

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, 21st January 2008** at **7.15 pm**

PRESENT:

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Fox

COUNCILLORS:

Ahmed	John
Allie	Jones
Anwar	Joseph
Arnold	Kansagra
Mrs Bacchus	Long
Bessong	Lorber
Beswick	Matthews
Blackman	Mistry
D Brown	J Moher
V Brown	R Moher
Butt	Moloney
Castle	Motley
Chavda	O'Sullivan
Clues	Pagnamenta
Colwill	CJ Patel
Corcoran	Powney
Crane	Ms C Shaw
Cummins	Singh
Dunn	Sneddon
Dunwell	Steel
Farrell	Tancred
Mrs Fernandes	Thomas
Gupta	Van Colle
Hashmi	Van Kalwala
Hirani	Wharton
Jackson	

1. **Chair**

In the absence of the Mayor, Councillor HB Patel, who was on a visit to India to receive the prestigious Pride of Gujarat Award, the Deputy Mayor took the Chair for the meeting with the Council's consent.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of The Mayor (Councillor HB Patel) and Councillors Baker, Detre, Eniola, Malik, Mendoza and HM Patel.

3. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th November 2007 be approved as an accurate record.

4. **Declarations of Interest**

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Fox declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item relating to the Calculation of the Council Tax Base as the owner of an empty property. He would vacate the Chair for this item and not take part in the discussion or voting thereon.

5. **Mayor's Announcements**

The Council joined the Deputy Mayor in extending congratulations to Mark Rimmer, Director of Registration and Nationality on the award of an OBE. He had conducted the first Citizenship Ceremony in the UK, here in Brent in 2004 and the Council was pleased to see his work being formally recognised. On behalf of the Council, the Deputy Mayor also congratulated all Brent residents who had been recognised in the Queen's New Year's Honours List.

It was with sadness that the Deputy Mayor reported the death before Christmas of Carmel Lee, former Electoral Services Manager, and employee since 1965. A service in her commemoration would take place on 27th January in Pinner.

The Deputy Mayor also referred to the death of the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto, on 27th December which was a shock particularly felt by the Pakistani community. Books of Condolence had been opened around the Borough. The Deputy Mayor also extended sympathy to those

Brent residents who had lost relatives or friends as a result of the recent troubles.

It was again with sadness that the Deputy Mayor reported the sudden death of Michael Morgan, who had recently retired from his job as a recycling officer, having been one of London's first. Michael had been with the Council for almost 50 years, having started work with Wembley Borough Council in 1959.

The Deputy Mayor referred to the recently announced validated GCSE exam results which showed that 63% per cent of Brent pupils had achieved five or more A* to C passes in 2007, an increase of 2% on the previous year and better than the London and national averages. The Council joined the Deputy Mayor in congratulating school staff and governors on this achievement.

The Council noted that Rwandan and Holocaust survivors' personal stories would make up part of the Brent Holocaust Memorial Day on 27th January at the Town Hall from 2.30pm to which members were invited.

The Deputy Mayor was pleased to announce that he had attended the 104th birthday celebration of Nellie Washbourne, Brent resident, and on behalf of the Council, had presented her with flowers.

The Mayor drew the attention of members to the schedule circulated as usual showing progress of those petitions received in accordance with Standing Order 68.

The Deputy Mayor referred to the passing of the former Deputy Lieutenant of Brian Caesar-Gordon after a long-illness. Brian had a long association with the borough and one of his lasting contributions was the establishment of a regular borough remembrance service at Barham Park, which he continued to organise throughout his illness. The Deputy Mayor extended sympathy to his wife and family. A memorial service would be held in March, the details of which would be sent to members when available. The Council observed a Minute's Silence in his memory.

6. **Committee Membership Changes**

RESOLVED:-

that the following change to committee membership be made with immediate effect:

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Delete Councillor Hirani as alternate for Councillor Tullett and insert Councillor Tancred.

Teachers' JCC and Employees' JCC

Insert Councillor Van Kalwala into the vacancies on each of these committees.

7. Chair

At this stage the Deputy Mayor declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the following item and vacated the Chair. The Council elected Councillor Jones, (Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee) to the chair the meeting for that item only.

