

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, 8th September 2008 at 7.15 pm**

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Fox

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor O'Sullivan

COUNCILLORS:

Allie	Joseph
Anwar	Kansagra
Arnold	Leaman
Mrs Bacchus	J Long
Baker	Lorber
Bessong	Matthews
Beswick	Mendoza
Blackman	Mistry
D Brown	J Moher
V Brown	R Moher
Butt	Moloney
Castle	Motley
Colwill	Pagnamenta
Crane	CJ Patel
Cummins	H B Patel
Detre	H M Patel
Dunn	Powney
Dunwell	Shah
Eniola	Ms C Shaw
Farrell	Singh
Green	Sneddon
Gupta	Tancred
Hashmi	Thomas
Hirani	Van Colle
Jackson	Van Kalwala
John	Wharton
Jones	

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Ahmed, Chavda, Coughlin, Mrs Fernandes, Malik and Steel.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the meeting of full Council held on 30th June 2008 be confirmed as a true and accurate record, subject to the following amendment:

Penultimate paragraph of minute number 10 – insert after the word but 'on objection by Councillor J Moher under standing order 46'.

3. **Declarations of Interests**

At this meeting there were none.

4. **Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor announced with sadness the untimely death of Miriam Green who spent over 30 years working in social care for Brent Council and was instrumental in helping disabled and disadvantaged residents, especially in and around Kilburn.

The Mayor informed members that Councillor Steel had recently been admitted to hospital following a fall. He spoke on behalf of members in wishing him well soon.

The Mayor announced that the Council's Housing Benefit service had been shortlisted for a national award for the 'most improved benefit service in the country'. The Institute of Revenue and Rating, who host the awards, had confirmed that there were over 30 applications for this category and that shortlisting to the final stage was an achievement in itself.

The Mayor was pleased to announce the opening of the new replacement Wembley primary school. The school for 900 children was the largest purpose-built primary school in England and incorporated a nursery and children's centre. The Mayor reported that the school provided an additional 210 places to meet growing demand in the Borough.

The Mayor announced that on 29th August, the Right Honourable Stephen Timms - Minister of State for Employment and Welfare Reform opened the new Wembley Works employment centre. This

was a new 'walk in' facility located on the ground floor of the first new building completed in the Wembley regeneration area, and would provide a one stop shop for all local people wanting to secure any of the 6000 new jobs to be created at Wembley. The Mayor explained that Wembley Works was a partnership between the Council's Brent in2work team, the College of North West London and Quintain.

The Mayor congratulated Harlesden boxer James DeGale on his gold medal at the Olympic Games in Beijing. The Mayor was sure that James DeGale's achievement would be an inspiration for local young people to make the most of their sporting talents as London gets ready to host the 2012 Games.

The Mayor congratulated the various officers of the Council and Councillors Paul Lorber, Peter Corcoran, Chandubhai Patel and Muhammed Butt for successfully completing the Nike 10km run. They had all raised money for various local charities including the Mayor's charity appeal.

The Mayor offered the Council's congratulations to Councillor Coughlin and his partner Kate on the recent birth of their son, Lewis Kieran Morris Coughlin.

The Mayor informed members of some upcoming events taking place in the borough:
firstly, the Annual AJEX Interdenominational Service would be taking place on Sunday 14th September at Gladstone Park at 2.45pm and all members were invited;
secondly the "Not Another Drop Peace March" was taking place on Saturday 20th September starting from Roundwood Park in Harlesden at 11.30am and it was hoped as many members as possible would support this event; and
thirdly, Brent Countryside Day would be taking place on Sunday 21st September at Fryent Country Park and everyone was welcome to attend.

With the permission of the Mayor, Councillor Van Colle made a short personal statement updating members on the legal case he had been pursuing for the past few years following the murder of his son.

Finally the schedule of petitions was before Members for noting.

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

RESOLVED:-

that Sheila Darr be appointed as an alternate independent member of the Standards Board until May 2010.

6. Question time

The selected questions submitted under the provisions of standing order 38 had been circulated together with written responses from the respective Lead Members. The Members who had put the questions were invited to ask their supplementary questions.

