

London Borough of Brent – Decisions taken by the Council on Monday 20 September 2021

PRESENT: Councillors Colacicco (Mayor), Aden (Deputy Mayor), Abdi, Afzal, Agha, Ahmed, Akram, M.Butt, S.Butt, Chan, Chappell, Chohan, S.Choudhary, A.Choudry, Colwill, Conneely, Crane, Daly, Dar, Denselow, Dixon, Ethapemi, Ezeajughi, Farah, Gbajumo, Georgiou, Grahl, Hassan, Hector, Hylton, Johnson, Kabir, Kansagra, Kelcher, Kennelly, Knight, Lo, Long, Mahmood, Maurice, McLeish, Miller, Naheerathan, Nerva, M.Patel, Sangani, Shah, Shahzad, Ketan Sheth, Krupa Sheth, Southwood, Stephens, Tatler, Thakkar.

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1	Apologies for Absence	<p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Donnelly-Jackson, Hirani, Lloyd, McLennan, Mashari, Mitchell-Murray, Murray, R.Patel & Perrin.</p> <p>Councillors Lloyd, R.Patel & Perrin had submitted apologies as they were unable to attend meetings in person due to underlying reasons requiring them to continue isolating related to Covid-19.</p>
2	Minutes of the Previous Meeting	The minutes of the previous Full Council meeting held on Monday 12 July 2021 were approved as a correct record.
3	Declarations of Interest	No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.
4	Mayor's Announcements (including any petitions received)	<p>Noted the announcements from the Mayor in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pride of Brent Youth Awards • Count us In Engagement Programme • Brent Council Staff Long Service Afternoon Tea • Emergency Services Day & Flag Raising event • Participatory Budgeting – “You Decide” Programme • Petitions
5	Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies and Appointment of Chairs/Vice Chairs (if any)	<p>AGREED the following changes in Committee & Outside Body memberships:</p> <p>(1) Councillor Kennelly to be replaced by Councillor Grahl as a full member of the</p>

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		Licensing Committee.
6	Deputations (if any)	No deputations were received at the meeting.
7	Questions from Members of the Public	<p>NOTED</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The written response provided by the Lead Member for Environment to a public question submitted by N.Kollgaard regarding the Council’s use of flexible car sharing schemes. No supplementary question was received. 2. The written response provided by the Lead Member for Public Health, Culture and Leisure to a public question submitted by C.Meagher-Mansilla regarding the provision of leisure and cultural facilities in areas of regeneration including those surrounding Gladstone Park. No supplementary question was received. 3. The written and supplementary verbal response provided by the Lead Member for Environment to a public question submitted by G.Aldrich regarding parking and other enforcement activity around Queensbury Circle and local footways. 4. The written and supplementary verbal response provided by the Lead Member for Environment to a public question submitted by P.Laurance regarding engagement and the progress being made against the Brent Climate & Ecological Strategy First Year Delivery Plan 2021-22. 5. The written and supplementary verbal response provided by the Lead Member for Environment to a public question submitted by K. Anderson regarding the development proposals for Kilburn Square and preference identified y for a reduction in scale and lower density scheme.
8	Petitions (if any)	<p>NOTED</p> <p>(1) the following petitions presented at the meeting:</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Josie Warshaw, supporting the introduction of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods across the borough. • Sarah Dever, objecting to the introduction of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in the Crickelwood area and seeking assurances around public consultation, displaced traffic and equalities. <p>(2) The response from the Lead Member for Regeneration, Property & Planning to both the deputations and petitions, which highlighted the Council’s responsibility to address the climate emergency and related public health issues, whilst also acknowledging the need to engage with residents and key stakeholders to ensure any action taken worked for all parties. As part of the response, the opportunity was taken to outline a number of Active Travel initiatives the Council had introduced to address these issues (including expansion of the School Street Programme & Cycling Networks). The petitioners were also advised that the Council would soon be publishing its draft Long Term Transport Strategy, which would outline the ambitions for transport within the borough and how this would also contribute towards addressing the climate emergency and related public health issues. The Lead Member also encouraged residents to reflect on changes that could be made to their own lifestyles in order to address these issues, whilst providing an assurance that the Council would seek to work with residents in order to develop the necessary infrastructure to support such changes.</p>
9	Annual Report from the Leader of the Council	NOTED the annual report provided by the Leader of the Council on the work of the Council and state of the borough.
10	Reports from the Leader and Cabinet	NOTED the report and update provided at the meeting by Councillor M. Butt, Leader of the Council, highlighting the ongoing work being undertaken across each Cabinet

