by the end of the year.

(ii) *New Primary and Secondary School for Wembley*

Councillor John reported that the Executive had taken decisions on the establishment of a new primary and secondary school in Wembley but that these had been called-in for scrutiny. She welcomed the opportunity this gave to further discuss and explain the decisions taken by the Executive. She emphasised that the decisions taken on the establishment of a new school did not prevent existing schools expanding or undermine the protection of open space. Alternative premises would be found for any organisations displaced from the preferred site.

(iii) *Visit to India*

Councillor John stressed that she and Councillor R Patel had undertaken this trip at their own expense. She reported on a wonderful time spent in New Delhi where she received hospitality which she had properly declared.

11. Report from Chair of Overview Committee

Councillor Thompson submitted his report and pointed out that a substantial proportion of the Committee's work programme was carried out through task groups, with details of the current ones included in the report.

12. Report from Chair of Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Kansagra submitted his report. He raised the issue of receiving petitions, which had been discussed at the scrutiny management board. He questioned the role that scrutiny was being asked to undertake in receiving petitions and felt that in most cases petitions should be submitted to the Executive for a response. He asked Councillor Kagan, as Lead Member for Democracy and Consultation to look into this.

13. General Debate

Members debated the items included under reports from the Executive and Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Reference was made to the wider regeneration projects either completed or underway in the borough in addition to the activity within the Wembley area and specific mention was made of the future re-development of The Copland Community School which it was asserted would demonstrate the vision of the Council.

The Leader was thanked for clarifying the status of her trip to India.

It was suggested that rumours existed of subsidence problems on the site of the new Wembley stadium. Reference was also made to the noise nuisance caused by concerts at the Wembley Pavilion. It was stated that neither of these issues had been covered in the report from the Executive. Reference was also made to the original planning condition concerning the interference to television reception by the Wembley arch. It was pointed out that the Council was not enforcing this condition.

The point was made that building a new school in Wembley would force many children to have to travel from the south of the borough to school each day. As an alternative the opportunity existed to expand Copland, Queens Park and Preston Manor schools. If a new school was needed it should be located in the centre of the catchment area. The Executive was accused of not taking notice of the objections raised about the establishment of a second City Academy. There would be nine schools in the vicinity of the new school and the greater demand for new school places was from the East/South of the

borough. This was where a new school was needed so it was questioned why the site in Wembley had been selected.

Councillor RS Patel referred to his visit with the Leader to the opening of the temple in New Delhi, completed in just 5 years, which some were saying was the best temple built since the Taj Mahal. Although principally a place of worship it was clear that it would become a huge tourist attraction. He stated that in some ways it reminded him of the Neasden Shri Swaminarayan temple only on a grander scale. He was pleased that the then Labour Members of the Council had agreed that the temple in Neasden should be built in Brent and that the parking issue had since been amicably resolved. It was disputed that the building of the temple was down to Labour councillors because it was granted planning permission in 1990 when the Council had no one party in overall control. The view on the temple in New Delhi was shared and it was stated that it would become a major new wonder of the world.

Councillor John responded to the general debate. She stated that it was the first she had heard about any subsidence problems with the new stadium and she would need to speak to members separately about this. The noise nuisance notice concerning the Pavilion had been served on Quitains as the owners of the Pavilion and she agreed the Council needed to keep the position under observation. The situation over television reception in the Wembley area had changed from that set out in the planning condition because of the BBC's move towards transmitting digitally. She agreed it was necessary to keep the maximum pressure on the bodies involved to resolve the problem. Finally she stated that the provision of a new school would not be the only answer to providing sufficient school places in the borough but that if there was to be meaningful objection to the proposals it was necessary to accompany this with viable alternatives.

RESOLVED:-

that the reports from the Executive, Overview Committee and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

14. 1st Reading Debate – 2006- 07 to 2009-10 Budget

The Leader introduced the reports of the Executive and Director of Finance and Corporate Resources. The report of the Executive set out the Administration's priorities for spending and activity for 2006/07 and highlighted the achievements made in delivering the 2002-06 Corporate Strategy. The report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources set out the parameters surrounding the setting of the budget. Further to the achievements outlined in the report, the Leader reported that the recent Best Value Performance Indicator residents' survey showed that overall satisfaction results were up from 48% one year ago to 53%. She stated that the Council was now well

used to winning awards and being held up as an example of best practice.

The Leader expressed her Group's desire to see the regeneration of the borough with the new national stadium at its heart. She referred to the hard fought battle to secure the new stadium which had begun under the Conservative Administration. She saw this as benefiting the whole borough and was critical of those that took the opportunity to cast doubt on the project. The Leader went on to state that her Administration wished to continue to work towards renewing old housing estates, providing new schools to offer children better life chances, providing better opportunities for youth and older people and creating a cleaner, greener borough.

The Leader referred to the piloted ward working scheme as being popular with local people and her Administration's intention to roll it out across the borough after the 2006 local elections. She challenged Opposition Members to explain what their proposals for improvement might be and to explain them to the residents of the borough. In the meantime she invited non-Executive Members to make constructive suggestions for what they would like to see included in the budget.