8. Calculation of the Council Tax Base 2008/9

The report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources set out Council Tax base calculations to be used for 2008/09. The level of Council Tax base set was used in the calculation of the Council Tax for 2008/09. Regulations required that the Council Tax base was set by 31st January prior to the start of the financial year.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the collection rate for the Council Tax for 2008/09 is set at 97.5%;
- (ii) that in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the amount calculated by the Council as its Council Tax Base for 2008/09 is set at 94,585;
- (iii) that the 10% discount currently granted for long term empty unfurnished properties (para 3.3.3 of the Director's report refers) be removed, so that such properties pay 100% of the bill due from 2008/09 onwards.

(The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Fox, declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item, vacated the chair and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon).

9. London Local Authorities Bill, London Local Authorities (Shopping Bags) Bill, London Local Authorities and Transport for London (No. 2) Bill

On 29th October 2007 the Council passed a resolution stating their support for the promotion of a London Local Authorities Bill or Bills to be promoted by Westminster Council. The Council was now required to confirm their support by passing a further resolution approving the promotion of the Bills.

The Council noted that the Bills would have to pass through a number of parliamentary readings in both Houses of Parliament and that local authorities

would be still able to have some influence throughout this process. However, it was also pointed out that budget proposals to delete a food safety post may hinder the Council's ability to monitor in this area.

The Council AGREED the following resolution which will approve the promotion of the 10th London Local Authorities Bill, the London Local Authorities (Shopping Bags) Bill and the London Local Authorities and Transport for London (No. 2) Bill by Westminster Council:

“RESOLVED that the resolution of this Council passed at a meeting of the Council held on 29th October 2007 to promote a Bill or Bills, pursuant to which the Bills intituled “A Bill to confer further powers upon local authorities in London; and for related purposes”; “A Bill to introduce in London a prohibition on the supply of certain bags by retailers, to confer powers upon local authorities in London to enforce the prohibition; and for related purposes” and “A Bill to confer further powers upon local authorities in London and upon Transport for London; and for related purposes” have been deposited in Parliament, be and the same is hereby confirmed.”

10. **Question Time**

The following five questions were selected by the Leader of the Labour Group.

Parking Policy

The question from Councillor Arnold had asked what the reason was for the delay in reviewing the Council's parking policy and when this could be expected to be available as there was continuing confusion over the holiday periods with residents' relatives being fined when visiting over the Christmas period. She noted the Lead Member's response which refuted that there had been any delay and which argued that a measured approach was being adopted, so that policy changes were progressive and evolving. Consultation was taking place and a report expected by the end of summer. As a supplementary question, Councillor Arnold asked about the levels of profits being made from these and other fines and how much of the income would be used for footway improvements.

Councillor Brown replied that the Administration had made a point of communicating to residents the parking policy and reminded them of the restrictions that would be in force over the holiday period. As a result, the number of fines issued had reduced from 90 to 40. He confirmed that all surpluses would be used for transportation purposes.

Barham Park Estate

Councillor Jones' question referred to the delay in a decision on the development of Barham Park estate and whether it was the Administration's intention to be the only authority to have resiform housing in the UK. The

response from the Lead Member set out efforts made since 2002 to address this issue, proposals put forward by the Notting Hill Housing Group in 2006 and residents' insistence on a low density scheme and opposition to the required additional access route. Options continued to be developed, however a funding gap remained. As a supplementary question, Councillor Jones pointed out the Forward Plan of Key Decisions had indicated that a report on Barham Park Estate development would be presented for decision in September 2006. The submission date had been successively put back until now when an indicative date of April 2008 had been given. She questioned whether this was a delay too far for residents in sub-standard homes and how this could be justified.

Councillor Allie replied that the previous Administration had considered the development of Barham Park Estate as early as 2002 and had excluded the development from the decent homes programme on the grounds of costs. A decision to demolish had been taken in 2003 and in 2004 Notting Hill Housing Trust were selected as partners. However, a financially viable scheme had not been produced nor a means of bridging the funding gap. Councillor Allie then referred to other reformed housing still in existence.

