

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, 23rd January 2006 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor C Moloney

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor H Gladbaum

COUNCILLORS:

Arnold	D Long
Bellia	J Long
Beswick	Lorber
Mrs N Blackman	Lyon
R Blackman	McGovern
Chavda	Mendoza
N Colwill	J Moher
R Colwill	R Moher
Crane	Nerva
Cribbin	O'Sullivan
Coughlin	B M Patel
Dromey	C J Patel
Duffin	H M Patel
Farrell	H B Patel
Mrs Fernandes	R S Patel
Fox	Sattar-Butt
Freeson	Sayers
Harrod	Shah
Hughes	Singh
John	Steel
Jones	Thomas
Kabir	Thompson
Kagan	Van Colle
Kansagra	Wharton
Lemmon	Zakriya

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Fiegel, Halder, Rands and Shahzad.

Councillor R Blackman referred to a lack of respect shown by some members who did not attend meetings nor submit apologies for absence.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 28th November 2005 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

3. **Declarations of Interests**

At this meeting there were none.

4. **Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor reported that eight Brent residents had received honours in the New Year's Day Honours list this year. He stated that it was good to see so many Brent residents being honoured by the Queen in this way and they had been invited to a reception in the Mayor's Parlour in order to congratulate them on behalf of the Council.

The Mayor reminded all Members that the Council's annual Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony would be taking place on Sunday 29th January at 2.30pm in Copland School, Wembley. The theme this year was 'one person can make a difference' and he expressed the hope that all Members would make an effort to attend this important civic event.

The Mayor congratulated staff in the Council's Trading Standards service for their recent successful operation against fraudulent traders at Wembley Stadium market. They had recently seized £1.5 million worth of counterfeit goods thereby helping to protect both customers and honest traders.

The Mayor congratulated the staff in the Legal and Democratic Services Unit for achieving ISO 9001 accreditation.

The Mayor informed Members that a prize quiz to raise funds for the Paul Daisley Trust, one of the Mayor's Charities, was being organised for Friday 24th February at the Town Hall. Anyone wishing to join in should contact Richard Cotton for further details.

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

At this meeting there were none.

6. **The Local Implementation Plan**

The Local Implementation Plan (LIP) was a statutory document that every London Borough has prepared or is preparing ready for submission to the Mayor of London in 2006. The Council's Transportation Service Unit last reported to the Executive in August 2005, detailing how, via the LIP, the Borough plans to implement the relevant priorities, policies and proposals included within the Mayor's Transport Strategy.

Officers were congratulated on the production of the plan but it was pointed out that there was a disparity between the report and Appendix 2 of the report regarding the number of questionnaire leaflets that were returned to the Council. Attention was also drawn to the tension within the plan brought about by not making provision for the motor car and yet acknowledging the increase in traffic and heavily used roads in the borough.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the summary of Transport for London's feedback report on Brent's Draft LIP attached as Appendix 1 to the report be noted;
- (ii) that the summary of Brent's Final LIP attached as Appendix 2 to the report be noted;
- (iii) that the content of the Final LIP be approved, subject to any minor amendments the Director of Environment and Culture finds it necessary to make;
- (iv) that the Director of Environment and Culture submit the Final LIP to the Mayor of London for final approval.

7. **Brent's Community Strategy 2006-10**

This report presented Brent's draft sustainable Community Strategy 2006-2010. The Strategy was developed by the Local Strategic Partnership, who approved the draft on 14th December 2005. The report provided background information and legal, financial and diversity implications.

Councillor John introduced the Strategy by drawing attention to the ambitions contained in it, being to make Brent:

a great place;
a borough of opportunity; and

an inclusive community

The Strategy had been enthusiastically endorsed by Partners for Brent and had been sent to the Council's partner agencies to consider. There remained one or two matters of detail to finalise.

Councillor R Blackman stated he strongly supported the principle of neighbourhood policing but submitted that it was not good enough to simply switch resources from one form of policing to another. Additional resources were required to counteract what was recognised as a high crime rate in the borough. He submitted a motion expressing condolences to the family of Tom Ap Pryce who had been murdered returning home from Kensal Green Station and calling for additional resources to be applied to cut crime.

