

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, 22nd January 2007 at 7.15 pm**

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor B Joseph

COUNCILLORS:

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

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Corcoran, Coughlin, Detre, Mistry, CJ Patel, HB Patel, Singh, Shah, Steel and Tancred.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Councillor Crane pointed out that at the last meeting he had accepted the advice of the Borough Solicitor and left the chamber during the general debate when the PCT cutbacks were discussed. However he did not consider he had a prejudicial interest and asked for further legal advice on this point. Councillor Mrs Fernandes asked for an amendment to the minutes to show she had also left the chamber during discussion of the same item.

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the meeting of full Council held on 27th November 2006 be confirmed as a true and accurate record, subject to recording that Councillor Mrs Fernandes left the chamber during the debate on the PCT cutbacks because she considered herself to have a prejudicial interest by virtue of being an employee of the trust.

3. **Declarations of Interests**

The following declarations were made:

Councillor	Organisation/Subject
Arnold	Kilburn Park Foundation School governor
Bacchus	Chalkhill Infants/Primary School governor
Baker	Mount Stewart Infants school governor
Blackman	Wembley Manor Infants School governor Preston Manor High School governor Wembley Manor temporary governing body
Clues	St Mary C of E Primary School foundation governor
Colwill	Brent Educational Tutorial Service Daughter attends College Green Nursery school
Cummins	Paddington Churches Housing Association
Crane	Brent Primary Care Trust (non-executive director)

Farrell	Wykeham Primary School governor
Mrs Fernandes	Brent Primary Care Trust (employee) St Gregory's RC High School governor
Fox	Hoffman Foundation for Autism
Hashmi	London Music Society (Director)
John	Stonebridge Primary School governor Grandson attends Northview Primary School
Jones	Preston Manor High School governor St Andrew and St Francis Primary School governor
Joseph	Grandchildren attend St Joseph RC Schools and St Robert Southwell RC Primary School
D Long	Capital City Academy trustee Mitchell Brook Primary School governor
J Long	Brent Housing Partnership Board Fortunegate Community Housing Mora Primary school governor
Lorber	Barham Primary School governor
J Moher	Oliver Goldsmith Primary School governor Wembley High Technology College governor
R Moher	Wembley High Technology College, chair of governors
Moloney	St Joseph Primary School governor
O'Sullivan	Chalkhill Primary School governor
Thomas	Willow Housing Association Sutherland Housing Association
Wharton	Employee of KPMG Fryent Primary School governor Sudbury Primary School governor

5. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor wished everyone a happy new year.

The Mayor reported on her attendance at the birthday party held for Nellie Washbourne who celebrated her 103rd birthday and was a life long resident of Stonebridge. Members passed on their congratulations on reaching such an age.

The Mayor reported on the mini tornado that swept through an area in Kensal Rise on 7th December, causing considerable damage. More than 60 staff from across the council responded to the emergency. Surveyors ensured the structural safety of buildings, tree surgeons removed fallen trees and StreetCare began the massive clean up. By 20th December, collections of rubbish had been completed in all the roads affected by the tornado and a final cleaning team dealt with remaining debris in the area on Saturday 23rd December. The Mayor drew attention to the appeal launched by the Willesden and Brent Times with support from the Council and NatWest Bank for funds to help those displaced and made homeless by the tornado. Those wishing to contribute could do so over the counter at The Cashiers Office in the Town Hall or by calling the dedicated line during working hours.

The Mayor congratulated Gill Bal and all her staff, the Governors and pupils of Wembley High Technology College on the recent achievement of being ranked the 34th most improved secondary school in the country for the years 2003-2006.

The Mayor congratulated Faraz Sayed, a pupil at Copland School who had been offered a provisional place at Oxford University where he hoped to study for his Masters in Material Science.

The Mayor drew attention to the progress of petitions received that met the requirements of standing order 68 as listed in the schedule circulated and which could also be found on the local democracy web site.

By permission of the Mayor, the Leader of the Council added the Council's congratulations to an employee of Brent Community Transport known as Moses who had been awarded an OBE in the New Year's honours list.

