



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
held on Monday, 21 November 2011 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor M Aslam Choudry

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Michael Adeyeye

COUNCILLORS:

Aden	Al-Ebadi
Allie	Arnold
Ashraf	Mrs Bacchus
Baker	Beck
Beckman	Butt
Castle	Cheese
Chohan	S Choudhary
Clues	Colwill
Crane	Cummins
Daly	Gladbaum
Harrison	Hashmi
Hector	Hirani
Hossain	Hunter
John	Kabir
Kansagra	Kataria
Leaman	Long
Lorber	Mashari
Matthews	McLennan
J Moher	R Moher
Moloney	Naheerathan
Ogunro	Oladapo
BM Patel	CJ Patel
HB Patel	HM Patel
RS Patel	Powney
Ms Shaw	Sheth
Sneddon	Thomas
Van Kalwala	

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: Councillors Beswick, Brown, Denselow, Green, Jones and Mitchell Murray

1. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 September 2011 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

2. **Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests**

Councillor Powney declared a personal interest in item 5 - Executive Report, by virtue of being a member of the West London Waste Authority.

Councillor Lorber declared a personal interest in item 10 - Motions, by virtue of being a trustee and director of Friends of Barham Library.

Councillor Colwill declared a personal interest in item 7 - First Reading of the Budget, by virtue of being a member of Brent Housing Partnership and the Tricycle Theatre.

Councillor Moloney declared a personal interest in item 7 - First Reading of the Budget, by virtue of being a member of Hillside Housing Trust and the Brent Irish Advisory Service.

3. **Mayor's announcements (including any petitions received)**

The Mayor announced that a vacancy had arisen in the Wembley Central ward after the resignation of Jayesh Mistry and that the subsequent by-election would take place on 22 December 2011.

The Mayor congratulated Councillor Beswick on being presented with a Veterans Badge from the Ministry of Defence for his services to the Armed Forces in the UK. He also reported that Councillor Beswick was taken ill during the week and was unable to attend this meeting. On behalf of the Council he wished him a speedy recovery.

The Mayor announced that he was hosting a Christmas Party on Thursday 15 December in the Blue Room Bar and Restaurant at 7.30pm. Tickets were available from his office.

In accordance with Standing Orders, the Mayor drew attention to the list of current petitions showing progress on dealing with them, which had been circulated around the chamber.

4. **Appointments to committees and outside bodies and appointment of chairs/vice chairs**

RESOLVED:

that the following appointments be made:

Committee	Appointment
Alcohol and Entertainment Licensing Committee	Councillor Thomas to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Councillor Mistry
Call-in Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Thomas to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Councillor Mistry
Partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor R Patel to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Councillor Mistry
Budget and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Oladapo to fill the vacancy for a 2nd alternate for Councillor Naheerathan left by the resignation of Councillor Mistry
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Oladapo to fill the vacancy for a 1st alternate for Councillor Aden left by the resignation of Councillor Mistry
Health Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Oladapo to fill the vacancy for a 2nd alternate for Councillor Ogunro left by the resignation of Councillor Mistry
General Purposes Committee	Councillor Naheerathan to fill the vacancy for a 2nd alternate for Councillor John left by the resignation of Councillor Mistry

5. Report from the Leader or members of the Executive

Temporary accommodation and housing benefit changes

Councillor Long (Lead member for Housing) reported that the changes to housing benefit being introduced by the Government were already having an impact on the borough. The number of homeless applications had increased by 29% over the last year and whilst those in temporary accommodation had remained stable there had been a 70% increase in those in bed and breakfast. Councillor Long stated that in January 2012 the Housing Benefit transitional arrangements would end and it was expected that hundreds of families would be approaching the Council in need.

Joint commissioning, the customer journey and transitions

Councillor R Moher (Lead member for Adults and Health) was pleased to report that, following work carried out with health partners on adult social care, agreement had been reached to create a commissioning support team. She hoped final approval would be reached soon and it appeared that Ealing and Hammersmith and Fulham were keen to join the team. She hoped this would not only save money but result in the provision of a more efficient service and provide a better deal to the customer.

Councillor R Moher reported that eight months ago the customer journey project had started which was designed to look at ways of ensuring that people were dealt

with at the first point of contact or passed to the appropriate agency. Early signs were that the new system was working well but it was too early to draw any final conclusions.