Whilst acknowledging that the crime rate in the borough was too high attention was drawn to the productive partnership the Council had with the police and the good results this produced. The murder of Tom Ap Pryce was condemned as was the recent murder of a person in Willesden. The call for additional resources to support neighbourhood policing was supported. The Leader sought to amend the motion to include reference to the victims of other violent crime and Councillor R Blackman agreed to this amendment.

A view was expressed that the Council could no longer hope to deal with the crime situation in the borough by producing further plans and strategies but instead had to admit to the problem and seek additional police resources and increase the use of CCTV.

In response it was suggested that security around rail stations was a matter Partners for Brent could play an important role in addressing. It was pointed out that there was CCTV around Kensal Green Station but this had not stopped the crime taking place. The rail authorities needed to be made responsible for the proper monitoring of CCTV and the safety of passengers. The Executive was urged to request a meeting with the relevant rail authorities to explore how stations in the borough could be made safer.

The motion submitted by Councillor R Blackman, as amended, was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the draft Community Strategy 2006-2010 attached to the report be adopted.
- (ii) that this Council places on record heartfelt condolences to the family of Tom Ap Pryce who was savagely murdered in Bathurst Gardens whilst returning home from Kensal Green Station and to the victims and families of other senseless violent crime in the

borough; this Council applauds the detailed and thorough investigation being carried out by the Metropolitan Police in order to identify and bring the murderers to justice; this Council notes that this heinous crime has made all Brent residents feel less safe in going about their law abiding business; this Council notes that current proposals exist to transfer existing front line police to bring in Safer Neighbourhood policing; this Council believes that Safer Neighbourhood policing is to be welcomed but only if this is additional resource being applied to cut crime; this Council therefore calls for additional police resources to be made available for patrolling the streets in Brent, particularly after dark.

8. Question Time

The selected questions submitted under the provisions of Standing Order 39 had been circulated together with written responses from the respective Lead Members. Members were invited to ask supplementary questions.

The following two questions had been selected by the Leader of the Conservative Group.

Safer Neighbourhood teams – crime levels

The question from Councillor R Blackman asked for the comparative crime figures for those areas with Safer Neighbourhood teams and those without. Whilst supporting the Safer Neighbourhood teams, Councillor Blackman pointed out that with the exception of the Fryent area all those areas with such teams remained the highest crime areas and he wondered if they were doing the job for which they were intended. Each team comprised of only four personnel which was a small resource to combat crime. Councillor Blackman in his supplementary question asked if the Executive accepted that Safer Neighbourhood policing still remained to be proved, particularly in the light of the increase in violent crime.

Councillor Beswick (Lead Member for Crime Prevention and Public Safety) replied that he accepted it was too early to fully assess the effectiveness of Safer Neighbourhood policing but added that the success of the teams should not only be measured in terms of statistics. The teams spent a lot of their time working with the local community to reassure it, hear local people's concerns, issue leaflets informing people of what was happening in the area and none of this work was measured. Crime levels had reduced in all the areas the Safer Neighbourhood teams worked in and he fully supported them.

Wembley Stadium – TV Signal

The second question selected by the Leader of the Conservative Group was from Councillor Mendoza asking about the planning condition intended to rectify any deterioration in TV signals caused by the new Wembley Stadium. He expressed disappointment at the nature of the reply he had received and the poor reaction from Wembley National Stadium Ltd (WNSL). He contrasted this to the situation in Manchester where the developer of the City of Manchester Stadium had been required to visit each household affected and provide a solution. Councillor Mendoza in his supplementary question asked if WNSL would be pressurised to meet their obligations before they completed the stadium and moved on.

Councillor Jones (Lead Member for Environment, Planning and Culture) replied that she had attended meetings with local residents and was committed to discussing this matter further with the Planning Service and Barry Gardiner, MP. WNSL was due to carry out a survey of the households affected and then look to rectify the problem. She repeated that it was difficult to get the planning condition enforced because technology had since moved on but there was a commitment to resolving the problem.

The following question had been selected by the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group.