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

Planting of street trees

The question from Councillor Powney had asked what planting of street trees would take place in the borough between 2007 and 2010 and whether this would represent a net gain or a loss of trees across the borough. He added that the reply he had received appeared to differ from the response given to Councillor Mrs Fernandes to a similar question in April 2007. In that answer it was stated that 300 trees were planted with the hope that 650 would be planted in 2008. Councillor Powney further related that the earlier answer had said that around 600 trees were lost or removed because of storm damage, disease, accident damage due to cars, vandalism and subsidence damage, or to allow vehicular cross overs to be constructed. As a supplementary question he asked if any reason could be given as to why it was expected that the number of trees lost in the current year would be only a third of the number lost in the year up to April 2007.

Councillor D Brown replied that he hoped that there would not be another tornado as there had been in late 2006. Another reason for the difference in figures was that in 2007 there was insufficient money to plant any more trees but that the Administration had corrected this in the budget for this year meaning the Council was able to pledge to plant 100 more trees to make Brent a cleaner, greener borough. Each year £50,000 would be available to plant more trees and this was the reason for the difference referred to.

Brent Cross light railway system

The question from Councillor Long had asked if the Administration supported the proposed light railway system that would run through Brent Cross and provide an orbital transport line for many parts of the borough. She added that another proposal for use of the railway line was to connect to Heathrow. This would not stop at any station in Brent though. She asked if the Administration supported this. Councillor Long also asked what plans there were to connect the high unemployment areas in Harlesden and Church End with the regeneration areas in Wembley, Park Royal and Brent Cross as the Plusbus service did not go into Church End. Finally, Councillor Long pointed out that the Mobility Forum had not met since January 2006 and asked if there were any plans to revive it.

Councillor D Brown replied that the nature of any proposals for railways made them long term projects and the financing was outside the capacity of a single borough. The Council therefore supported Plusbus and other ways of ensuring Church End was served by public transport. The proposal for a fast train to Heathrow had been superseded by a service running out of Paddington. Councillor Brown replied that the Mobility Forum was not the responsibility of the Council.

Growth of weeds in Welsh Harp ward and elsewhere

The question from Councillor Farrell had asked what action was proposed to tackle the unsightly display of weeds along the streets of Welsh Harp ward and elsewhere in the borough. She added that this was a very serious matter and outlined the unsatisfactory method of work undertaken by the contract cleaners. She stated that the contractual three times a week cleaning was not happening as evidenced by the profusion of weeds. She was pleased to see that some action was now being taken in response to the problem being raised. As a supplementary question Councillor Farrell asked how long it would take to remove all the weeds in Welsh Harp ward and elsewhere and what would be done to ensure that the same problem was not faced next year.

Councillor D Brown replied that a past answer to a similar question by Councillor Crane in 2005 was that a wet summer caused more weeds to grow. He stated that an independent audit of street cleansing performance had found Brent to be the fourth best in London, compared with seventeenth out of twenty under the previous Administration. The contractor had now deployed additional resources to deal with the weeds and Councillor Brown expressed the hope that next year would see an improvement.

Road resurfacing

The question from Councillor Butt had asked how many miles of carriageway were scheduled for resurfacing in 2008/09 and a breakdown of the programme by ward. He asked as a supplementary question why the streets in Tokyngton ward had been left out as well as Chippenham Avenue, Grove Way, Park View, Harrow Road and the part completed Tudor Court South and when they would be done.

Councillor D Brown replied that the annual spend on roads and pavements was now around £3m. He explained that a borough-wide condition survey was carried out and this led to a good spread of work across the borough being carried out on a needs basis. This achieved the best results for residents and avoided the appearance of favouritism.

Cleaning of street drains

The question from Councillor Beswick had asked for the number of street drains cleared in 2006, 2007 and 2008 and what the arrangements were for monitoring and maintaining street drains. He asked as a supplementary question what measures were in place to determine the frequency of gully cleaning given that not all wards have dedicated street care officers and that an ad hoc approach had led to an increase in blocked gullies. He also asked what action was being taken to deal with gullies blocked with grass and weeds growing out of them.

