

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, 26th June 2006 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor B Joseph

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor H B Patel

COUNCILLORS:

Ahmed	John
Allie	Jones
Anwar	Kansagra
Arnold	Tancred
Mrs Bacchus	Leaman
Baker	D Long
Bessong	J Long
Beswick	Lorber
Blackman	Malik
D Brown	Matthews
V Brown	Mistry
Butt	J Moher
Castle	R Moher
Chavda	Moloney
Clues	Motley
Colwill	O'Sullivan
Corcoran	Pagnamenta
Coughlin	C J Patel
Crane	H M Patel
Detre	Powney
Dunwell	Ms C Shaw
Eniola	Singh
Farrell	Sneddon
Mrs U Fernandes	Steel
Fox	Thomas
Hashmi	Tullett
Hirani	Van Colle
Jackson	Wharton

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Cummins and Mendoza.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the meetings of full Council held on 24th April, 17th May and 22nd May 2006 be confirmed as true and accurate records.

3. **Declarations of Interests**

At this meeting there were none.

5. **Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor reported with sorrow the death of Shree Nalinikant Tribhovandas Pandya, MBE who passed away peacefully on 27th May 2006 aged 90. Mr Pandya was a well loved and respected community leader and instrumental in the building of the Sanatan Hindu Mandir Temple in Ealing Road.

The Mayor reported that the Queen's Birthday Honours List included many Brent residents, among them:

Mr Russell Henderson - services to music.

Mr Richard Colwell – services to education.

Dr John Curtis – services to museums.

Ms Elcena Jeffers – services to the community in South Kilburn.

Mrs Pam Jordan – services to Further Education.

Mrs Angela Fugaccia – services to hospitality industry

Mr Martin Polden – services to environmental law

Ms Janine Irons – services to music

Mr Leo Scoon – services to Law

Dr Aruna Ajitsaria – services to Education and is Deputy Head Teacher at Preston Park Primary School.

She passed on the Council's congratulations to each and every person who has been honoured by the Queen.

The Mayor was pleased to announce that her chosen charities for her Mayoral year would be the Down's Syndrome Association and the Shooting Star Children's Hospice.

The Mayor announced that her Civic Service would be held on Saturday 30th September at 2pm at the Church of the Transfiguration, Kensal Rise. All Members were welcome and an invitation would be sent out nearer the time.

6. The Executive

Councillor Lorber explained that, following the outcome of the local elections, he had tried to establish an all party executive to reflect the wishes of the electorate. This had not been possible so he moved the motion circulated proposing a joint Executive comprising members from the Liberal Democrat and Conservative Groups and putting forward a policy programme for the new joint administration for 2006-2010.

Councillor Blackman seconded the motion and emphasised the importance of forming an Executive and that the proposal before the Council was a result of discussions held since the elections.

Councillor John stated that she fully accepted the outcome of the elections which saw Labour returned as the largest Opposition Group and that she had been opposed to proposals for an all party Executive because the Liberal Democrat Group in Brent had a poor track record of working with the other political parties.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the following members be appointed to the Executive:

Councillor	(Portfolio)
Lorber (Leader)	Corporate Strategy and Policy Co-ordination
Blackman (Deputy Leader)	Resources
V Brown	Crime Prevention and Public Safety
Colwill	Adults, Health and Social Care
Castle	Human Resources and Diversity, Local Democracy and Consultation
Van Colle	Environment, Planning and Culture
D Brown	Highways and Transportation
Wharton	Children and Families
O'Sullivan	Regeneration and Economic Development
Allie	Housing and Customer Services

- (ii) that the formation of the new joint administration and the policy programme for the joint administration 2006-2010 be noted.