Redevelopment of Barham Park Estate - Maybank Open Space

Councillor Lorber had asked how the Council's named housing partner for the redevelopment of Barham Park estate could propose a development that far exceeded the scale of the original brief and proposed building on the Maybank open space. In the absence of Councillor Lorber the supplementary question was asked by Councillor Wharton. He asked if there were any proposals in the plans submitted by the developer to provide additional access to the estate in light of the greater number of homes proposed by the redevelopment.

Councillor Thomas (Lead Member for Housing and Customer Services) replied that it was proposed to compulsorily purchase some houses to allow a second access point onto the estate. Councillor Thomas stated that he could provide more information on this outside the meeting.

There then followed three questions selected from those submitted by Labour non-executive members.

Council Rent 2006/07

Councillor Harrod had asked what the rent increase/decrease would be for 2006 for people living in Council property. He stated that there was

over £12.5M of reserves and provisions within the housing account. He submitted that Government plans for a rent convergence and restructuring could be used to help those whose rents are higher than the capital value of their homes within an overall rent freeze. The officer recommendation to the Executive was for a rent increase of 4.54% despite rents in Brent having risen by more than the rate of inflation in the past 2 or 3 years. Councillor Harrod asked as his supplementary question when the hard pressed rentpayers of Brent would be relieved of year on year rent increases over and above that which they can afford.

Councillor Thomas (Lead Member for Housing and Customer Services) replied that the Council's ability to increase or decrease rents had been curtailed by a Government imposed regime for rent restructuring which included a conversion calculation to harmonise Council and Housing Association rents. The impact of this would be cushioned by the Government limiting rent increases to an average of 5%. The proposal being submitted to the Executive was in line with Government guidance. Councillor Thomas added that residents of the borough had received a good deal over the years with all the major estates regenerated. The proposed increase would amount to less than £4 per week.

Alcohol related illnesses

Councillor Crane had asked if consideration would be given to additional budgetary provision being made to improve services to local residents suffering from alcohol-related illnesses. He was pleased to hear that the Council took alcohol related illnesses seriously and provided effective services to sufferers.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Crane asked if the Lead Member agreed that the victims of alcohol abuse stood a better chance of recovery if they received the support of their colleagues but that if a recovering alcoholic was summarily dismissed in a humiliating way it would likely exacerbate the problem.

Councillor Fox (Lead Member for Adults, Health and Social Care) replied that he agreed with Councillor Crane's view and that efforts were made in Brent to treat those with alcohol related problems in an understanding way which was not the case in all areas of London.

Shortage of Football Pitches

Councillor J Long had asked what progress was being made with the planned changing rooms on Gibbons Recreation Ground and in Gladstone Park. She added that whilst it was good to hear progress was being made it had taken far too long. Several years had passed during which time people had not been able to play league football in

these parks because without changing rooms teams could not register into a league.

In her supplementary question she asked if the Lead Member would agree that the process for providing changing rooms was too slow and insufficiently match funded. She asked that toilet facilities for spectators and changing rooms be provided so that two performance indicators could be improved upon and that therefore in future sufficient funding should be provided.

Councillor Jones (Lead Member for Environment, Planning and Culture) replied that she shared the disappointment in the delays in providing some facilities but pointed to the many demands on the budget. She added that a number of sites in Gladstone Park had been prioritised for upgrading and agreed that facilities for spectators also needed to be considered. However there was the security aspect to consider. Councillor Jones stated that considerable extra resources had been put into parks but she was not aware that teams had been unable to register for a league.

The following four questions had been selected from the remaining questions submitted.

Waste Disposal

Councillor Van Colle had asked whether Brent faced closure of its rubbish landfill site within 5 to 10 years and whether this would be before large scale replacement recycling 'waste parks' and incineration plants would be available and where these would be situated. Councillor Van Colle added that the press had reported that the EU would impose 'waste parks' with reports of 300 being needed across the country at great expense. He submitted that he had not received a full answer to his question and pointed out that such provision would require serious consideration.

Councillor Van Colle's supplementary question was to ask for a full answer to his original questions.

Councillor Jones (Lead Member for Environment, Planning and Culture) replied that she did not know where other sites might be located. The current site would not shut so landfill would continue to be used. However the Council would have to continue to look at ways of reducing reliance on landfill through increasing recycling. She stated that waste disposal was a very technical subject and she could not give further detail at this stage.