Councillor D Brown replied that he was surprised that a question should be asked on this matter rather than on what he saw as more important matters such as crime, regeneration and Council Tax collection. He stated that gullies were inspected regularly and that if Councillor Beswick felt further action was needed in his ward he could direct some neighbourhood funding into it. Councillor Brown added that there were 18,000 gullies in the borough and the Council aimed to clean them all twice a year despite some being obstructed on occasions, which he stated, was more than under the previous Administration.

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

Recognising the achievement of James DeGale, Olympic Gold medallist

The question from Councillor Bessong had asked what the Council planned to do to recognise the outstanding achievement of James DeGale, a Harlesden resident, in winning an Olympic Gold medal and what the Council was doing to encourage more Brent residents to get involved in sport and leisure. As a supplementary question Councillor Bessong asked what the Council was doing to support and encourage those currently training to be the next set of Olympians in Brent for 2012, such as those at Willesden Judo Club.

Councillor Van Colle replied that the Council's draft sports strategy identified 8 priority sports: athletics, basketball, cricket, football, martial arts, netball, swimming and tennis; and that the Council already had a purpose built dojo at Willesden Sports Centre which it was hoped would be used by those practicing judo. The Council's sports service was very interested in working with other sports in the hope of developing future Olympians. Councillor Van Colle stated that he was delighted over the achievement of James DeGale and recognised that this needed to be capitalised on. A report would be submitted to the Executive in the Autumn reviewing the sports facilities in the borough.

Changes in housing Benefit rules

The question from Councillor Jackson had asked what the effects on residents were of the recent changes in the Housing Benefit rules in respect of backdating benefits. He felt it was good news if it was true that the Government was backing off from the plans to reduce the period for backdating to 3 months but as a supplementary question asked whether the Executive agreed that it was impossible for the Council to plan for or introduce changes when they were being neither confirmed nor denied a month before they were to be introduced.

Councillor Blackman replied that housing benefit was one of the most complicated benefits to understand and administer. He took the opportunity of praising the Council's housing benefit service for being shortlisted for an award, as announced by the Mayor earlier in the meeting. He stated that the service had improved year on year for the last 18 years. He stated that the Council had to continue to lobby government to simplify the administration, application forms and amount of supporting information required. Whilst the Council was making great strides in supporting people it was not appreciated when the government appeared to be changing the rules as it went along. A strong message needed to be sent to government to get the system to work properly for the sake of the poorest in society.

Provision for the Noting Hill carnival

The question from Councillor Green had asked if the residents of the Kensal Triangle area could expect the same higher level of provision to deal with the effects of the Notting Hill carnival next year as they had for this year. He added that he had received a communication from a prominent local residents association chair expressing thanks for getting the streets properly cleaned and providing toilets. In addition he informed members that many of those heading towards Harlesden and Willesden on the day of the carnival were happy with the new facilities. As a supplementary question Councillor Green asked if the Executive agreed that the extensive measures introduced in the Kensal Triangle area during and after the carnival were as a result of a coordinated effort involving the Council Leader, Executive Members, Queens Park councillors and residents and if such a localised approach delivering tangible results was an improvement on previous years.

Councillor D Brown replied that he agreed that people were pleased that Brent streets were now officially amongst the cleanest in London having undergone a 20% improvement in cleanliness. He added that the Council put £2.1m a year into making the streets cleaner. The condition of pavements had also improved as had the removal of graffiti. He read from a letter from a local resident who had acknowledged the cleaner environment within the borough.

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

Issue of Wembley event day parking tickets

The question from Councillor HB Patel had asked how many parking tickets had been issued on event days and paid within the time limit. He felt he had only received half an answer and claimed the arrangements were disliked by residents. There was confusion around the times of operation of the scheme with some areas operating from 8.00 to midnight and others from 10:00 until midnight. He suggested that most of the 3,600 tickets issued were to local residents when many marked bays remained empty. He could not understand why such a long time span was necessary when most events were in the evening. As a supplementary question Councillor Patel asked whether there was any intention to revisit the whole scheme in order to make it more beneficial to local residents and what specific enforcement arrangements had been made for Madonna's concert on Thursday 11th September.