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

RESOLVED:

that Councillor Mrs Fernandes be appointed to the Alcohol and Entertainment Licensing Committee in place of Councillor Baker.

7. **Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy and Principles**

The report before members presented the Council's Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy and Principles for adoption by Full Council prior to its publication. The policy was submitted to the Executive on 11th December 2006, and had been recommended to Full Council for adoption.

RESOLVED:-

that the Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy and Principles in the form circulated to members be adopted.

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. The Members selected were invited to ask their supplementary questions.

The following five questions had been selected by the Leader of the Labour Group

Parking penalty charge notices issued on New Year's Day

The question from Councillor Thomas asked if those residents in Kensal Green ward that had been issued with a parking penalty notice on New Year's day would be reimbursed as a goodwill gesture. He felt the response he had received did not properly answer the question. He stated that no parking tickets were issued in Kensal Green on 1st January 2006 as stated in the answer. In his supplementary question Councillor Thomas asked if the Lead Member would revisit the original traffic order which established the CPZ in Kensal Green because he felt the imposition of the CPZ on Bank Holidays should only apply to the August Bank Holiday when the area was greatly affected by the Notting Hill Carnival and should not apply on the Christmas and New Year bank holidays.

Councillor D Brown replied that if it was suggested that an error had been made then the error had been made for a long time because penalty charge notices had been issued during past Christmas/New Year periods. However, he undertook to check on the position again.

Penalty Charge Notices issued on 1st January 2007

The question from Councillor Moloney asked how many penalty charge notices were issued in Brent on 1st January 2007 and how this compared with January 2006. He stated that no notices were issued on 1st January 2006 because it was a Sunday and that the figure of 97 given in the Lead Member's response was in fact the figure for 2nd January. Councillor Moloney added that because it was a bank holiday and many shops were shut it was difficult for people to buy permits. In his supplementary question Councillor Moloney referred to the tornado suffered by the residents of the Queen's Park/Kensal Rise area when a number of people had their homes damaged and in some cases were made homeless and asked whether the Council could not have shown greater sensitivity to those residents and their relatives who came to visit them during the 'season of goodwill'.

Councillor D Brown questioned why Councillor Moloney should be asking a question about events in another part of the borough to which he represented. He replied that in the immediate aftermath of the tornado the parking restrictions were not enforced but that it would be a dereliction of duty by the Council if it did not enforce the restrictions at other times. He added that no other borough had lifted its parking restrictions over the holiday period and to lift them in one particular area would set a dangerous precedent

Brent Museum

The question from Councillor Jones asked how the Administration intended to support the museum and fund the opportunities for special and visiting exhibitions. Councillor Jones asked as a supplementary question when plans would be brought forward to control parking in the Willesden Green Library Centre car park so that it was available for short term use by visitors to the Centre and local shoppers.

Councillor Van Colle replied that he needed advance notice of such a question and undertook to provide a reply.

Waste disposal

The question from Councillor J Long asked what proposals the West London Waste Authority had for disposing of waste within the framework set by the Mayor of London. She added that the answer from the Lead Member implied that the West London Waste Authority strategy mirrored that of the Mayor's strategy but then went on to explain that West London Waste was seeking judicial review because of disagreement between the two parties. Councillor Long, in her supplementary question, asked if the Lead Member agreed that the West London Waste Authority strategy defined actions to manage waste in accordance with a waste hierarchy agreed by the constituent borough councillors and officers, following consultation. She submitted that the disposal of waste which was at the bottom of the hierarchy now appeared to be the preferred option despite environmental concerns about the incineration of waste. She asked if the Lead Member could explain the decision to tender for incineration services; whether this policy had been agreed by all parties in the administration; and how West London Waste was proposing to deliver on the reduction, reuse and recycling options, all of which had previously had a higher listing in the strategy.