Services available for recovering alcoholics

Councillor Cribbin had asked what support the Council offered to recovering alcoholics and how this compared to the services available

in Liberal Democrat controlled boroughs. She was pleased to hear that the Council took this problem seriously but was disappointed that there were not comparisons available.

Councillor Cribbin asked as her supplementary question whether the Lead Member agreed that the Liberal Democrats' sedulously fostered image of being a caring and compassionate party had taken a tumble following the cruel and humiliating treatment of their former Leader.

Councillor Fox (Lead Member for Adults, Health and Social Care) replied that he agreed with Councillor Cribbin and that the answer he had given to the original question showed the good work undertaken to help people with alcohol related illnesses in the borough.

Alcohol related illnesses

Councillor R Moher had asked if people suffering from alcohol related illnesses should be treated with compassion, particularly by their colleagues and asked for confirmation that Council employees suffering from such illnesses would be offered support. Councillor Moher stated she was pleased with the answer she had received, which showed the Council had a caring approach to this issue. She expressed the hope that other organisations adopted a similar approach.

Councillor John (Leader) replied that it had been an awful episode to see the former Liberal Democrat Leader, Charles Kennedy, let down by his colleagues and expressed the hope that such a thing would not happen within the Council.

Sex Offenders

Councillor Mrs Fernandes had asked what cross checks are made in Brent's schools to make sure sex offenders were barred from working in Brent. Councillor Mrs Fernandes suggested people now had less confidence in the Secretary of State for Education and Skills ensuring sex offenders were not allowed to work with children. She stated that it had been believed that anybody on the section 99 list would not be allowed to work in schools but it now appeared this was not the case. She asked as her supplementary question what steps the Council was taking to establish whether any of the foreign teachers working in Brent had a criminal record.

Councillor Lyon (Lead Member for Children and Families) replied that he had given a very thorough answer to the original question and was not able to add to this on the specific issue of foreign nationals working in schools. Any additional information he could obtain he would ensure was passed on. In the meantime Councillor Lyon stated that he understood that the statement given by the Education Secretary in Parliament had been well received. He quoted passages from the

speech and repeated that he was satisfied that no persons who posed a risk to children were working in Brent schools.

9. Reports from the Executive

(i) *Wembley update*

Councillor R S Patel reported that progress continued to be made on building the new National Stadium with a decision on whether it would be completed in time for the Cup Final likely at the end of January. Meanwhile arrangements for management of the early events were being put in place.

Councillor R S Patel reported that the Planning Committee had agreed the detailed plans for the first residential block on the site of the old Bingo Hall immediately adjoining the Arena. The proposal was for an 8 storey residential block to include 296 flats (of which 141 would be affordable), a nursery, an employment agency, a retail unit and 8 live-in/work units.

Councillor R S Patel added that the refurbishment of the Wembley Arena was nearing completion, with the first event scheduled for March. The temporary Wembley Arena Pavilion had now been dismantled and removed from the site.

Councillor R S Patel reported on the three station improvement projects. The capacity works at Wembley Park station were largely complete, with ongoing works to improve the façade of the old station building, strengthen the road bridge and create a public transport interchange. Wembley Stadium Station and the White Horse Bridge were also expected to be finished by March. The capacity works at Wembley Central station were on schedule, and the St Modwen's development of Central Square was now on site.

Finally, Councillor R S Patel reported that the Government's Casino Advisory Panel had written to all local authorities asking them to express an interest in hosting a new casino. Brent had expressed an interest in a regional casino only, on the basis that it was only a regional facility that would deliver the conference and other benefits set out in the Wembley vision. Full economic and social impact assessments were being undertaken in order to assess whether to submit a full statement of case by the Advisory Panel's deadline of 31st March 2006.

(ii) *Ministerial visit*

Councillor John reported on the visit to the borough by Phil Woolas, MP, Junior Minister for Local Government. He had visited the City Academy, a children's centre, seen the regeneration programme on St Raphael's estate and the

Wembley development. He had commented on the cleanliness of the streets.