Councillor D Brown replied that the Event Day scheme had been reviewed and that was when the hours of operation had been reduced from 8.00am to 10.00am to make it easier for local people. As many changes as possible had been made to the scheme but it was very difficult to apply certain times to specific events. For this reason a blanket time of operation was used.

Sponsor for Wembley Park Academy

The question from Councillor Mrs Fernandes had asked why the Executive was not informed about the potential for an alternative sponsor for the Wembley Park Academy and if the original application for a City Academy had ever been withdrawn. On behalf of Councillor Mrs Fernandes, Councillor Mistry claimed that the answer to Councillor Mrs Fernandes's question sought to hide behind the race against time argument. As a supplementary question she asked what legal advice was sought on the permissibility of modifying the Expression of Interest rather than commencing a new one with a new sponsor.

Councillor Wharton replied that all decisions taken by the Executive were taken in the light of proper legal advice. The Executive was mindful of its legal duties, including providing sufficient school places for children in the borough. He stated that it was a race against time to ensure sufficient places were provided for the future. The school places strategy was not all about one school but was a multi faceted strategy designed to provide enough school places across the borough, including the south of the borough through the provision of the new school in Wembley Park and the rebuilding of the John Kelly schools.

7. **Items selected by Non-Executive Members**

(i) Operation and role of the Executive

Councillor Powney introduced the item he had raised which asked for the Executive to draw up a statement on how it exercised collective responsibility and what the Executive thought the relative roles of Lead Members and officers were under the Executive/Scrutiny system. He added that he was concerned that members of the Executive did not understand their role and that some members, including experienced ones, did not seem to understand the Executive arrangements that had been in place for the last few years. He asked on what basis Lead Members spoke when expressing their views.

In response Councillor Lorber stated that he was surprised that such an item had been raised and did not feel it would resonate with residents of the borough. The joint Administration was united in dealing with the key issues facing the borough including provision of school places, stopping a super casino being built in the Wembley area, saving libraries from closure and improving street cleaning. However he recognised that it was still possible for the Administration to do better and this it would strive to do. Adding to the response, Councillor Blackman stated that it had been a tough task to take over from what had been left by the previous Administration and to get two distinct parties working together. Nevertheless there had been only two matters on which they had disagreed and otherwise they were doing an excellent job. He pointed out that there were no standing orders that applied to the functionality of a two party system. It was the duty of the Executive to hold officers accountable for delivering services and he pledged to continue to do this.

(ii) Cleaner streets in Brent

Councillor Anwar introduced the item he had raised which asked the Executive to consider ways in which the Council could express its thanks for the hard working efforts of members of the street cleaning teams operating across the borough. He stated that the difficulties in keeping clean the borough's streets should not be underestimated. He again referred to the street sweeper in his local area and hoped a way of officially thanking him could be found.

It was stated that there was no objection to recognising the efforts of hard working people from all services and not just the street sweeping service. Many of these people had worked under previous contractual arrangements. It was said that people working on keeping the streets clean would appreciate being shown some thanks by the offer of a cup of tea. There was support for recognising the efforts being made to keep the borough's streets clean. However a view was expressed that the problem of fly tipping still had to be properly tackled.

Councillor D Brown (Lead Member for Transport and Highways) responded that the problem of fly tipping was taken very seriously. He regularly received letters from residents expressing compliments on the standard of cleanliness of the streets. At present the Council's staff awards scheme only applied to directly employed Council staff but he would be seeking to get this expanded in 2009 to include those working for contractors. He was glad for all the hard work being done.

(iii) Rehabilitation of offenders

Councillor Leaman introduced the item he had raised asking for the Executive to look into new ways of helping ex-offenders rehabilitate into society and stop re-offending. He added that it was obvious that in many cases prison did not work in this country. If crime was to be truly tackled then there needed to be consideration of how to stop re-offending.

In response Councillor Blackman stated that the level of re-offending, reported crime and violent crime was of great concern and were relatively high in Brent. He subscribed to the recent view expressed by a senior police officer that prisoners were released too early before proper remedial action had been taken and that this was because there were insufficient prison places. A large number of prisoners were on drugs and insufficient effort was made to get them off their drug habit before they were released. He felt that what was first needed was proper punishment before the line suggested by the motion was followed.