Councillor Van Colle confirmed that the West London Waste Authority operated to a hierarchy as outlined by Councillor Long but that it was not seeking to tender for incineration other than for the top 10% of waste which would otherwise have to go to landfill leading to enormous cost implications for the six boroughs. The Mayor was trying to prevent this which showed that his strategy was not in line with the national

strategy for disposal of waste. The West London Waste Authority was seeking to show that the Mayor was acting beyond his powers and legal action was being taken because of the major financial implications for the Authority and its constituent boroughs. Councillor Van Colle stated that he was convinced that the Authority was properly following the waste management strategy.

Planning enforcement

Councillor Farrell had asked if the Administration would commit itself to respecting cultural and religious sensitivities in planning enforcement during cultural/religious festival periods. She welcomed the reply she had received from the Lead Member and the fact that her constituents had received a partial refund of costs of the enforcement action taken against them. Councillor Farrell asked as a supplementary question whether in view of the Council not respecting cultural/religious sensitivities in this instance a refund of the whole amount would be agreed.

Councillor Castle replied that he had answered the original question from a diversity point of view but the supplementary question was on a planning matter and as such outside his remit. He accepted that the Council had made a mistake in this case but whether it would reconsider the refund of monies was for the Lead Member for Environment, Planning and Culture to address.

Brent tPCT debts

In his question, Councillor Leaman had asked what steps the Council had taken to collect the £10 million owed to it by Brent tPCT and what pressure was being put on the Government to end the health cuts being made in Brent. In his supplementary question Councillor Leaman asked if the Lead Member shared his disappointment that Brent's two Labour MPs were threatening the united front being promoted in the Council Chamber by suggesting the Council owed the tPCT £28 million.

Councillor Colwill agreed and expressed his disappointment that the MPs had not sought the Council's views on this matter before following Labour Party policy on the issue.

Improvement to services by Chiltern Railways

Councillor CJ Patel had asked for an update on the Council's discussions with Chiltern Railways to improve services for local residents. In Councillor Patel's absence, Councillor Bessong welcomed the response received from the Lead Member showing that Chiltern Railways had been persuaded to rethink its plans. He asked as a supplementary question if the Lead Member was aware of the petition from rail users calling for a better service at Sudbury and

Harrow Road and whether Chiltern Railways was likely to have regard to this.

Councillor D Brown replied that he was aware of the petition raised by the Sudbury and Harrow Commuter Group which currently had around 200 signatures to it. The Council fully supported the call to restore services and was lobbying strongly for this. He hoped this would have all-party support from the Council.

Government grant

The question from Councillor Pagnamenta asked why the Government was unfair to Brent in the amount of grant it provided to the Council and for confirmation that this year's rise was below the rate of inflation and what this would mean for local residents. Due to the late arrival of Councillor Pagnamenta, Councillor Motley added on his behalf that the Council had received a poor grant settlement which it could ill afford. He referred to the doubling of the Council Tax since a Labour Government had come to power and asked as a supplementary question was, given the health cuts, other cuts and failure to recognise the correct population figures, the Government not forcing the Council to raise Council Tax.

Councillor Blackman replied that he agreed with the comment about how the Government had treated Brent but that it had been expected. The settlement provided for less than half the rate of inflation. He pointed out that there was a 5% pay claim, increased costs transferred to the Council by the Government and the GLA and that if the grant settlement was to be fair it would have to more than double what it was. Councillor Blackman stated that any increase in grant was welcome but the Council would have to bear the consequences of below the rate of inflation increases until there was a change of Government.

Litter around secondary schools

Councillor Mendoza had drawn attention to a major cause of litter being schoolchildren at lunchtime purchasing food and leaving refuse on the streets and had asked what specific measures were being taken to tackle this highly concentrated problem. In acknowledging the reply he had received, Councillor Mendoza stated that just talking to schoolchildren was not good enough and that the Council needed to be more proactive. In his supplementary question he asked if the Council would define the areas that suffered badly from this problem by including the roads in the vicinity of the schools and routes leading to regular lunchtime gathering places, to make clear where the extra street cleaning was required.

Councillor D Brown identified the area around Preston Manor High School as being of particular interest to Councillor Mendoza and stated

that the Council had worked with the Head of that school to encourage the children not to drop litter. The area around the school was also identified on the hotspots list for more regular or targeted street cleaning.