StreetCare Ward officers

The question from Councillor Long asked how many StreetCare officers were in post for the borough's 21 wards to which Councillor D Brown had responded that there were 21. In her supplementary question Councillor Long asked about the number of officers covering more than one ward and the arrangements for keeping ward members and the public informed, whether this level of staffing resource would be sufficient given the introduction of compulsory recycling and a need to monitor the new Viola contract and whether there was any intention to return to the previous set up of one officer per ward.

Councillor D Brown responded that there were 21 StreetCare ward officers in place however, secondments were possible given changing priorities. Two members of staff were on sabbatical and others involved in related projects. There were no plans to change existing arrangements.

Executive attendance at meetings

Councillor J Moher had requested a breakdown of attendance at council and committee meetings for all members of the Executive. In his supplementary question, Councillor Moher pointed out that the response he had received had not included attendance at scrutiny committees and questioned whether this was because Executive members rarely attend these meetings leaving officers to take responsibility.

Councillor Clues replied that although the Executive were not members of those committees he would be happy to provide this information. He added

that being a member of the Executive was a demanding role and he was proud to be part of a dedicated team that provided for the people of Brent.

Ujima Housing Association

Councillor Thomas had asked how many meetings the Lead Member for Housing and Customer Services had with the Chief Executive of Ujima Housing Association prior to its demise. The response from Councillor Allie had expressed regret at the end of the organisation and confirmed he had met Ujima's Chief Executive on four occasions. He noted also the efforts that had been made recently to ensure the well being of tenants and the security of the housing stock. In his supplementary question, Councillor Thomas referred to the large hole now in the Council's diversity structure and the ending of dreams and aspirations. He felt the successor landlord knew little about Brent and he asked how confidence in the BME (Black Minority Ethnic) Housing Sector could be restored, what lessons had been learned and whether the Council would review its Diversity Housing Strategy.

Councillor Allie recognised the significant implications for the BME sector and assured Councillor Thomas that the Director of Housing and Community Care was taking an active role liaising with key partners so that the welfare of residents was kept to the fore. He agreed that L&Q's knowledge of Brent was limited, however the situation would be closely monitored and lobbying would continue at local, London and national levels.

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

Council Tax collection

Councillor Joseph put Councillor HM Patel's question to the meeting in his absence concerning the level of Council Tax collection in the current year in comparison to the previous years and in a supplementary asked about initiatives to improve collection rates.

Councillor Blackman replied that the Council's policy on Council Tax collection was 'Can Pay, Will Pay' and that benefit entitlements should be taken up where appropriate. Arrears collections were on target. New initiatives included reducing the turnaround time for bailiffs' action, making bankrupt those who refused to pay and initiating attachment to earnings orders. Short term lets were also being targeted. Councillor Blackman commended officers for the actions being taken and the message was that residents were expected to pay their Council Tax so that Council services could be provided was yielding results.

New Year's Day parking restrictions

Councillor Kansagra referred to the number of parking tickets issued to those residents' friends and relatives who were unaware of parking restrictions in force on New Year's Day. In his supplementary question, he pointed out that bank holiday charging was a legacy of the previous Administration and asked what proposals there were to make changes.

Councillor D Brown had replied that nine of Brent's CPZs were in operation New Year's Day in accordance with the wishes of residents following consultation, for which 157 penalty charge notices had been issued. A further 96 tickets had been issued for parking on yellow lines. In response to the supplementary question, Councillor D Brown stated that he was not aware of the CPZ operation causing problems in Councillor Kansagra's ward, Barnhill, however he would be listening to residents' views and was willing to review existing arrangements where indications were that this was wanted.

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

Recycling and Landfill Tax

Councillor Pagnamenta had asked about recycling and composting rates in comparison to previous years and the implications for the payment of land fill tax. He referred to the information received from the Lead Member which indicated a steady increase in recycling performance from 20% in 2006-7 to 23% in 2007-08 but yet this was not matched with a decrease in the amount paid in Landfill Tax which had increased from £1.8m to £2.5m over the same period with an estimated rise to £3.4m in 2008-09. In his supplementary question, Councillor Pagnamenta congratulated the Lead Member for the work on recycling and asked whether, given the likely increase in landfill tax next year which would go to the Treasury, was this not another Central Government stealth tax.