Councillor R Moher reported that agreement had been reached on the responsibility for young people with disabilities moving from children's services to adult social services at the age of 14 to enable the process of preparing for adulthood to begin sooner.

Road safety - national transport awards

Councillor J Moher (Lead member for Highways and Transportation) reported on the Council winning a prestigious national road safety award in recognition for the nearly 60% fall in the number of accidents in the borough achieved by a wide range of activities undertaken by past and present administrations. He congratulated the Transportation Unit on this achievement.

School places funding, A level results, fixed for the future award for young people's employability

Councillor Arnold (Lead member for Children and Families) reported that a good outcome had resulted from lobbying the Government and the Council had been allocated £25M to provide additional school places. This was the third highest sum allocated nationally. There was still a funding gap compared to what was needed but nevertheless provision could now start to be delivered.

Councillor Arnold reported that the 'O' level average points score was above the national average with more pupils taking and completing 'O' levels. Together with improved early years results the quality of Brent's schools continued to be high.

Councillor Arnold reported that she had received a cheque for £726,000 from the lottery fund to go towards improving the career prospects for looked after children and young offenders.

Waste and recycling strategy

Councillor Powney (Lead member for Environment and Neighbourhoods) reported that following the introduction of new waste collection arrangements on 3 October the rates of recycling had increased and he paid tribute to the Administration and the officers for what had already been achieved.

6. Questions from the Opposition and other Non- Executive Members

Councillor Allie asked whether the Council had any plans to alter its housing allocation scheme to give any priority to people in work given the importance of encouraging strong mixed communities in areas with lots of social housing. Councillor Long (Lead member for Housing) replied that the Council was presently out to consultation on its housing allocation policy and the issue of including employment status presented the Council with a conundrum. Councillor Allie responded by saying that a ghetto effect could arise from placing a high proportion of out of work people in areas of high social housing and by adding in a priority for those on the waiting list who were in work it would create a more mixed tenancy. He felt this should be taken account of in the Council's housing allocation policy.

Councillor Hashmi asked why parking meters did not accept some coins such as 5 pence, and why parking machines did not give change when people put in pound coins and overpaid for parking. He felt this was very inconvenient to many people who needed to park. Councillor J Moher (Lead member for Highways and Transportation) replied that most parking meters were of a standard design. If people did not have the correct money they usually had the option to pay by phone. He did not think it was a big problem for most people. Councillor Hashmi responded by saying that he had spoken to many residents who did not have a credit card and he submitted that they should not be required to pay by this means. He felt the Council must be making a lot of money from drivers who did not have the correct change for the parking meters. Councillor Hashmi stated that the technology now existed for parking time to be extended by the amount that people over paid and that this should be looked into.

Councillor Sneddon stated that everybody had noticed how the streets were getting dirtier and more littered as a result of the Council's decision to reduce street sweeping from three times a week to one or two times a week. He had been contacted by many people who lived near those areas with a high footfall pointing out the effects this was having. He added that the effect was cumulative and each time there was more litter and rubbish than before to clean up. Councillor Sneddon also felt there was a big problem with overflowing litter bins at the weekend, as the street cleaning staff were no longer around to empty the bins as often. He asked what remedial action the Council would be taking. Councillor J Moher (Lead member for Highways and Transportation) replied that the majority of the reductions had been in residential areas with a light litter drop. However, he acknowledged that a build-up of litter could occur in more built up areas. It was therefore important to educate people on the anti-social effects of dropping litter. Councillor Moher assured members that the street sweeping contract was monitored and where problem areas came to light they were dealt with. Councillor Sneddon responded by suggesting that there had to be the flexibility to target the worst areas and that consideration should be given to altering the frequency of street cleaning to better meet the need in the borough.