Provision for children with Special Education Needs

In her question Councillor Mrs Fernandes had asked what action was being taken to provide more places for children with SEN, particularly for those who were dyslexic. She added that the learning needs of pupils with dyslexia posed challenges to the education system. The Higher Education Statistics Agency had gathered data that showed that between 2002/3 and 2004/5 between 2.3 and 2.6 percent of students had dyslexia. In addition, many were not identified until adulthood so the true number of pupils passing through the education system with dyslexia was higher than any of the gathered statistics showed. In her supplementary question, Councillor Mrs Fernandes asked for assurance that the Council would, in addition to maintaining a robust system to ensure children with learning needs were diagnosed, put in place an action plan and report back to the Council on the improvements made for young people with dyslexia.

Councillor Wharton replied by assuring Councillor Mrs Fernandes that the Council would not be complacent about the needs of children with SEN and that any report on the provision being made for such young people would be put before the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

9. Items Selected by Non-Executive Members

(i) The Kingsbury Pool Site

Councillor Malik introduced the item he had raised by saying that as new housing was provided in the area so the number of children increased and they had no access to sports facilities in the area. Not all parents were able to drive to facilities. In the past the Council had said it would provide a swimming pool but this had not happened. He requested the Executive to urgently review the situation and get a new swimming pool built.

Whilst sharing the concerns of Councillor Malik it was submitted that the original deal for the provision of a pool on the old Kingsbury pool site had been a poor one for the Council and the scheme had not been realised. The Council did not have the resources to provide a new pool itself and the failure of subsequent negotiations with alternative developers had shown that the provision of only a pool on the site did not represent a viable option. That was why the Council had consulted the local residents on what else they would like to see on the site and begun upgrading the park. It was pointed out that the Willesden sports centre had recently opened at a reported cost of £16 million which had

been made possible only through a negotiated financial package. In addition it was suggested that any scheme for the site met with objections from local people because it would attract an unwelcome increase in traffic to the area. In response it was stated that local people appreciated the traffic issue and would accept a scheme that made on-site provision for car parking, which had not been the case in the past.

Councillor Van Colle (Lead Member for Environment, Planning and Culture) re-iterated that the provision of a swimming pool was very expensive and it was not likely the private sector would support such a scheme. The Administration had recently adopted a sports strategy which included swimming and without this the Council had not been able to appeal for financial backing. There was a commitment to provide an additional swimming pool in the borough and this might be on the old Kingsbury pool site but equally might be elsewhere. No undertaking could at the present time be given on the timing of this.

(ii) Dangerous dogs

Councillor J Moher referred to the statement made by the Mayor within her announcements in November 2006 and stated that he had not seen a response from the Executive. He alerted Members to information the Mayor had circulated about the dangers of certain types of dog. He claimed the existing legislation was not effective in dealing with the problem. Councillor Moher stressed that the great majority of dog owners were responsible people who looked after and trained their dog properly. He felt it was time to return to a system of licensing dogs and urged the Executive to take action to minimise the risks to Brent residents.

The Mayor endorsed the comments made by Councillor Moher about this matter being about the small minority of people who either did not take proper care of their dogs or used them as weapons or to fight. This was recognised by Members.

The point about licensing was supported and it was suggested that this should be a local function administered by the Council in a cost effective way. It was also suggested that as had been done in another authority, the Council and the police work together in declaring an amnesty so certain breeds of dog defined as dangerous could be handed in without questions being asked.

Councillor Van Colle (Lead Member for Environment, Planning and Culture) replied that the problem existed because of the irresponsible ownership of vicious dogs. He stated that the Dangerous Dogs Act had not proved as useful as had been hoped. It was difficult to prove any given dog was one of the four types covered by the Act. Councillor Van Colle reported that the Council had two officers who worked with the police to deal with reports of disturbance by dogs. There were 30-

40,000 dogs in the borough most of which were looked after properly. Imposing by-laws was not the best means of dealing with the problem and what was needed was local knowledge of where the dangerous dogs were so that action against them could be taken. He urged people to come forward with this information.