Councillor Van Colle acknowledged that while percentage recycling rates were going up, efforts needed to be made to increase the tonnage collected as far as possible. He agreed that landfill taxes were iniquitous and added to the difficulties in reducing Council Tax levels. Residents would be encouraged to recycle more and to further decrease the amount going to landfill.

Members' Code of Conduct

The question from Councillor Dunn had asked about new powers given to Standards Committees to regulate member behaviour, when Brent would introduce them and what sanctions would be available against members who, for example, engaged in homophobic rumour spreading campaigns or failed to declare interests. The reply from the Lead Member had stated that the Brent Members' Code of Conduct had been adopted by the Council on 10th

September 2007 and had referred to the requirements and sanctions. New powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, which received Royal Assent on 30th October 2007, had given Councils responsibility to investigate a matter when the complaint was first received as well as the substantive issue however, there were no new powers specifically relating to homophobic behaviour. Councillor Dunn's supplementary question specifically related to a former Labour Waltham Forest Councillor found guilty of making false statements of a homophobic nature, alleged that she had appeared with current Brent Labour figures and asked the Lead Member why the Labour Party had not condemned the former Waltham Forest Councillor.

Councillor Clues replied that he could not explain the behaviour of Labour MPs or councillors however he was proud of the Council's diversity record and the progress being made to implement the six strands of the equalities scheme. He questioned whether anyone who associated with the former Waltham Forest councillor was fit to represent the borough of Brent. He acknowledged the Waltham Forest councillor had claimed innocence, however MPs had also to abide by the Parliamentary Code of Conduct and residents would make their own judgments.

Monks Park Clinic

Councillor Leaman's question related to the services available at the new Monks Park Clinic and what was no longer available, which meant that residents had to travel further for these services. The response from the Lead Member had set out the services formerly provided and indicated that all except the District Nursing Walk-in Clinic and Podiatry were available in the new centre. The supplementary question was put by Councillor Sneddon in Councillor Leaman's absence and asked about the building and running costs of the new PFI clinic, per head, in terms of the number of residents using the facilities. The answer to be provided in writing if necessary. Given the perceived reduction in usage it was questioned whether the facility was good value for money for the local tax payers.

Councillor Colwill responded that the development was the continuation of a pattern of behaviour from the tPCT and that information had been slow to arrive. People were having to travel distances for some health care services which was particularly stressful for elderly people and he felt that the Labour Government and the tPCT had a lot to answer for. Councillor Colwill promised a full written response to the other issues raised in the supplementary question.

11. Items selected by Non-Executive Members

(i) Monks Park Clinic

Councillor Corcoran introduced the item he had raised which expressed Tokyngton ward residents' view that the clinic was virtually closed for business

as it was perceived to be short staffed and had few clients. It was felt to be underused and he questioned why this was and the costs of the facility per head. Councillor Corcoran referred to time spent on some of the previous Administration's past initiatives including proposals for a casino and also an asylum centre and felt that greater attention should have been focused on the health service.

Councillor Butt contributed that as ward councillor he had raised concerns with the clinic manager who had indicated that there had been staff shortages and that where necessary, clients had been redirected to other facilities. He felt that ward councillors should support the services being provided and the clinic staff. Councillor Lorber added that ward councillors had a duty to protect residents' interests, provide leadership and expose failings. He also referred to concerns over Willesden Hospital where patients were having to stay for extended periods in the absence of rehabilitation facilities.

(ii) Immigration

Councillor Mistry introduced the item she had raised concerning the impact of Central Government's 'open door' approach to immigration on public services and community cohesion. She stressed the importance of the borough getting its fair share of grant funding which was dependent on the accuracy of official population figures. Councillor Mistry called on the Executive to monitor immigration levels and to make representations to Central Government on grant requirements so that there could be adequate service provision.