6. Appointment to Committees etc/Appointment of Chairs/Vice Chairs

RESOLVED:

That the following appointments be made:

Committee	Councillor
Alcohol & Entertainment Licensing	Colwill (1 st alternate for Baker) Mrs Fernandes (2 nd alternate for Baker) Malik (1 st alternate for Mistry) Dunwell (2 nd alternate for Mistry) Kansagra (1 st alternate for H Patel) Mendoza (2 nd alternate for H Patel) O'Sullivan (1 st alternate for Steel) Detre (2 nd alternate for Steel)
Planning	Hirani (to replace Allie) Bessong (to replace V Brown as 2 nd alternate for Anwar) Matthews (to replace Hirani as 2 nd alternate to Cummins) CJ Patel (to replace D Brown as 1 st alternate for Hirani) Tullet (to replace CJ Patel as 2 nd alternate to Hirani) Dunn (to replace Wharton as 1 st alternate for Hashmi) Pagnamenta (to replace Lorber as 2 nd alternate for Hasmi)
Overview and Scrutiny	Jackson (to replace Castle) Sneddon (to replace Lorber) D Long (to replace Crane) Shah (to replace Anwar as 2 nd alternate for Clues) Corcoran (to replace Shaw as 2 nd alternate for Dunn) Tullett (1 st alternate for Jackson) Hashmi (2 nd alternate for Jackson) Hirani (to replace Jackson as 1 st alternate for Leaman) Bessong (to replace V Brown as 2 nd alternate for Leaman) Motley (1 st alternate for Sneddon) CJ Patel (2 nd alternate for Sneddon) Anwar (to replace Sneddon as 1 st alternate for Pagnamenta) Tancred (to replace Tullett as 2 nd alternate for Pagnamenta)
Standards	Leaman
School Admission Forum	Arnold D Long Remove Motley
School Organisation Committee	Arnold Jones Remove Tullett
Trading Standards Joint Advisory Board	Remove Bessong
Northwick Park Joint Committee	CJ Patel (to replace Detre)

ALG Leaders Committee	Lorber
ALG Transport and Environment Committee	Van Colle Blackman (Deputy) Kansagra (Deputy) Colwill (Deputy) O'Sullivan (Deputy)
Black and Minority Ethnic SUCF	Bessong (Chair) Butt
Children SUCF	Arnold (Chair) Tancred
Disability and Mental Health SUCF	Mistry (Chair) Sneddon
Pensioners SUCF	Clues (Chair) Singh
Private Sector Housing SUCF	J Long (Chair) Cummins
Voluntary Sector Liaison SUCF	Colwill (Chair) Motley Fox
Youth Matters 2 SUCF	Matthews (Chair) Butt
Harlesden ACF	Powney (Chair) J Long
Kilburn & Kensal ACF	Pagnamenta (Chair) Arnold
Kingsbury & Kenton ACF	R Moher
Wembley ACF	Shah
Willesden ACF	Sneddon (Chair) Jones

7. **Statement of Community Involvement**

The purpose of the report put before Members was to inform them that a binding report had been issued by the Planning Inspector, following the Independent Examination on the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The changes recommended by the Inspector had been incorporated and, consequently, the amended SCI was now considered statutorily sound. Full Council at its meeting on 22nd May 2006 deferred a similar report in order that further consideration could be given to it. Some amendments have subsequently been made to clarify certain aspects and these changes are shown in bold type in the report. Full Council, in light of the amended report, was being asked to adopt the revised SCI which would then be published formally.

Some Members expressed continuing concern that the Statement should not be too prescriptive and should allow flexibility in developing new ways of involving the public. However it was pointed out that the issue had been the subject of full public consultation and a public hearing and so it was time to move forward in adopting it.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the Planning Inspector's binding report attached as appendix 1 to the Director of Environment and Culture's report be noted;
- (ii) that the revised Statement of Community Involvement, incorporating the Inspector's recommendations, as attached to the report submitted be adopted and published.

8. Best Value Performance Plan

The report introduced the Performance Plan for 2005/07. The Plan contained details of Brent Council's performance over the last year and set targets for improving services for the next three years. The Council was obliged to publish the Plan each year by 31st June. Due to the tight timeframes, the data in the Plan was still being verified upon production of the covering report and was subsequently circulated to all Members of the Council.