(iii) Speeding Traffic in The Avenue, Brondesbury Park

Councillor Shaw introduced her item by reference to the road being used as a rat run to avoid traffic on the Harrow Road. A number of accidents had happened and she felt it was now time to take action. The impending extension to the congestion charge zone would increase traffic levels in the area. The re-building of the Tiverton Community Centre and expansion of the Queens Park Community School had both generated an increase in pedestrian movement in the area. Councillor Shaw stated that she was in no doubt that an accident would happen if no action was taken and yet she had been told that there would be no resources available to do anything until a bid to Transport for London was successful. She felt this was not good enough.

Some support was expressed on this issue and it was pointed out that Transport for London's own calculations showed that there would be an increase in traffic levels in this area upon the extension of the congestion charge.

Councillor D Brown (Lead Member for Highways and Transport) replied that schemes such as that being requested by Councillor Shaw were funded by Transport for London as part of an annual bidding process the Council entered into. An assessment of all the bids was made to ensure the optimum use of resources was achieved. A bid would be included in the 2008/09 programme to introduce 20mph zones around schools in the borough and this area would be included. If successful implementation of the scheme would take place during 2009/10.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the response from the Executive that the provision of a new swimming pool being included in the sports strategy is sufficient to show the matter had been addressed be accepted;
- (ii) that the item on dangerous dogs be reported back to the Executive in due course to review the action taken;
- (iii) that the inclusion of a scheme to deal with speeding traffic in a future bid to Transport for London be noted and reported to the Highways Committee in due course.

10. Report from the Executive

(i) *Brent PCT Update*

Councillor Lorber (Leader) referred to earlier statements made about the PCT debts and the money owed by the PCT to the Council. The PCT had disputed many of the debts but the Council had, thanks to the hard work of officers, managed to get some of the monies paid and were in discussion about the rest. He referred to the loss of interest the Council had suffered through the late payment of these debts and the poor administration within the PCT that had allowed the current situation to develop. In turn some of the cuts being pursued by the PCT were being forced on it by the Strategic Health Authority and the Secretary of State. Councillor Lorber expressed the wish that the PCT would work in greater partnership with the Council to resist some of these cuts. He stated that the Council would now have to increase the Council Tax because of the position being forced on it by the PCT.

(Councillor Mrs Fernandes, having earlier declared an interest in the above item, considered her interest to be prejudicial and left the Chamber and took no part in the discussion).

(ii) *School places*

Councillor Lorber reported on the decisions of the Executive regarding the provision of school places and the location of the Academy on the Wembley Park Bridge Road site. He added that the Executive had agreed a strategy for the provision of school places which required the search for additional sites for new schools to continue and to lobby for additional resources to expand existing successful schools.

(iii) *Tornado appeal*

Councillor Lorber praised the Council staff and the emergency services personnel who responded to the effects of the tornado. The Council had spent £200,000 on making good the damage caused. He referred to the appeal fund launched by the Willesden and Brent Times for those people affected which had so far raised £8,000. The Council paid thanks to all the people that had raised monies, particularly the Rotary Club, the pupils of the John Kelly schools and SEWA international.

(iv) *Housing Benefit Subsidy appeals*

Councillor Lorber explained that in January 2006 the previous Administration had agreed a scheme to maximise housing benefit when dealing with homelessness. Less than a year later the Government had changed the rules to make the scheme unworkable. Government cuts meant the Council would lose £1M and he urged all parties on the Council to make their objections to this change known to the Government.

(v) *Wembley Stadium*

Councillor Lorber reported that he had been assured that the opening of the new stadium remained on schedule with a community event planned in March and invitations to 40,000 mostly Brent residents being issued.

(vi) *Library funding*

Councillor Lorber stated that the budget for the Library Service had been mismanaged by the previous Administration in that it had agreed to extend opening hours but had not made proper financial provision for it. This now had to be addressed within the budget discussions along with the issue of the poor infrastructure of the libraries.