Members in discussion, cautioned against calling for immigration monitoring as this could create a climate of fear reminiscent of far right policies. Other members suggested the issues of service provision and population figures were better kept separate and contributed that as an island, the UK needed incomers to keep it vibrant. Reference was also made to the diversity of the borough as an asset. It was also contributed that asylum applications should be dealt with quickly as it was unfair to refuse leave to stay after an extensive period of stay and the view was put that immigrants bringing skills that were in demand were particularly valuable.

Councillor Blackman (Lead Member, Resources) responded that newcomers brought both economic and cultural benefits and agreed that the official population statistics for the borough, on which government grants were based, were inaccurate. He assured that officers were lobbying Central Government as the Council was not receiving its rightful allocation. He recommended that the language used in this sensitive matter be clarified and that further representations may be made to Central Government to ensure the grant settlement was fair.

(iii) Event Day Parking

Councillor Kansagra raised the issue of parking arrangements in operation in Wembley which, he considered, continued to cause confusion for local residents and those who worked in the area. Wembley Stadium were also changing their own arrangements and making additional facilities available for VIPs. Councillor Kansagra referred to other schemes in place for grounds that hosted football matches such as at Stamford Bridge and the Emirates Stadium which he felt worked more for the benefit of residents and businesses. He suggested a pilot scheme be introduced to try out alternative arrangements.

Other members agreed on the impact that event day parking had on local people's lives however, they felt that other venues mentioned were not comparable to Wembley Stadium as they were smaller. It was also put that consideration was being given to introducing a scheme similar to Wembley's for the Emirates Stadium. Reference was also made to parking schemes in operation around the borough, supported by residents, without marked out bays or yellow lines and also a one hour free parking scheme on Preston Road that was felt to be very successful.

Councillor D Brown (Lead Member, Highways and Transportation) responded by saying that he was awaiting confirmation of the cost effectiveness of the one hour free parking scheme in Preston Road and was concerned that there was no way of enforcement. On event day parking, a report was due to be considered by the Highways Committee the following evening when members would consider ways of adjusting the scheme.

The respective Lead Members confirmed that they were each willing for the matters raised to be reviewed further by the Executive.

RESOLVED:

that the responses provided by the Lead Members in each case be accepted.

12. Report from the Executive

(i) Police Station review

The Leader reported that Brent police were consulting on possible changes to police station locations which may include co-locating with other services. He encouraged members to submit comments on the options put forward.

(ii) New Library Strategy

The Leader was pleased to report that a new Library Strategy had been agreed which included the retention of smaller libraries. The Administration had also agreed an increase in the revenue budget for libraries of £300,000 from 2008/9 onwards to meet the current deficit and to maintain current

spending on stock and opening hours. There would also be improvements to many of the library facilities around the borough.

(iii) PCT - mothballing of facilities

Councillor Lorber referred to the tPCT which he considered to still be in crisis with services at risk and performance at a low ebb due to financial pressures.

(iv) Rail services to Gatwick

The Leader referred with concern to the threat to the direct rail service between Wembley Central and Gatwick which he felt needed be safeguarded.

(v) Post Office closures

The Council were assured by the Leader that plans to close a series of post offices throughout the borough would be opposed.

(vi) Preston Manor School expansion

The strategy of expanding popular and existing schools in the borough would see the expansion of Preston Manor High School.

(vii) Decision taken by the Executive under the Council's urgency provisions

The Leader drew the Council's attention to the decision taken by the 14th January 2008 Executive under the Council's urgency provisions on the Housing and Community Care Non HRA PFI Project – Funding of Advanced Works.

13. Report from the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny

Councillor Jones presented her report on the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee over the past few months and changes that were taking place. She referred to the task groups which provided a very useful insight and in which she recommended more members to become involved. A review of their way of working would be conducted. Additionally, in order to enhance the status of the work undertaken by task groups there would be tracking of the implementation of the recommendations passed by Overview and Scrutiny. Also, lead members would be encouraged to be more involved in the process, especially at overview and scrutiny committees, so as to avoid officers having to face political questioning. Councillor Jones felt that members would benefit from additional training, especially with new health care responsibilities. Finally, external partners would be encouraged to attend meetings when there were matters of significant concern, for example the Environment Agency and Post Office managers for Neasden Depot and post office closures respectively.