Councillor Lorber asked if it could be explained why nothing had been done to stop Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) purchasing new homes in Barnet as part of the settled homes initiative which could not then be used to house families in need because Brent had not obtained Barnet's permission. These homes were now on the market and had cost taxpayers thousands of pounds in purchase costs without benefitting anyone. Councillor Long (Lead member for Housing) replied by admitting that mistakes had been made by both the Council and BHP but that negotiations were still continuing with Barnet. Before these were concluded she would not be finally commenting on the matter. Councillor Lorber responded by saying that he felt the reply he had received showed complacency and that this was a fiasco that needed dealing with immediately. He pointed out that the funding from the Homes and Communities Agency should have delivered 225 new homes for people in need in Brent this year but as a result of this episode the target had been revised to 115. Losing all the money was bad enough but he felt the tragedy was that so many families in desperate need of housing had lost out. This had happened when there were three Labour councillors on the BHP board and no Liberal Democrats so it was Labour's responsibility.

Councillor Cheese asked how much the taxpayer spent on paying for the Executive members to eat out at a hotel after the end of the Awaydays this year. Councillor John replied that the question was a last resort from a political group with nothing of substance to offer. The meal had been arranged to foster good working relations between lead members and chief officers and this was not an exceptional event. Discussions at the Awaydays had centred on the biggest change faced by local government in a generation and providing the means to discuss the issues was very important. Councillor Cheese acknowledged that only light refreshment had been provided but felt that, given the budget situation and the fact that so many people were struggling, it was totally inappropriate for the Executive members to treat themselves to meals at the taxpayer's expense.

Councillor Van Kalwala stated that it was presently a terrible time for young people living with the consequences of the government's actions and asked what the Council was doing to get young people into training and work. Councillor Arnold (Lead member for Children and Families) replied that an effective vocational framework had been developed. There had been a 17% increase in the take up of training opportunities but this was below the level of comparable neighbouring boroughs. She added that the key was to enhance the supply of job opportunities through job creation schemes and apprenticeships which provided a vital route into work. Councillor Van Kalwala congratulated the Council on the work it was doing and the companies the Council was working with.

Councillor Gladbaum stated that those parents being consulted on possible nursery closures were confused, and possibly some councillors as well, because they had been told that the Early Intervention Grant was no longer ring fenced, but the MP for Brent Central who was a Government minister for Children and Families had told them it was still ring fenced. Councillor Gladbaum asked what the true position was. Councillor Arnold (Lead member for Children and Families) replied the grant was no longer ring fenced and she agreed that it did not help parents to be so misled. Councillor Gladbaum added that this confirmed what she had always thought; that the Liberal Democrats could not be trusted and said different things to different people.

Councillor McLennan referred to the London Councils' research which showed Brent would be disproportionately affected by cuts to the Local Housing Allowance, and by the cap on Universal Credit, and asked what preparations the Council was making to ensure people were protected from the coalition government's attempts at social engineering through the welfare system. Councillor Long (Lead member for Housing) replied that she was pleased to say that a proactive approach was being taken to try to protect local residents because, as the London Councils report stated, one in three Brent residents would be affected. All those families potentially affected by the changes had been written to inviting them to seek help. A grant was available from the Department for Work and Pensions but this was limited and she expressed continuing concern because it was not known if it would be possible to protect them completely from the government's actions which might force families to move out of the borough. Councillor McLennan thanked the lead member for her reply.

Councillor Naheerathan referred to the changes in local government housing finance to be introduced in 2012 and asked how tenants would benefit from the reforms. Councillor Long (Lead member for Housing) replied that reform of the

Housing Revenue Account which began under the last government was continuing and would benefit Brent as far as the consequent debt reduction was concerned but the Government had made announcements that day on right to buy discounts that threatened this. This would make it more difficult to make the reforms work for the benefit of the Council and tenants. Councillor Naheerathan thanked the lead member for her response.

Councillor Colwill stated that he had been seeking information on the current investigation at Furness Road Primary School into financial mismanagement but was disappointed he had not been able to get any information from the Children and Families Department and so felt he had to bring the matter to the attention of Full Council. He asked why opposition councillors had not received a briefing or been told that an investigation was occurring. Councillor Arnold (Lead member for Children and Families) replied that she understood all members had received a briefing on the situation at Furness School. An interim executive board for the school had been put in place and the past Head was subject to on-going disciplinary action. Councillor Colwill responded that no briefing had been provided until he had been forced to draw attention to the matter.

7. Procedural motion

Councillor Moloney moved a procedural motion.