11. Report from the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor D Long drew attention to his report as circulated with the Summons. He referred to the decision taken by the Executive on the provision of school places and a second Academy and the delay and resources used in reaching this decision.

12. Motions Selected by the Group Leaders

The Council agreed to re-order the remaining items from that set out on the Summons so that they followed the order set out in Standing Orders.

(i) *Bicentenary of Abolition of Slavery in the UK*

Councillor John introduced her motion by referring to the issue having originally been raised by Councillor Beswick during the 1st reading debate on the budget. Although she understood plans were being made little had been heard in response. She felt that such an event should be at the forefront of the Council's activities and widely publicised in a borough of such diversity. Many other public authorities were marking the occasion, including Parliament and UNESCO. She asked what the Council was doing, the resources allocated and what opportunities were being explored to tie in the opening of the new stadium with a bicentenary event.

In support of the motion it was felt that in a borough as diverse as Brent the Council should take the lead in sending out a message that such actions against humanity would never be tolerated and that the abolition of slavery was to be commemorated. It was pointed out that slavery in the UK was utilised for economic benefit up to its abolition in 1807 and that it took a concerted effort by William Wilberforce to abolish the trade whilst other European countries continued with it. It was felt the leadership of Britain in abolishing slavery should be

highlighted. Sadly slavery still existed today, and it was felt that by commemorating the abolition of slavery it would present an opportunity to draw attention to this and confront the continuing exploitation of some people.

Councillor Castle (Lead Member for Human Resources & Diversity and Local Democracy and Consultation) accepted that all parties on the Council would want to commemorate the abolition of slavery and that there should be a programme of events, including educational and commemorative aspects. He referred to the request from Councillor Beswick that £3,000 be earmarked to spend on such a programme and stated that more than double this would be spent. He outlined the events and activities being planned. He acknowledged that people may not have been made as aware of these as they might have been.

Councillor Mendoza moved an amendment to the motion which sought to draw attention to Britain's role in legislating against slavery and the fact that some forms of slavery continued today. He pointed out that in the face of economic benefit, Britain turned against slavery, but presently there were still people being led to think they could have a better life in this country only to find themselves being exploited. The plight of these people needed to be highlighted.

The amendment to the motion moved by Councillor Mendoza was accepted. The motion in the name of Councillor John, as amended, was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

to note that 25th March 2007 marks the bicentenary of the Abolition of Slavery Act and to note with pride that Britain was the first nation to enact legislation of this nature domestically and to also adopt an ethical foreign policy to disrupt the slave trade overseas;

the Council will commemorate this important anniversary with a series of events including acts of remembrance for the victims of slavery and educational programmes as well as a focus on the contemporary evil of human trafficking that exists today, thereby linking the past with the present;

Council notes that Councillor Beswick, on behalf of the Labour Group, called on the Administration to earmark at least £3,000 for this purpose (in addition to external funding) during the course of the 1st Reading debate on 27th November 2006 and that officers confirm that work is in hand and report on progress to date.

(ii) *Justice for all Brent residents*

On behalf of the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor Allie introduced the motion by saying that it was not the intention to use it to

attack the work of the Police in the community which was highly valued. However he stated policing should be based on consent and there was evidence that young black men were disproportionately targeted for questioning. Their DNA samples were then taken and recorded meaning their details were kept on a database irrespective of whether they were charged with any offence.

Councillor John moved an amendment seeking to remove reference to a deliberate attempt by Government to intrude into people's private lives.

Councillor Dunwell moved an amendment to the motion seeking to remove reference to calling on the Police to end their practices for taking DNA samples on arrest and calling for the collection of statistics on the people whose DNA had been taken.

The amendment to the motion moved by Councillor John was accepted.

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

The motion in the name of Councillor Lorber, as amended, was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

This Council notes :

- the emphasis given by the Government to the Police collecting DNA records as a means of fighting crime
- that over 3.6 million people had DNA details on the database at the end of 2006
- that in many cases DNA samples are being taken without people being charged, including where suspects are too young to go to court, or where Fixed Penalty Notices are issued, preventing cases from going to court
- that at least a third of young black men have had DNA samples taken, representing more than 10 times the ratio of Afro-Caribbeans in the population
- that DNA samples and records are not deleted when people are acquitted, and that at the end of 2006 about a third of people on whom DNA records were held – around a million people - had not been found guilty of any crime.