The Director of Policy and Regeneration introduced the item. He stated that the production of the Plan was driven by external deadlines and it was the responsibility of the scrutiny function to keep the Plan under review. The Executive received a separate set of performance indicators called 'Vital Signs'.

In discussion, the comment was made that because of the timescales involved there had been no time to scrutinise the Plan and that as a consequence it was an underdeveloped document. It was also considered that in many cases the indicators were too centralised and did not reflect local issues.

RESOLVED:

that the Council's performance against key national performance indicators be noted and the targets for the next 3 years be agreed.

9. Municipal Calendar of Meetings for 2006/07

The Council had before them a slightly amended draft Calendar of Meetings for 2006/07 from that submitted to the Council meeting on 22nd May 2006.

The Mayor proposed the calendar for adoption subject to the following changes:

Planning Committee (Policy) moved from 4th October to 5th October 2006, and
Highways Committee moved from 3rd October to 12th October 2006.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the draft calendar of meetings as amended for 2006/07 be agreed, subject to any further changes found necessary to make prior to publication of the Council's diary;
- (ii) to note that meetings of full Council are scheduled to take place on the following dates:-

11th September 2006
30th October 2006
27th November 2006
22nd January 2007
5th March 2007 (Council Tax and Budget setting)
23rd April 2007
16th May 2007 (Annual - Mayor making)
21st May 2007 (Constitution and Appointments)

10. **Motions Selected by the Group Leaders**

- (i) *Brent teaching Primary Care Trust Budget Deficit*

Councillor Clues on behalf of the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group put the motion. He stated that the Government's Public Health White Paper encouraged the voluntary sector to get involved in the provision of services so it was disappointing to see the tPCT having to cut its joint commissioning budget to find the savings it was being forced by the Government to make. He urged that the work of the voluntary sector be recognised and supported through the Council showing corporate leadership by scrutinising the proposals of the tPCT and to produce an overarching health strategy for Brent.

Specific reference was made to the work of the Brent Citizens Advice Bureau which it was submitted provided good value for money and empowered and helped people. This led to long term improvements in the health of those people. Cutting the service would lead to higher costs than the money saved.

Councillor Fox moved an amendment to the motion which sought to acknowledge the success of the tPCT in showing a surplus this year but noting the need for it to find £5M to deal with previous overspends. It acknowledged that the new funding formula had penalised the tPCT and that the previous Council Administration had lobbied against this. Councillor Fox submitted that the motion before Council should recognise the massive improvements in health care over the past few years and congratulate the tPCT for its part in this. He added that

there was nothing new in calling for an overarching health strategy for Brent and that this was already being developed.

At this point in the meeting Councillor Mrs Fernandes declared a personal interest in the item and left the Council Chamber for the duration of the remainder of the discussion on the item and voting thereon.

Further concern was expressed about the unacceptable nature of the cuts being forced on the tPCT. However it was also further pointed out that the tPCT had achieved its financial targets and was one of the most successful tPCTs in London. Nevertheless, it had to play its part in the overall NHS recovery plan. New facilities had opened and others were planned which demonstrated the strength of the tPCT. The cuts proposed were in services the tPCT were not required to provide and it was submitted this was preferable to cutting frontline services.

The amendment moved by Councillor Fox was put to the vote and declared LOST.

RESOLVED:

This Council expresses its grave concern at the potential impact of plans by Brent teaching Primary Care Trust to tackle a deficit totalling some £22 million.

The Council notes that the need to find such savings, in priority to meeting local demand, is being forced on the tPCT by the Labour Government, and will have to be done if the tPCT are to avoid formal recovery procedures and further imposed regimes from the Government.