(iii) *2004/05 Joint Audit and Inspection Letter*

Councillor John referred to the unqualified report which accompanied the Joint Audit and Inspection Letter for 2004/05. She read extracts from it which showed the Council in a good light and graded it as improving well on a 3* rating.

(iv) *Consideration of Second City Academy in Brent*

Councillor Lyon said that the issue of a second city academy had now been debated many times, the first at an earlier meeting of Full Council at which he had invited the opposition parties to seek a confidential briefing from the Director of Children and Families. He suggested that the arguments against the proposal amounted to denying the borough a new school. All the sites put forward as alternatives had similar issues attached to them. He felt the opposition parties did not recognise their responsibilities on this issue. The borough needed a new school and the Administration was committed to providing additional school places for Brent residents. An expression of interest had consequently been submitted to the Department for Education and Skills. Councillor Lyon stated that the Wembley Park sports ground site was suitable for the proposal being the right size and affordable. No other site met this criteria.

10. **Report from Chair of Overview Committee**

There was no report from the Chair to this meeting.

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

Councillor Kansagra submitted his report. The report included information on the London-wide budget scrutiny event held on 1st December 2005. This event was hosted by Brent, in conjunction with the Association of London Government and the London Scrutiny Network. Councillor Kansagra thanked the officers who had worked hard to make the event a success, especially Lorraine Brook from Legal and Democratic Services.

The other item reported to Council concerned the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel's consideration of the called in decisions of the Executive on the Expression of Interest in a 2nd City Academy. Councillor Kansagra pointed out this was open for discussion under the general debate to follow.

RESOLVED:-

that the report from Scrutiny be noted.

12. General Debate

Members debated the items included under the reports from the Executive and Chair of Scrutiny Committee.

A view was expressed that the Wembley Park former LT sports ground was the only suitable site for a new school. Brent was becoming a more popular place to live and parents did not want to send their children to schools out of the borough. Wembley was likely to be the transport hub of the borough making the site accessible to a wide area. The point was made that schools in the south of the borough had been closed by previous administrations and in one case the site no longer existed because houses had been built on it. Some Members expressed their lack of enthusiasm for the academy concept but recognised this was the only realistic way the Council could create a new school and ensure adequate school places existed for the future.

It was put to the meeting that the concept of academy schools was not under consideration. The catchment area for the proposed new school extended into the south of the borough but the proposal was to build a school in the north of the borough and it was suggested this made no sense. It was reported that at Scrutiny, Members had agreed that the Wembley Park sports ground was the wrong site and Scrutiny had asked the Executive to reconsider this. It was suggested that the Executive had not done this and consequently it was submitted that proper consideration had not been given to using the Guinness site or the Palace of Arts site. It was said that this was because of plans to accommodate a super casino in the Wembley area. The Unisys site was almost in the centre of the proposed catchment area and next door to Bridge Park which had facilities the school could use. It was submitted that there were alternative sites available and some Members were opposed to the chosen site because it was the wrong site.

It was acknowledged that the Government had set criteria whereby the only practical way of building a new school was through the academy process. Doubts were expressed by some Members as to the effectiveness of academy schools especially given that the concept had not existed for long enough to be able to draw firm conclusions. Children deserved the best and it was questioned why the idea was being further pursued before it could be evaluated. The Wembley Park sports ground was outside the proposed catchment area given the greatest demand would appear to be coming from the Harlesden and Stonebridge areas. No proper consideration had been given to how far pupils would have to travel.

It was said that there was absolutely no disagreement at Scrutiny about the provision of a city academy but that a motion had been agreed to request the Executive to look again at the site. However it was

submitted that there were young people from areas of the borough that would want to access the new school and if it was situated on the Unisys' site they would be faced with a journey that would pass by the Wembley Park sports ground site. It was also pointed out that large numbers of young people already travelled some distances to school. Any argument about loss of open space was countered by the point being made that if a new school was built on the Wembley Park sports ground site the remaining area would be improved and made more accessible. The point was made that, in any event, if the site did have limitations the planning process would determine its suitability and what might need to be done to accommodate a new school.