RESOLVED:

that in respect of summons item 7 - First Reading Debate 2012/13 budget:

the Leader be permitted up to 10 minutes in which to present the reports, the Leaders of the Liberal Democrat Group and the Conservative Group be permitted up to 10 minutes each to debate the item, with a general debate to follow, in accordance with standing order 44(b).

8. First Reading debate on the 2012/13 - 2015/16 budget

Councillor John stated that the Council was at a bleak juncture in time and yet many people had not yet grasped the enormity of what local government was facing. It was not just dealing with budget reductions but having to change the way it did business. In future the Council would be a smaller organisation with less resources and delivering services in a different way. The Localism Act would make big changes and along with the local housing allowance and universal credit caps she felt this amounted to social engineering that would drive people out of central London. The universal credit cap would affect Brent the most of all London boroughs and amounted to an assault on poor Londoners. The combined effect of both caps would result in 130,000 households across London finding their rent unaffordable, of which 10,000 would be in Brent. Larger households would be more harshly affected. Councillor John also referred to the decision that benefit should be paid direct to the claimant rather than the landlord which would inevitably mean some people not paying their rent in such tough times and collection costs for the Council increasing. Councillor John stated that despite the dramatic effects of the Government's policies they were not working as could be seen by increasing youth unemployment and unemployment generally. She referred to the Labour Party's alternative plans to create jobs. In an effort to mitigate the harmful effects of

government policy on local residents, Councillor John stated that the Council was adopting the following important priorities:

- employment
- neighbourhood services
- services for young people
- social care and health
- regeneration
- diversity and democracy

Councillor Lorber stated that the situation faced by the Council was a result of the past Labour government's legacy. He backed this up by stating that there was a two year time lag behind all policy decisions meaning the current situation was the result of decisions taken by the last government. He submitted that the Council was fortunate that the previous Council administration had introduced the One Council programme which now allowed the Council to deliver a balanced budget. However, one aspect of the programme had not been delivered and he challenged the administration to reach the stated target of one manager for every six workers and by this means achieve further savings. Councillor Lorber did not feel it was all bad news by referring to a three year Council Tax freeze being made possible, a £25M award from the Government to address the shortage in school places and low interest rates meaning the cost of the Council's borrowing was cheaper. He criticised the administration for believing it knew better and did not listen to the views of local people. He referred to the cuts to the library service and school crossing patrols which affected young people and the cuts in street cleansing which had resulted in overflowing litter bins. He suggested it was time to stop producing the Brent magazine and asked why festivals organised by local people had had funding cut but the Council retained a festivals team which was more expensive to maintain. Councillor Lorber also asked why buildings were being kept empty when voluntary sector partners were looking for premises. He referred to paragraph 5.3 of the Executive's report and asked how it could produce proposals that were at the same time both comprehensive and targeted. He ended by challenging the Council to deliver services that the people wanted.

Councillor HB Patel stated that the administration was saying that it was not elected on a programme of having to make massive cuts, however the choice was between dreaming of what was wanted or striving to achieve the dream. He said that everyone knew before the last elections that massive cuts in public expenditure were going to be needed because the previous government had overspent. What was needed was a coherent programme for how to achieve the cutbacks required. He felt it was not a coherent approach to shut libraries in the face of strong community opposition and asked that this be reconsidered. Councillor Patel referred to the government grant to support a freeze in Council Tax and how this had been used to increase reserves rather than support services and how the Council intended to do the same again for 2012/13. He felt that if the grant was accepted it and the existing reserves should be used to maintain services. Councillor Patel referred to the proposal for councils to collect and retain their business rates which would make it more important to support businesses to grow. He felt a simple solution would be to stop penalising people with parking charges. He ended by adding that more resources needed to be put into maintaining pavements and roads, street cleansing and providing hot meals for the elderly.