14. **Motions selected by Group Leaders**

(a) Albert Road Day Centre

The motion in the name of the Leader of the Labour Group asked the Council to note the planned closure of the Albert Road Day Centre and to ensure that there was sufficient financial provision in the 2008-09 budget to fund personal care plans for those affected by the transformation programme. In proposing the motion, Councillor John referred to the valuable contribution the service makes to users and the service users and carers' opposition to changes.

The Lead Member for Adults and Social Care responded that social care grant funding would be provided and that officers were assessing the implications. Any plans for Albert Road Day Centre formed part of the overall plans for adult care and there was an opportunity to build a new centre from South Kilburn regeneration programme funding.

Some members in discussion felt that residents and carers were not in favour of the transformation programme which could become a cost cutting exercise, nor were they in favour of direct payments being introduced to allow for greater choice. Councillor R Moher referred to the need to gain service users and carers' confidence so that they could be assured of the service they were buying into. Councillor Van Kalwala agreed that carers were against the idea of direct payments which he felt would take away support and contribute to failings in looking after the most vulnerable. He, with other members, expressed a wish for ward councillors to be fully briefed on any plans for change in their local area. Members agreed that day centres were a valuable asset, a source for friendship, support and also respite for carers.

Councillor Lorber accepted the Council had a responsibility to provide for an aging population however central government had not provided sufficient funding and proposals to change to direct payments were centrally driven. The Administration had been able to protect social services budgets and he questioned the claim that there were plans to close Albert Road Day Centre. He proposed an amendment to add "and future years" after "2008/09". It was the intention to support people with new and improved services. Councillor Blackman added that the Council's choices were limited by Central Government's insistence in taking away funding from day centres and this had necessitated a review of the Albert Road Day Centre. Members agreed that councillors should be properly briefed and it was open for them to ask for information on plans for their wards.

The Council AGREED the motion in the name of the Leader of the Labour Group as amended by Councillor Lorber.

RESOLVED:

this Council notes the planned closure of the Albert Road Day Centre and resolves to ensure that there is sufficient financial provision in the 2008/09 budget and future years to fully fund personal care plans, at an appropriate level, for all of the individuals affected by the transformation programme.

(b) Spend money on Police and Safety, not ID Cards

Councillor Matthews moved the motion on behalf of the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group which expressed concern at Government plans to introduce compulsory Identity Cards and a National Identity Register. Estimated costs were £200-£300 per person, running into billions of pounds and she argued that funding would be better spent on additional police and security. Councillor Matthews added that an identity card scheme would not give information on how people were planning to act or stop terrorism. She referred to recent incidents of discs containing people's personal data getting lost and felt that the Government departments' reliability in this area was doubtful and individuals were now at risk. Less liberty did not imply greater security and Councillor Matthews urged the Council to call on the Government not to make ID cards compulsory.

Councillor Beswick agreed that ID cards would not stop terrorism but argued that individuals already carry ID in a variety of forms and data protection was an issue. He also felt that ID cards would not prevent members of BME communities being disproportionately stopped and searched. Councillor Beswick felt it unlikely that ID cards would be introduced given the costs involved and as MPs had a free vote. He urged the Administration to concentrate on local matters within their remit. Councillor Joseph added that the potential closure of a local police station was a more important concern, reminded members of police officers' intention to demonstrate in support of back dated pay and agreed that data protection was an important issue.

The motion in the name of the Leader of the Liberal Democrats was CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

Council expresses its increasing concern at Government plans to introduce compulsory Identity Cards and a national Identity Register, and the effect these would have on Brent residents.

Among other reasons, we reject this expensive, ineffective scheme as:

- It will cost many billions of pounds. Estimates have escalated repeatedly, meaning an ever rising bill to the taxpayer and cost being passed on to anyone wanting a Passport.