The view was put that apart from criticising government action the Administration should be considering what it could do to alleviate the problems caused by people re-offending. This could be done through housing provision, employment opportunities and dealing with those that came out of prison still with outstanding orders against them. The view that government had not provided sufficient prison places was supported by reference to the level of gun crime and drugs on the streets. It was stated that drugs on the streets needed to be tackled more firmly and that the police did not receive sufficient back-up.

Councillor Matthews (Lead Member for Crime Prevention and Public Safety) responded by acknowledging that Councillor Leaman's item was about the actions the Council could take. She stated that efforts were being made to tackle re-offending and that on 21st August the Council and Police had launched a joint prisoner release scheme to help those released from prison to settle back into society and not re-offend. Councillor Matthews stated that the scheme did not claim to deal with the more serious crime but aimed to tackle the petty form of crime. She stated that the Executive would be very willing to give further consideration to how crime in the borough could be reduced.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the response provided by the Lead Member on item (i) above be noted and no further action on the item be taken;
- (ii) that the response provided by the Lead Member on item (ii) above which confirmed that consideration was already being given to the matter raised be noted;
- (iii) that the response provided by the Lead Member on item (iii) above indicating that the Executive would continue to give consideration to ways of cutting crime, including re-offending, be noted and accepted.

8. Report from the Executive

a. *The Treasury Management Annual Report 2007/08*

Councillor Blackman introduced the report, the purpose of which was to provide information to Members on borrowing and investment activity during 2007/08. It also set out how the Council performed against prudential indicators set in the 2007/08 budget. Councillor Blackman pointed out that performance was better than had been anticipated. The Executive had agreed the recommendations in the report and it was before Full Council for approval.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2007/08 be approved;
- (ii) that a new policy on repayment of principal outlined in section 5 of the report be adopted in response to the government issuing new capital finance and accounting regulations.

b. *Items reported by the Executive*

(i) Compulsory recycling progress

Councillor Lorber reported on the successful introduction of the compulsory recycling scheme. There had been a very good public response with 11,000 new boxes being issued. He added that there needed to be government action to encourage industry to improve capacity for recycling garden compost and plastic.

(ii) Support for more voluntary organisations

Councillor Lorber explained that action was being taken to provide additional support for young people in the borough. A

budget of £120,000 had been identified to provide additional support with 39 groups applying and 13 being identified for funding.

(iii) *Climate change consultation*

Councillor Lorber thanked those residents that had taken part in a discussion on climate change. He stated that he was looking for an action plan to be produced on the issue.

(iv) *Temporary accommodation update*

Councillor Lorber expressed concern over the position concerning temporary accommodation which, although its use continued to be reduced with numbers down by 400 and the Council working hard with its partners to deal with this issue, support from the government was needed.

(v) *Hay Lane and Grove Park schools – sixth form provision*

Councillor Wharton reported that the new sixth form block at Hay Lane and Grove Park schools was coming into use during the current week. He stated that this and the following item were the fruition of several investment decisions taken by the Administration during the previous year.

(vi) *Wembley Primary School*

Councillor Wharton referred to the Mayor's announcement regarding the opening of the new Wembley primary school providing four forms of entry at reception and year one.

(vii) *New pupil referral unit at Chalkhill Youth and Community Centre*

Councillor Wharton reported on the refurbishment of the youth and community centre at Poplar Grove which had brought the facility back into occupation.

c. Decisions taken by the Executive under the Council's urgency provisions

RESOLVED:

that the decisions taken by the Executive under the Council's urgency provisions relating to the following items be noted:

- Edward Harvist Trust Criteria
- Tendering of Housing Support and Care Services for People with a Learning Disability

- Housing and Social Care Non HRA PFI Project – Authority to Award Contract
- Authority to Tender Contract for the Provision of Passenger Transport