It was submitted that the budget plan would seek to deliver a fair, safe and secure future for residents. It was welcomed that the Council would look to address issues around employment and providing jobs. It provided financial prudence by ensuring adequate reserves but at the same time delivered savings through the One Council programme. The Government had decided to cut hard and fast and by doing so had targeted those that could least afford it. The clarity of the Executive's vision was welcomed. The importance of looking after those in care was stressed and it was felt to be important to take an active approach that would protect vulnerable people. It was stated that for the last two years the administration had been forced to make millions of pounds of cuts because of decisions taken by the Government. The damage this was inflicting was becoming increasingly unbearable. More young people were out of work than two years ago. In the circumstances, it was submitted that that it was essential for the Council to maintain services and that through the leadership provided by the Executive this was being done despite having to find further cuts. Concern was expressed over the current overspend and the projected budget gap shown in table 2 of the Director of Finance and Corporate Service's report and it was stated that this would be subject to scrutiny over the coming months. It was felt the priority needed to be to strengthen local communities.

Reference was made to the £2.6M provided by the Government to freeze the Council Tax and the view was supported that this should be used to protect front line services and not to increase the level of reserves. It was also suggested that the monies returned from the Icelandic banks was in effect a windfall and could be used in the best way possible to protect front line services, including libraries. Decisions made by the last government on caring for the ill and elderly were criticised and it was felt that assurance was needed that the social services were working efficiently. The budget was about making decisions on how resources were allocated and it was submitted that more resources were needed for street cleaning with the view that litter bins were overflowing being supported. It was also pointed out that certain areas with a heavy footfall such as around Dollis Hill station, needed more frequent targeted sweeping. The view that residents should be listened to more and consequently resources targeted more toward the services wanted by residents was supported.

A view was submitted that the real problem lay in the level of borrowing by the last government in order to save the banks. This had nothing to do with the current government and cuts had to be made to avoid the country being bankrupt. However, an alternative view put forward was that the downturn in the world economy had started on Wall Street through bad investment decisions and so it was spurious to blame the last government.

Criticism was levelled at the Government's funding to keep the Council Tax down which was seen as a means of eroding the underlying revenue position of the Council for future years. It was submitted that residents should expect to pay a fair rate for a fair level of service. The Council had significantly reduced its staff numbers and Appendix A of the report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Service's showed the level of premature retirement costs being met. The view that the present time was very worrying was echoed.

A plea was made for councillors to stand up for the interests of Brent which had seen its budget slashed by 28 % when other councils had only been required to save in four years what Brent had saved in one year.

RESOLVED:

that the broad budgetary priorities set out in the report from the Executive be noted and the issues raised in the First Reading debate be referred to the Budget and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

9. **Reports from the Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

Councillor Van Kalwala introduced the report by pointing out the change from reporting to the meeting orally to producing a written report. He asked members to read the report before them and thanked everyone who had contributed to the work of overview and scrutiny outlined in the report.

10. **Changes to Part 3 of the Constitution: Contract Standing Orders**

The report before members proposed some minor amendments in relation to Contract Standing Orders concerning the procurement of works contracts.

RESOLVED:

that the Constitution be amended to incorporate the changes to Contract Standing Orders shown in Appendix 1 of the report submitted.

11. **Motions**

11.1 **Waste and recycling success**

Councillor Powney moved the motion circulated in his name by stating that although the new waste and recycling arrangements were a money saving exercise they had also proved to be a good project by achieving a substantial increase in recycling and benefiting the environment. He referred to the circulated amendment to the motion by the Liberal Democrats which he submitted showed them to be on the wrong side of the debate by constantly criticising the arrangements instead of providing constructive comment.

Councillor Lorber stated that, contrary to what Councillor Powney had said, everyone agreed about the need to increase recycling, but not on how to go about it. He referred to the different colour bins being filled with the wrong material because the Council had failed to get the correct messages across to local residents. This contributed to the worsening condition of Brent streets and he challenged the administration to carry out a consultation with residents on what they thought of the current street sweeping arrangements to test if they viewed them as a success or failure. Councillor Lorber moved an amendment to the motion which sought to remove reference to the success of the new arrangements being attributed to the Council's leadership. Following a vote the amendment was declared LOST.

Councillor Colwill felt that the information contained in the public information leaflet was informative and that the new arrangements appeared to be working satisfactorily at the moment. However he expressed concern at the poor level of cleanliness in the Kingsbury area.