The Chair of the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel expressed her wish that the recommendations coming out of the Panel should not be ignored but she felt that they had been. Referring the matter to Council offered a further opportunity for Members to send a strong message back to the Executive. It was important that the Council worked together on such an issue to ensure the new Children and Families Department was able to develop in a consensual way.

Members stressed the need for a new school. Children needed to be educated and live in a healthy environment and they would suffer if a new school was not built.

Further doubt was cast on the effectiveness of academies but the point was again made that if a second one was to be built in the borough, it should be on the most suitable site. Scrutiny had recommended the Executive to look for an alternative site but the Executive had dismissed this. It was suggested that the use of a particular site had become more important than concentrating on the need to provide a new school. Reference was made to exam performances at the Capital City Academy and to the objection heard by Scrutiny from a representative of teachers who were against the provision of a second academy school.

The Executive was asked if local people had been asked what they thought about the Council expressing an interest in attracting the 'super casino' to the Wembley area.

It was suggested that the response of the Executive and the Lead Member for Children and Families to the request to look for alternative sites had been to reject this without any proper investigation. This called in to question the purpose of scrutiny or the effectiveness of Full Council if the Executive could act in this way. It was submitted that there were better sites but the Council was being directed towards the Wembley Park sports ground site.

A view was put that instead of having a sensible debate on the issue, the matter had become a political football. The Council had heard that Members were generally not against an academy school but were

more concerned with the site. Scrutiny had considered this matter at which the co-opted members had been able to have an input. Questions had been answered by the Director of Children and Families so the idea that no further consideration had been given to the matter was not correct.

As Chair of Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Kansagra responded to the debate. He referred to the Executive's style of decision-making within the Council which he said led to decisions being made efficiently but without proper consultation with local residents. The first most people knew about the proposals was through the newspapers. He submitted that the matter should have been reported to the area consultative forums. The need for a school was supported and there was no fundamental objection to an academy school. The dispute centred on the choice of the site. He submitted that no proper costings had been considered on the choice of the site but everything had been put in place to make the choice of site look most favourable. The issue had been called in for scrutiny and referred to Full Council with no effect on the decision. He stated that the Executive should properly reconsider its decision and moved the motion circulated in Councillor R Blackman's name calling on the Executive to reconsider the site options for the development of a second city academy to include the Park Royal site, the Palace of Arts site and the Unisys site and further calling on the Executive to reconsider the catchment area of any proposed city academy.

Councillor John responded to the general debate. She explained that Section 106 monies from the stadium development and the Quintain developments had contributed towards funding the Wembley Park sports ground site and that this was a more suitable site than the Palace of Arts site which in any case was not available. Existing users of the green space would be offered alternative sites. It was clear that most of the existing site was under-used and a second academy operating similarly to the Capital City Academy would open up access to the site both during and outside school hours. The former Guinness Brewery site was in a poor location to serve the children of Brent. Councillor John pointed out that most secondary school children did not travel to school by car. She stated that it was too early to see the results of academy schools but it was clear that young people were enthusiastic and engaged with the facilities on offer within the schools. She pointed out that many children travelled from the Stonebridge area to Copland Community school and that the Press Road area and the Wembley area were included in the proposed catchment area. The South Kilburn area would also generate an increase in the numbers of young people needing a school place. Finally, she stated that the Capital City Academy was working well and the Council had a good working relationship with the governors of that school.

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

RESOLVED:-

that the reports from the Executive and the Scrutiny Committee be noted and that no further views be submitted on the decisions of the Executive arising from the report on Consideration of Second City Academy in Brent.

13. Motion Selected by Leaders of the Opposition Groups

(i) *Protecting our Environment and Improving Sport*

Councillor R Blackman introduced his motion which called for a review of open spaces in the borough to ensure they were used to their maximum potential. He stated that action needed to be taken to protect green open spaces to make the borough a fit and healthy borough with opportunities for young people.

The Lead Member for Children and Families, Councillor Lyon, pointed out that the Capital City Academy Sports College and the proposals for the redevelopment of Copland Community School minimised encroachment on to existing open space whilst at the same time enhancing the open space. At Wembley Manor Primary School the generous site had been preserved. He stated that two years ago the Council had appointed to a new post of Sports/PE Adviser. This created an important linkage between children and the environment. He emphasised the point made in the previous debate that the Capital City Academy opened its facilities to other children in the area. He then referred to the rebuilding of the Willesden Sports Centre, football coaching and the Government initiative to provide two hours of PE time in schools as evidence of meeting standards for sporting activities.