This Council therefore calls for :

- Brent Police, and the Metropolitan Police, to end the practice of automatically taking DNA samples on arrest

- An end to taking DNA samples for Fixed Penalty and Public Order offences – which has contributed to the heavily imbalanced racial profile of the register
- Regular statistics by area detailing the ethnic breakdown of people whose samples have been collected, for monitoring by Police Authorities and local partnerships
- A national framework to govern collection of DNA samples, removing the discretion of local Borough Commanders to require these automatically
- The destruction of DNA records held on innocent people who have not been charged with or found guilty of any offence, and measures to monitor this.

(iii) Damaging cuts

Councillor Blackman introduced his motion stating that the problems the NHS now faced had arisen because funding had been reduced. He referred to two of Brent's MPs supporting the actions of the PCT rather than representing the people of Brent. He referred to the closure of Shenley Hospital when it had been agreed to transfer responsibility and finances to the PCT to support the service and that in his view this had meant for the duration of the patient's illness and no sooner. The Council would take action to recover monies due to it and make the PCT face up to its responsibilities. The potential cost to the Council of the PCT's actions was £10M in the next year and it was important that the Council spoke with one voice to resist such actions.

Councillor Matthews moved an amendment to Councillor Blackman's motion seeking to ask the two Labour Brent MPs to withdraw their statement on the PCT funding cuts and calling on all members of the PCT Board to vote against the cuts. She added that the PCT was taking the position that it would only fund NHS related responsibilities but refused to say what those responsibilities were. The Government had so far refused to address the issue and Brent's Labour MPs had supported this position.

Councillor J Moher referred to the amendment to the motion moved by Councillor Matthews. He spoke against the amendment and sought to present an amendment of his own by adding reference to the outcome of the officers' discussions with PCT officers and welcoming continuation of the dialogue as the best way of achieving a positive outcome. He added that officer morale was low in the PCT and it was not beneficial to the Council to attack the organisation. Councillor Moher felt the interests of those needing care provision were best served by the Council and the PCT working together. He challenged the Administration on how much it valued the support of the Labour Group in order to present a united front against the cuts being made by the PCT. In light of the debate, Councillor Moher did not move his amendment.

The amendment to the motion moved by Councillor Matthews was accepted.

The motion in the name of Councillor Blackman, as amended, was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

that the Council continues to express its very deep concern at the funding difficulties facing the NHS in London which is leading to damaging cuts to local health provision in Brent with very significant costs being shunted on to the Council;

that the Council places on record its support of the request by the London Councils early in December when requesting a report for February 2007 detailing the impact of the possibility of these terrible cuts on the London Boroughs including Brent;

that the Council also supports the letter sent to the Secretary of State for Health by the Leader of the Council and recognises how important the results of the latest deliberations will be to the council tax payers of the Borough;

that the Council is very concerned about the impact of these massive cuts in local health provision and the serious impact on some of Brent's most vulnerable people and communities;

that the Council resists these proposals and once again calls on all political groups to continue to make representations to the Government to safeguard Brent's health provision and support the cross-party campaign in any and every way possible;

that the two Brent Labour MPs be asked to withdraw their statement made last week regarding the Council and suggesting that the previous Labour Administration failed to pay some £28M of NHS costs. This statement from Dawn Butler, MP and Barry Gardiner, MP is misinformed, unfounded and wrong. It disappoints the Council that the two Labour MPs have once again put the Government ahead of the people of Brent;

that all members of Brent Primary Care Trust, including the Labour councillor and voluntary sector/community directors on the board, be called on to vote against the massive NHS cuts being imposed by the Health Secretary.

(Councillor Mrs Fernandes, having earlier declared an interest in the above item, considered her interest to be prejudicial and left the Chamber and took no part in the discussion).

The meeting ended at 9:45pm

B JOSEPH
Mayor