9. **Report from the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny**

Councillor Jones presented her report on the work of Overview and Scrutiny over the past few months. Councillor Jones welcomed the attendance by the Leader at Overview and Scrutiny Committee to explain the Administration's priorities and added that as chair of the Local Strategic Partnership he had been well placed to comment on the first annual report on the work of the Partnership. She again expressed her concern that the target on smoking cessation had not been met. Councillor Jones referred to the work of the various task groups and the tracking of their recommendations. A training session for the chairs of the overview and scrutiny committees/sub-committees had proved to be very useful and it had been agreed that it would be useful for the chairs to meet occasionally to review their work programmes. Other aspects to emerge had been the need to develop a working arrangement between the Executive and overview and scrutiny, the development of a communications protocol, looking for ways to engage with and invite members of the public to participate in the work of overview and scrutiny and how the councillors call for action would be managed.

RESOLVED:-

that the report of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

10. **Motions selected by Group Leaders**

(a) *Fair Play in Brent*

The motion in the name of the Leader of the Labour Group asked the Council to use additional resources provided by the Government to ensure that new playgrounds and sports facilities were provided in areas of most need, particularly at Bramshill Road in Harlesden, Villiers Road in Willesden and Kimberley Road in Kilburn. Councillor John referred to an earlier investment programme which had not been completed meaning that there were gaps in provision in certain parts of the borough. She stated that there was always the need to invest in new playground equipment upon new housing estates being developed. However, in the meantime there was an urgent need to improve the facilities at Bramshill Road, Villiers Road and Kimberley Road.

Councillor Wharton moved an amendment to the motion which sought to delete the third paragraph and amend the others to reflect the investment that was being put into providing playgrounds. He welcomed the issue being raised but felt the motion was misleading in suggesting that a plan did not exist. He pointed out that the three playgrounds mentioned had long been in a poor state of repair. The money made available was not sufficient to invest in new playgrounds but could be used to undertake improvements to 19 existing playgrounds including the three mentioned.

Councillor Van Colle (Lead Member for Environment, Planning and Culture) supported the amendment and submitted that it was more sensible to undertake an improvement plan in a strategic way. He pointed out that the money was available over a three year period and so would be spent over such a period, meaning some would be done much earlier than others. He was keen to see children have access to good quality play provision but unfortunately it could not be provided all at one time.

In welcoming the funding that had been made available by the government, attention again turned to the condition of Villiers Road and Bramshill Road, where the local children were waiting for improved facilities to be provided and dog walking banned. It was felt that it was not enough just to upgrade existing playgrounds and that new schemes needed to be developed in consultation with the local community. Mention was made that the funding was meant to provide for 8 to 13 year olds but play equipment tended to cater more for 8 to 11 year olds. The question was asked how £1m over three years could provide children's facilities for all ages. However, it was also pointed out that improvements had already taken place at Roe Green Park, Eton Grove and Woodcock Park and that this new money had only been made available in July following which a plan for its use had been developed.

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

The motion in the name of the Leader of the Labour Group as amended was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that Council notes that many play areas in the borough, including Bramshill Road, have been in poor condition for many years, and notes that the Villiers Road playground was boarded up when Labour were in power. The Council notes that the Government has committed £235m in a three-year funding programme with over £1m for Brent to ensure every child has access to good quality and safe outdoor play, especially for 8 – 13 year olds. The Mayor's fund is providing £1m for Opportunities and Positive Activities for Young People over the

next three years and more funding to combat gun and knife crime has been announced recently. In addition funds for providing youth centres or improving existing facilities have been made available through the Big Lottery.

- (ii) Council notes that the £1m available through Playbuilder would not be sufficient to develop new facilities, but does allow improvement of many poor facilities around the borough.
- (iii) that the additional resources provided by the Government be used to ensure that new playgrounds and sports facilities are provided in those areas of the borough which most need them. Council notes and endorses the Playbuilder project plan which involves improvements to 19 play areas around the borough, including Bramshill Road, Villiers Road and Kimberley Road.
- (iv) that Council notes the Playbuilder project plan has consultation provisions which will involve service users and other stakeholders in developing future plans and all ward councillors be called upon to involve interested parties in the consultation process in their wards.