Further reference was made to the Wembley Park sports ground site and how schools could be encouraged to use that site more intensively rather than give it up for the building of a new school. A point was made that there was too much emphasis on the provision of sites for the playing of sports and not enough on encouraging young people to take up sport. A big issue that needed addressing was the lack of revenue resources to support organised sporting activities. The soon to be introduced Council Tax levy to contribute towards the cost of holding the Olympics would amount to some £1.8m a year for Brent residents and it was suggested this would have greater benefit if used to bring in coaching time and organisers to run events on currently under-used open space that already existed in the borough.

The Lead Member for Environment, Planning and Culture, Councillor Jones, stated that no one would disagree that it was important for open space to be well used and maintained. However, such a review was ongoing by means of the Local Development Framework which was soon to be endorsed by the Council and put out to public consultation. This would seek to protect open space as did the parks strategy and the sports strategy sought to utilise such open space. The allotments policy had led to improvements and the Council's playing pitch strategy protected playing fields. The borough had been surveyed and action taken to improve facilities. All this activity sought to maximise the usage of the borough's open spaces. Councillor Jones accepted there was a lot still to be done but stated that the Council had made substantial progress.

It was felt that the opportunity created by the London Olympics required the Council to review its green open spaces so that young people could enjoy them and stay healthy. However, it was pointed out that sport was for all and not just the young. People did not need organised sports in order to keep fit. The point was emphasised that amenity space and open space in the borough was important to the environment and should be available to all residents. In the past provision had been made for large parks but the Council now neglected to do this. There was a rising problem of obesity in young people and they had nowhere to play. Given the new Wembley Stadium and the London Olympics, it was stated that sport and open space should be at the heart of Council policies.

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

(ii) ***Protect our Open Spaces***

Councillor Lorber introduced his motion by stating there were plenty of examples where open space was being built on despite the Council's undertaking to protect it. The Copland Community School redevelopment had already been mentioned where local people had fought to protect the open space. It was clear that money threatened the provision of open space. An example was the redevelopment of Barham Park estate where a feasibility study had proposed demolition of the existing houses and replacement with 350 new flats and yet a housing association was allowed to submit a planning application to build 600 units including building on the Maybank open space. This had now been withdrawn but a scheme for 409 units was now being considered.

It was disputed whether the Council had serious intentions to protect open spaces in the borough. This was countered by the

view that open space needed to be protected as much as possible. Nevertheless even where a development encroached on to open space it afforded the opportunity to improve the amenity value of the open space. The rumour that the Council intended to allow Maybank open space to be built on overshadowed the intention of the Council to rebuild the estate, which would result in improved amenity facilities in the area.

The Lead Member for Housing and Customer Services, Councillor Thomas, stated that the proposals submitted by the housing association were not about building on the Maybank open space but about rebuilding the housing estate. The Council had in place mechanisms to protect its open space and to consult with all stakeholders on such a redevelopment. Options for the funding of the redevelopment had to be considered. The current proposal envisaged taking 0.3 of a hectare of the open space from the 3.9 hectares that existed and in return enhancing the football and cricket facilities. It was open to anybody to weigh up the advantage that would be gained by losing a small amount of the open space.

The Lead Member for Environment, Planning and Culture, Councillor Jones, stated that there had been greater protection of open space in recent years. The proposed Copland Community school redevelopment would result in less than 10% loss of open space with better facilities provided in return. The Granville development utilised a poorly used area of open space in order to provide a kick-start for the wider redevelopment of the Kilburn area and in due course the open space would be replaced. The Cavendish development had been rejected by the Council but the developer had appealed to the Planning Inspectorate. The situation with regard to the Maybank open space was as reported by Councillor Thomas. Councillor Jones submitted that in some instances the loss of a small amount of open space was outweighed by the wider benefits it brought.

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

The meeting ended at 9.40 pm

C MOLONEY
Chair

Mins0506/Council/full/cm23jal