This Council accepts however its role in scrutinising and commenting on such plans with a view to protecting vital local services. With this in mind, the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel, once appointed, is urged to consider and comment on:

- proposals by Brent tPCT to slash £800,000 from the Joint Commissioning Budget that supports local voluntary services
- a proposed cut of £53,000 to Brent Citizen's Advice Bureau that would see the end of advice surgeries in GP surgeries, and further proposed cuts to organisations such as Brent Bereavement Service, Safe Haven and many others
- the value of preventative and community services and Drug and Alcohol strategies in tackling the causes of

health problems at an early stage, providing support, and preventing loss of life and health

- the importance of funding for such services as an effective use of resources that reduces pressures on local Hospitals and Accident and Emergency departments

The Council further calls for an overarching Health Strategy for Brent to be developed which :

- recognises the importance of preventative strategies and early, pre-crisis, non-statutory intervention
- involves the voluntary sector in service planning
- harnesses the contributions of health, local authority and voluntary bodies, and identifies and aims to fill any gaps in provision
- reflects the community outreach that Brent's voluntary and support services provide
- assesses the contribution made by the voluntary and community sector in reducing health inequalities across Brent's diverse communities, and the potential to do so to a greater degree within a proper, strategically planned approach.

(ii) *Labour Manifesto*

Councillor John stated that upon submitting her motion the formation of a joint Liberal Democrat and Conservative Administration had not been proposed. In the absence of any leadership of the Council a list of issues of concern to the Liberal Democrat Group had been circulated. In forming an Executive, a more substantial list had been submitted, which she claimed included a number of elements from the Labour manifesto. However, the list still lacked vision and ambition and in moving her motion Councillor John made it clear that she would lead the Labour Group in constructive opposition.

In response it was suggested that the new Administration would provide better value and that it would now be more appropriate for Councillor John to withdraw her motion. It was agreed by some Members that the results of the election which saw the party attracting the lowest percentage vote winning the most seats was a bizarre outcome and reflected a flawed voting system. The Liberal Democrat Party had called for a change in the voting system and continued to do so but at the same time had learnt how to use the present system to its advantage. Tribute was paid to the new Liberal Democrat councillors.

Councillor Tullett spoke in support of the Liberal Democrat pledge to protect the environment and asked why the previous

Administration had promoted the building of tower blocks in the borough. She moved an amendment to the motion circulated in the name of Councillor Lorber.

It was pointed out that no other party had presented a manifesto for the local elections and the working arrangements for the new Executive questioned.

The amendment moved by Councillor Tullett was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

This Council notes the result of the recent local elections in which Labour polled 36.7% of the votes cast compared with 29.5% for the Conservatives and 29.0% for the Liberal Democrats. Nonetheless, this produced an outcome in which the Liberal Democrats secured the largest number of seats thus demonstrating the fact that our electoral system does not always result in the most popular party winning the most seats. However, the Council believes that the public will expect that, as the largest group, the Liberal Democrats should form an Administration and that they should attempt to do so. It is noted that they have so far failed to do this.

In addition to note:

1. that the Labour Party was again soundly rejected by the people of Brent at the 2006 local elections, and that Labour politicians only ever whinge about the electoral system when they lose an election. If Labour councillors are concerned about the unfair electoral system, they should support the Liberal Democrat campaign to change it.
2. that in the first 2 years of the last Labour Administration, Labour councillors increased Brent's Council Tax by a massive 30%, and that Labour's Council Tax increases over 4 years were substantially in excess of the rate of inflation.
3. that Tony Blair was forced to sack the Labour Home Secretary while Brent Labour candidates were delivering a leaflet with his picture on it, because of Labour's abysmal failure to tackle crime and release of dangerous individuals into the community, then failure to find them.
4. that the Labour Party has failed to provide sufficient school places in Brent, and is denying many Brent schools of the capital funding they need, resulting in almost 500 young people being without a school place in a Brent school at the beginning of this academic year.
5. that despite their pledge to protect open spaces and sports fields, the Labour Party in Brent approved the