(b) *An environment fit for Brent residents*

Councillor D Brown moved the motion on behalf of the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group which welcomed the positive response by Brent residents to the recent introduction of compulsory recycling, offered thanks to those residents who had enrolled as Streetwatchers and reaffirmed the Council's commitment to making Brent cleaner and more sustainable. He added that 25% more recyclable waste had been collected in August than in July and the borough was now a cleaner, greener place. He re-iterated earlier comments made that an independent study had shown Brent's streets to be cleaner.

The view was expressed that such a study presented a paradox because all councillors could still identify areas within their wards that were not cleared of rubbish. With regard to the issue concerning the lack of capacity to recycle certain material, surprise was expressed that local Liberal Democrats had objected to a new facility being provided in Barnet. It was felt that there was a lack of equity in the fine of a £1000 under the recycling scheme when many other offences of a more serious nature attracted a far lower fine.

Councillor Van Colle (Lead Member for Environment, Planning and Culture) expressed his support for the motion. He was concerned that fly tipping was being excused because of the charge made when it should be made clear that any fly tipping was wrong. He expressed the hope that it would never be necessary to pursue someone for the £1000 fine. He had not received any complaint regarding this. People needed to continue to be encouraged to use their green boxes and

where they could not be provided alternative arrangements could be made. Efforts were being made to get West London Waste to invest in improved capacity.

The motion in the name of the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

that Council:

1. Welcomes Brent residents' positive response to the recent introduction of compulsory recycling.
2. Notes that:
 - Over 10,000 new green boxes were ordered by residents in the six-week run up to the introduction of compulsory recycling
 - Over 25% more recyclable waste was collected in July 2008 than in July 2007 – before the compulsory recycling start date of 4th August - and green box tonnages were up by 60%
 - August saw a significantly higher tonnage again
 - Brent is now recycling around 28% of its waste
3. Notes that for the first time in decades Brent's streets are among the cleanest in London, according to the latest official independent survey carried out by ENCAMS and Capital Standards which found no litter, stones, dirt or grit in 7 out of every 8 Brent streets inspected.
4. Notes that this represents a 20 per cent rise in street cleanliness, making Brent the 4th cleanest borough in London having previously been ranked 17th, and that this is a direct result of this Administration's decision to invest an additional £2.1million a year in making Brent cleaner, greener and safer.
5. Offers its thanks to all those residents who have enrolled as StreetWatchers, enabling the Council to respond quickly to any areas of concern.
6. Reaffirms its commitment to making Brent a cleaner, more sustainable Borough, acknowledges the efforts our residents have made in this area, and looks forward to further progress on recycling, sustainability and the creation of a cleaner, greener local environment.

(c) *Protection of confidential data*

The motion in the name of the Leader of the Conservative Group called for a complete review of all Council arrangements for the protection of sensitive and confidential data. Councillor Blackman referred to the

frequent stories of data being lost by government and other public bodies. He emphasised the huge amount of personal data held by the public sector not just on computers but paper as well and the duty of care these bodies had to ensure it was protected. It was necessary for staff to be ever vigilant because just one mistake could dangerously expose the Council. His motion therefore sought to complement existing IT reviews with a review of arrangements for data protection. He added that councillors also had a responsibility to protect personal data they held.

It was suggested that adopting protocols on the handling of sensitive data and making it clear they were to be adhered to was the most effective way of ensuring protection.

Councillor John moved an amendment to the motion which sought to delete the first two paragraphs. She stated that any number of organisations had lost sensitive information and there was no reason for the motion to be restricted to just government and public bodies. This was put to the vote and declared LOST.

The motion in the name of the Leader of the Conservative Group was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

- (i) this Council expresses its deep concern and disappointment at the disclosure that a memory stick containing confidential information has gone missing in the latest data loss fiasco to befall this beleaguered Labour Government;
- (ii) this Council notes that the lost data, which includes details of 10,000 prolific offenders as well as information on all 84,000 prisoners in England and Wales is the latest in a string of lost data incidents for the Government, which includes stolen laptops, lost computer discs and memory sticks as well as files left on trains;
- (iii) this Council believes that data protection needs to be taken increasingly seriously at all levels with sensitive information held securely at all times and as such calls for a complete review of all Council arrangements for the protection of sensitive and confidential data.

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm

R FOX
Mayor