- The Government's record on huge IT schemes always leads to costs over-runs; ID Card technology has not been properly tested; and many expensive systems such as those bought for the NHS do not even work properly.
- Every use of stop or question powers by the Police has seen these target black and Asian people disproportionately. Using ID Cards to access services will see this discrimination spread to GPs and Hospitals, while those refusing cards could be denied treatment.
- A central register of details such as address, age and gender will be a bureaucratic nightmare to keep updated. It will also be a paradise for hackers and fraudsters, especially if data goes missing as it has recently for millions of law-abiding citizens.
- Making one card the key to most services provides a massive target for fraudsters. Every other attempt to make systems "non-forgable" has failed.
- ID Cards did not prevent terrorism such as the attack on the Twin Towers or 2004 Madrid bombing. Good intelligence, gleaned from community policing and security, is the only way to stop "home-grown" terrorists like the tube bombers.
- The best way to reduce Crime is to invest in Police and Community Support Officers, as this Administration has done; more Police outlets; appropriate CCTV; and properly enforce laws against illegal working and activity.

Council therefore :

- asks the Chief Executive to write to Brent MPs, the London Mayor, Brent Borough Commander, Metropolitan Police Commissioner and Home Secretary advising them of Brent's formal view;
- calls on Brent Labour MPs to not break their election manifesto promise to introduce ID Cards only voluntarily;
- urges the Government to scrap plans for ID Cards and a National Database, and invest the billions of pounds this will save in better Policing and security, and more Officers.

(c) *Cancer Services*

Councillor Mrs Fernandes introduced the motion in the name of the Leader of the Conservative Group which referred to the UK's relatively poor cancer survival rates and called on the Council to support the call for changes in key areas to improve survival rates. Councillor Mrs Fernandes spoke of her years of work in the health service during which she had come into contact with

many cancer sufferers and witnessed differences in the treatment patients received depending on where they lived or who they were. Councillor Mrs Fernandes referred to the significant amounts of money that had been spent on the NHS but felt there had been little improvement in services. Patients should be able to spend their last days in a home environment should they so wish and for communities to be empowered to give appropriate levels of support.

Councillor Sneddon spoke in support of the motion which he felt accorded with Liberal Democrat principles. He felt that the Labour Government was not receptive to external opinion and that public services were becoming demoralized. However, he felt that Liberal Democrats had coherent plans for local people and for the Council Tax. Councillor Long spoke from personal experience of the need for a positive attitude to help recovery from cancer and praised treatment provided under both Conservative and Labour governments. She questioned the reliability of the figures quoted on different regions' average expenditure on individual care and pointed out that it was also difficult to draw direct comparisons between countries experiences and treatment. Councillor Long suggested that the Council should finalise its own joint commissioning strategy before it considered leveling criticism at Central Government.

The motion in the name of the Leader of the Conservative Group was AGREED.

RESOLVED:-

This Council notes that the Labour Government have had seven years to improve cancer services since their last cancer strategy, but cancer survival rates in this country still lag behind the European average, let alone the best in Europe or the world.

The announcement of a new strategy provides few indications as to how the dramatic improvement that is needed will be secured. This Council further notes that, if the UK achieved European-best levels of cancer survival rates, then 95 lives each day could be saved.

This Council believes that the current system of funding for cancer services is unfair across the country. The Labour Government strategy continues to discriminate against areas with the highest concentrations of older people. The Government is still refusing to scrap central targets, and has undermined cancer prevention by allowing public health budgets to be raided during the NHS financial crisis.

In Brent each cancer sufferer receives just £9,166 a year – by contrast, cancer sufferers in Nottingham receive £17,028 a year.

The figures may help to explain not only why inequalities in cancer death rates have widened during Labour's ten years in power, but also why access to drugs for the treatment of cancer varies so much across the country.

This Council believes that there is a need to improve cancer services in the UK but that the Government's strategy neglects key areas in which change is needed to improve survival rates, specifically:

1. This Council supports the call for a funding allocation formula to local NHS Trusts that better reflects the relative burden of disease.
2. This Council calls on the Labour Government to end narrow top-down targets which only focus on part of a patient's care.
3. This Council supports calls for a separate public health budget to end the raiding of public health resources that has taken place under this Government.

The meeting ended at 9.35 pm

R FOX
Deputy Mayor