- building on the Copland School playing fields in the process imposing a 28 storey tower on the area against the wishes of local people, while planning to build a City Academy on playing fields in Wembley.
6. that despite their 'green' words, Labour also actively supported overdevelopment on the Barham Park Estate, and building on Maybank open space.
 7. that there is no mention of a super casino in the Labour manifesto despite the fact Labour councillors are trying to impose it on Wembley and ignoring massive local opposition to the scheme.
 8. that despite numerous promises, Labour failed to clean up Brent.
 9. that the Labour Party failed to provide improved public toilet facilities in Brent – despite this being a high priority issue for local people.
 10. that despite empty promises about involving local people, the Labour consultation on the proposed 26 storey Queens Park Tower was a sham. Labour have failed to listen to the clear voice of Queens Park residents, who reject the Tower proposals and regard Labour's 'stakeholder forum' consultation as a sham.
 11. that despite their so called 'new deal for young and old', Labour failed to support organisations such as the Sudbury Neighbourhood Centre who serve Brent's elderly and disabled residents, and sat by while many voluntary groups went to the wall.

For all these reasons and more, this Council rejects the Labour manifesto as being unsuitable for the people of Brent.

(iii) *Knives and Other Weapons*

Councillor Blackman made clear his intent to use the provision to submit motions to Full Council for the benefit of Brent and its residents. Brent had a serious problem with guns and knives. He wanted to know why the full complement of safe neighbourhood police officers had not been appointed when people had paid for them through their Council tax. In addition it was important that the Council considered what it could do to combat crime, especially as submitted by Councillor Blackman when the Government had failed in this.

Councillor V Brown expressed support for the motion but moved an amendment to add to it. She felt street wardens should be given more powers.

Reference was made to the sentencing policy of the Courts and it was claimed that violent criminals could in some cases avoid going to jail just by paying a fine.

It was argued that whilst those that carried guns and knives posed a real danger the issue to be addressed was why people felt the need to do so and whether improved services and education might discourage this practice. Nevertheless it was put that for many years now people had been calling for more police. It was pointed out that knives were openly sold at Wembley market and nothing was being done to stop this. Residents of the borough needed greater protection from being attacked.

Councillor Powney moved an amendment to the motion by stating that he supported the majority of the motion but considered the third paragraph was designed simply to criticise the Mayor of London. He referred to the 5 points listed in the motion and outlined the initiatives of previous Labour Administration in support of these. He proposed adding a sixth point calling for an examination of how the rail safety partnership could further enhance security in and around rail stations.

The amendment to the motion moved by Councillor Powney was put to the vote and declared LOST.

The amendment to the motion moved by Councillor V Brown was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

This Council expresses sympathy to the family of murdered Special Constable Nisha Patel-Nasri and expresses outrage that such attacks can take place.

This Council strongly supports all measures to remove knives and other weapons via amnesty or other means to reduce the potential for criminal attacks.

This Council also reiterates its support for the roll out of Safer Neighbourhood policing but believes that this should be additional resources and not replacing existing policing. This Council notes the increase in Council tax precept being levied at present justified by the additional police resources but also notes that Brent still does not have a full complement of six police officers for each Safer Neighbourhood police team. This Council notes that most of the Safer Neighbourhood police teams have been launched with either two or three police officers despite the hike in Council Tax for which residents are being forced to pay. Furthermore, most police teams will not reach the full complement of six police officers until next year.

This Council further notes that Brent's street wardens have no enforcement powers.

This Council believes that a review of the resources currently being applied by Brent in relation to safer neighbourhood initiatives and anti social behaviour generally should be conducted as part of our Overview and Scrutiny process and that all options should be considered on applying more resources to fighting crime including:-

1. An examination of the current Safer Neighbourhood programme and the resources being applied.
2. Further measures to combat graffiti.
3. Controlled Drinking Zones to be examined as a way forward in particular parts of Brent.
4. An examination of options for additional Council-funded police resources.
5. Resources applied to parks and open spaces for security.
6. An examination of the relative merits and effectiveness of Police Community Support Officers and street wardens in combating crime and providing assurance.

This Council therefore requests the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, once appointed, to set up a task group to examine the above details and report back in the Autumn.

The meeting ended at 8.55pm

B JOSEPH
Mayor