RESOLVED:-

that the remarkable early success of the new waste and recycling arrangements introduced by Brent's Labour administration be noted, which in its first month has achieved:

- a 50% improvement in recycling rates in one month;
- recycling rates of 45%;
- a 41% reduction in landfill waste;

to also note that landfill causes a litany of environmental problems, including contributing to climate change; and that accelerated landfill taxes mean these measures will save Brent taxpayers millions of pounds;

to note that the Labour Group was elected on a manifesto commitment to introduce measures aiming to double the recycling rate to 60%, that the Council's opposition group have campaigned against increased recycling, and that Labour is the only party in Brent committed to recycling;

that Environment and Neighbourhood Services officers be congratulated on their tireless work to implement the new scheme, and the leadership of this Council for showing the vision and commitment to implement policies which will make Brent one of the greenest boroughs in Britain.

11.2 **Fairs fare**

Councillor J Moher moved the motion circulated in his name. An amendment to the motion was moved by Councillor Lorber which sought changes to the motion which included removing reference to welcoming the proposed fare package.

Following a vote the amendment was declared LOST. The motion was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

to note that Conservative Mayor of London, Boris Johnson has chosen to increase bus, tube and train fares above inflation for the fourth year running, introducing four year average fares increases amounting to 33% - hugely above the inflation rate of 13.9% over the same period;

to note that Boris Johnson's fare increases have meant the cost of a single bus fare using Oyster has risen by 56% - from 90p in 2008 to £1.40 in 2012; a zone 1-6 travel card has increased in cost by 22% - costing Brent residents £509 a year more to get to work;

to note that if elected Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone has promised to cut tube fares by 5% in October 2012 and that he has also committed to freezing fares in 2013 and not increasing fares by more than inflation after that and that these plans do not involve reductions in service or investment;

to note that under Ken Livingstone's fares plans, the average commuter in London and Brent would stand to be on average £800 better off over the next four years;

to note that a reduction in fares will reduce the cost of the Freedom Pass to London boroughs;

that Council welcomes Ken Livingstone's proposed fare package, which will cut the cost of travel for thousands of commuters here in Brent and put ordinary Londoners, struggling with the cost of living first.

11.3 **School places**

Councillor Crane moved the motion circulated in his name. An amendment to the motion was moved by Councillor Lorber seeking to insert reference to the role of the Minister of State for Children and Families.

Following a vote the amendment was declared LOST. The motion was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

that the Leader, Executive and Council officers be congratulated in their successful lobbying campaign to secure government funding to address the serious shortage of school places in the Borough.

to note that:

- the allocation of nearly £25m is the third highest of any authority in the country, and acknowledges the relentless pressure on school places in the Borough;
- lobbying central government was adopted as formal Council policy by the Council's Executive in August 2011;
- in line with this policy, the Leader of the Council wrote to the Minister of State for Children and Families highlighting the shortage of school places in Brent.

to further note that the allocation is insufficient to meet the long term needs of Brent's schoolchildren and to congratulate the Council leadership for pursuing further lobbying to secure additional funding, and calls on central government to recognise the basic right to education of Brent's children and young people.

11.4 **Climate change**

Councillor Powney moved the motion circulated in his name. Following a vote the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

to note that climate change is the greatest threat to the future of our planet and that urgent action is needed if we are to reverse its effects;

to also note that there are alarming signs that the effects of global warming are already underway, with storms, floods and droughts happening more often around the world;

that Council recognises that while climate change represents a serious threat to our planet it is also presents a significant opportunity to build a clean energy economy in the UK and secure thousands of jobs across the country;

to note the measures being undertaken by Brent Council to reduce its impact on climate change, including the move to the Civic Centre, the introduction of emissions based parking permits, the setting of a carbon emissions target and reducing emissions from landfill;

that the Government be called on to show real leadership at the forthcoming UN climate change conference in Durban by pushing the EU to commit to a second period of the Kyoto Protocol, as a route towards a global deal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and delivering on climate finance to help poorer countries deal with the effects of global warming.

11.5 Brent library service

Councillor Lorber moved the motion circulated in his name and the names of Councillors Ashraf and Brown by firstly paying tribute to the hundreds of residents for the campaign they had supported to save the six libraries that had been closed and urged that the administration listen to their voices. He submitted that a policy of closure rather than transformation was being pursued. He referred to the planned closure of the Willesden library for up to two years while the site was redeveloped during which time alternative premises would be needed and criticised the decision to be closing nearby libraries now. Councillor Lorber felt that some boroughs smaller than Brent had shown the way in keeping open more libraries by co-locating them in buildings with other facilities.