Councillor R Blackman stated that the Council would not know what level of resource it would have until the local government finance settlement was announced by the Government in December. This meant that the debate amounted to a wish list in light of resources being squeezed by the likelihood that the Council would receive the floor increase in grant and have to meet an increase in the Greater London Council precept and the levy in respect of the Olympics. These factors already indicated that a large increase in the Council Tax would be necessary and Councillor Blackman stated he would be happy to return to the days when the Council Tax was lower and the delivery of services better. He felt the level of Council Tax had reached its limits and stated that the current Administration had overseen a doubling of the Council Tax.

Councillor Nerva spoke in support of running a pilot scheme for household collection of plastics and creating additional sites at which plastics could be dropped off. He asked that investment be made in new technology to allow parking permits to be renewed over the web and for libraries to issue scratchcard permits. Councillor Nerva referred to the Brent magazine and the ward newsletters which were well received by residents but felt that these publications should be made available over the web to people who requested to receive them in that way by way of email alerts.

Councillor Van Colle referred to the Environment and Culture Service Development Plan and reference therein to working with the West London Waste Authority and partner boroughs to secure outlets for disposal and reprocessing other than landfill. He asked if this meant

incineration and if so why it did not say so. Councillor Van Colle pointed out that a significant proportion of Environment and Culture's budget went towards improvements in roads and pavements. However he felt it was not clear how this was spent and whether it represented value for money. He asked that the allocation of resources to improving roads and pavements be open to local determination. Councillor Van Colle contrasted the Leader's commitment to creating a greener borough with the proposal to build a school on a playing field site. Whilst supporting the opening of the site for use by schools he submitted it was not necessary to actually build a school on the site and urged the Executive to reconsider this.

Councillor Coughlin explained that the forecasts contained in the report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources were based on all the available information and did not take account of any preferences by the Administration. The Administration had set a 4 year strategy and he invited the other Groups to do similar. He acknowledged the financial constraints the Council faced. Councillor Coughlin pointed out that the Audit Commission had rated the value for money Brent gave as being 3 stars (out of 4) which made the Council currently the third best in London behind the City Corporation and Wandsworth Council.

Councillor HB Patel stated that the proposals set out by the Executive would add to the tax burden of residents and submitted that ward councillors should be left to work in their wards without the addition of £1M of officer support.

Councillor J Moher suggested that the proportion of tax paid under the old rating system had been higher than it was now under the Council Tax. He asked that the future funding of the Brent Countryside Day be secured. He referred to the consultation carried out on Fryent Park and complimented Groundwork on its involvement. He asked that funding be provided to ensure the outcomes could be put in place. Councillor Moher also asked that consideration be given to a budget for town twinning activity.

Councillor Sayers referred to the undertaking to restore Dollis Hill House as a community facility which had been long outstanding. He referred to the significant amount of money spent on Gladstone Park with no toilets being provided. He also made a request for extra resources to be spent on provision for the youth of the borough.

Councillor Duffin requested that housing caretakers be re-introduced to help care for the elderly who were prey for bogus callers operating on some estates. He felt more needed to be done to care for the elderly.

Councillor J Long referred to the improvement in the conditions of pavements in the borough and expressed the hope that such investment would continue. She also asked that the large print version

of the Brent Magazine be made available at the same time the magazine was distributed throughout the borough.

Councillor Mendoza suggested that the amount paid out in compensation by the Council as a result of personal injury claims resulting from the poor condition of pavements should be matched by the same amount being invested in improving pavements. He referred to the residents in the Wembley area who were suffering from poor TV reception and stated that it did not appear from the response the Council had received that the developers of Wembley Stadium were doing much about it. If it was a condition of the planning permission he felt it should be enforced. He referred to the popularity of Council's website but felt the large amount of paper he was sent as a councillor could be reduced if more information was sent electronically.

Councillor Farrell supported the request to provide more facilities for the recycling of plastic and for the continued investment in the borough's pavements. She also supported the request for greater provision for the youth of the borough, not only in the provision of facilities but by taking on youth workers as well.

Councillor R Colwill expressed concern over the increase in the cost of the bureaucracy supporting ward working rather than investment in front line services. He submitted that the ward members were best placed to serve local people and asked if the figures shown for ward working included staff costs. He called for more police on the streets to fight rising crime levels and to this end also supported the request for greater resources to be put into youth and community provision for those young people who might otherwise commit crime. He stated that there was a lack of such provision in the north of the borough and asked for more information on how Section 106 monies might be used for this.

The Leader responded to the 1st Reading. She pointed out that the Council Tax was the 3rd lowest in outer London and the 17th lowest across London. She appreciated that there were pressures on the budget and that the settlement was not yet known. She agreed that more was needed to facilitate the recycling of plastics. The Leader stated that a better deal was needed for the Council from the West London Waste Authority. She expressed the view that ward working would enhance the borough and residents had already shown they liked the newsletters. The proposed site for the new school was presently occupied by a poor facility and the development would not take all the green space. She emphasised the Council's 3 star award for the use of resources making it the third best in London. She acknowledged that action was needed on securing the future of Dollis Hill House. The Leader noted the request for continued investment in pavements. In response to the request for the re-introduction of housing caretakers she pointed out that existing neighbourhood

wardens already provided a service. Finally she referred to the significant increase in the capital investment in the borough.

RESOLVED:-

that the reports from the Executive and the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources on the 1st Reading of the 2006/07 Budget be noted and that the views submitted by Members during the course of the 1st Reading Debate be referred to the Executive to determine those it wishes to give further consideration to.

The meeting ended at 8.43pm

C MOLONEY
Mayor

Mins05/06/Council/full/cm28nk