Councillor Kansagra supported the motion and stated that he felt the libraries could be saved. He referred to the site of Preston library which he understood the Council had plans for but which he submitted should include the provision of local services, including a library.

Councillor Powney referred to the legal judgement on the Council's decision which had found in the Council's favour on all aspects. He expressed regret that the Council had been taken to court but having been so it was forced to defend its decisions. He submitted that by 2014/15 the Council would have more books in its libraries which would mean they could provide a better service and attract more visitors. In addressing the points contained in the motion, Councillor Powney replied that he could not comment at this time on the use of the Cricklewood and Kensal Rise library buildings, that the importance of bringing the closed library buildings back into use was an important one, that the closure of the libraries had not discriminated against any group of people and that the Council had discussed with local groups the future running of some libraries and so this did not need to be done again. Councillor Powney explained that 97% of Brent residents lived within 1.5 miles of one of the remaining libraries and the other 3% lived within 1.5% miles of a library within a neighbouring borough. The Council had a duty to meet the cost of redundancy arising from the closures and that he expected that other boroughs

would choose to reduce the stock and the opening hours of their libraries in order to make savings but that Brent had chosen a better way forward.

Following a vote the motion was declared LOST.

11.6 Police Community Support officers

Councillor Lorber moved the motion circulated on behalf of himself and Councillors Brown and Beck which sought to request the Executive to use the money saved by the delay in filling Police Community Support Officer posts for crime reduction measures. Following a vote the motion was declared LOST.

11.7 Dirty streets

Councillor Lorber moved the motion on behalf of himself and Councillors Ashraf, Beck and Brown which sought to ask the Executive to take action to clean up the streets of Brent. Following a vote the motion was declared LOST.

11.8 Police numbers

Councillor Kansagra moved the motion circulated in his name by referring to a leaflet distributed in the Queensbury area which he felt wrongly suggested that police were being withdrawn from the area and crime was rising. The suggestion that crime and the fear of crime was increasing was caused by the circulation of wrong statistics and scaremongering. Councillor Kansagra submitted that police numbers were being maintained and he called for an apology to be made to the residents of Queensbury. Councillor Kansagra reminded members that the Council had recently congratulated the Borough Commander on the performance of the police.

Councillor Lorber felt care needed to be taken when discussing crime and the fear of crime. He referred to a recent photo opportunity by the GLA Assembly member for Brent and Harrow wearing a 'Not Another Drop' t-shirt when the Council had recently cut the funding to this campaign. He expressed an interest in the number of additional Police Community Support Officers recruited to the borough which had recently been reduced. The remaining posts had only recently been recruited to and this had accrued an underspend which he felt could be used to support other initiatives in the area of crime reduction.

Councillor John stated that no apology would be made when the figures showed crime increasing in Brent and across London. She felt the summer riots should have given the Mayor of London pause for thought. Ken Livingstone had introduced the safer neighbourhood service when he was Mayor and if the funding had not been reduced the Council would not have had to reduce the number of PCSOs. Councillor John stated that policing was important to the borough and reducing the service was not acceptable.

Following a vote the motion was declared LOST.

11.9 Libraries

Councillor Kansagra moved the motion circulated in the name of the Conservative Group which sought to call upon all councillors with a library in their ward threatened with closure to express their support for the SOS campaign. Following a vote the motion was declared LOST.

11.10 **Regeneration funding**

Councillor Kansagra moved the motion circulated in the name of the Conservative Group. An amendment was moved by Councillor Lorber on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group which was accepted. Following a vote the amended motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED:-

that the news that Brent is to receive a portion of the £50million distributed by the Mayor of London to boost regeneration and rejuvenate town centre's in time for the 2012 Olympic Games be welcomed;

to note that this money will be spent on improving Willesden Green High Road and will include re-vamping empty shop fronts, encouraging new business into the area and installing new street furniture which will improve the quality of life of many;

that this Council believes that this will be a major step forward in stimulating economic growth in Willesden and thanks the Mayor of London for his valid and welcome contribution to the future of Brent.

12. **Urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm

COUNCILLOR M ASLAM CHOUDRY
Mayor