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		portfolio in order to provide ongoing support and services to residents across the borough. Members were also asked to note the list of urgent Executive decisions taken since the last Council meeting.
11	Questions from the Opposition and other Non-Cabinet Members	<p>NOTED</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The written response provided by the Lead Member for Schools, Employment & Skills to a question submitted by Councillor Chan regarding the attainment of Year 11 & 13 students across the borough under the revised assessment arrangements and support being provided to enable pupils to realise their future potential. No supplementary question was raised. 2. The written and supplementary verbal response provided by the Lead Member for Public Health, Culture & Leisure to a question submitted by Councillor Daly in relation to the steps being taken by the Council with the NHS to plan for the upcoming winter flu season and data on progress with the vaccination programme that could be made available to members. 3. The written and supplementary response provided by the Lead Member for Housing & Welfare Reform to a question submitted by Councillor Ezeajughi regarding the Councils ongoing commitment towards the delivery of high standard homes and housing services across the borough and current proposals relating to St Raphael's Estate. 4. The written and supplementary verbal response provided by the Leader of the Council to a question submitted by Councillor Kansagra regarding the Council's response to the Baroness Casey review on the issues experienced around Wembley Stadium in the build up to the UEFA European 2020 Championship

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		<p>Final including progress on the Council’s review of licensing arrangements.</p> <p>Responses were also provided by the relevant Lead Members on the following additional questions raised during the open session of this part of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Chan regarding the Council’s efforts to support residents use of electric vehicles. • Councillor Kennelly regarding the concerns highlighted by local residents in relation to the design and impact of the Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme within his ward. • Councillor Georgiou regarding the Council’s policy on development of tall buildings, with specific concerns identified in relation to Alperton and response to the GLA Planning & Regeneration Committee’s recent review in relation to the impact of Tall buildings and density in relation to Covid-19. • Councillor Long regarding the promotion of credit unions to Council staff and residents of the borough. • Councillor Choudhary regarding further funding from central government for infrastructure in the borough. • Councillor Miller regarding development of the Council’s relationship with the community and voluntary sector following the pandemic. • Councillor Georgiou regarding the action and time being taken to address issues raised in relation to the condition of the Council’s social housing stock. • Councillor Kennelly regarding the Council’s support for veterans identified as homelessness within the borough.
12	Report from Chairs of Scrutiny Committees	NOTED the update reports provided by the Chairs of the Community and Wellbeing and Resources & Public Realm and Scrutiny Committees.

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		<p>Responses were also provided by the relevant Scrutiny Chair on the following additional questions raised during the open session of this part of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Kabir expressing concern at the recent CQC Inspection of services at Northwick Park Hospital and serious issues identified in relation to maternity services. Support was expressed for the work being undertaken by the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee in their ongoing monitoring of actions being taken to address the issues identified with relevant partners. • Councillor Maurice regarding his experience of the quality of care received at Northwick Park Hospital.
13	Report from the Vice-Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee	NOTED the update report provided by the Vice Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee.
14	Non Cabinet Members' Debate	<p>The following motion was unanimously AGREED as the outcome of the non-cabinet member debate:</p> <p><u>Cuts to Universal Credit</u></p> <p>This council understands how hard this borough has been hit by the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of the tragedy that is the loss of more than 720 lives, the uncertainty of a local economy put on hold, and the hardship of tens of thousands of Brent's residents either furloughed or out of work and reliant on an inadequate Universal Credit.</p> <p>Therefore, the announcement of this government plans to cut Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit later this year comes with serious implications, especially in light of</p>

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		<p>the furlough scheme coming to an end in September.</p> <p>This council is concerned at the soaring figures of food bank usage in the borough coupled with the increase in gas prices as we wind down into the colder months forming a perfect storm. One which emerging research has shown will force thousands of families into severe poverty.</p> <p>This council notes its efforts to shield its residents from the full impact of the economic downturn in recent years, particularly in anticipation of the furlough scheme ending. Thus far this council has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up significant monetary support through the Brent Resident Support Fund which has been access by thousands of residents. • Contributed a further £500k to Brent works to extend this scheme as furlough ends. • Organised two Job Fairs to help connect residents with potential employers. • Worked with businesses to place young people into 'kick start', a new youth work placement scheme, helping to provide a much needed boost to youth employment in the borough. • Employed an ethical approach to financial inclusion which is reflected in Brent's Ethical Debt and Debt Write Off policy. • Supported private renters to sustain tenancies and avoid eviction.

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		<p>However this council recognises the limits of its abilities to mitigate the economic downturn for its most vulnerable residents and calls upon the government to step up to its duty to protect those most at risk.</p> <p>This council points out, that families most at risk of deepening poverty will not benefit from the increases because they are subject to the benefits cap. Migrants without recourse to public funds, many of whom work in industries hardest hit by the lockdown, have also been left out in the cold and millions of families reliant on the legacy benefit system did not receive the uplift channelled through Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit.</p> <p>This council therefore calls upon the Government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the £20-a-week increase to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit early contributions which was brought in to help households deal with the impact of COVID-19. • Extend this to other benefit schemes to help residents who are most in financial need and have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. <p>Support Councils through better funding to help them up skill and retrain residents at risk of unemployment as furlough ends.</p>
15	Continuation of Temporary Delegations	<p>Council RESOLVED to:</p> <p>(1) agree that the delegated powers set out in Appendix 1 of the report remain in place until the 2022 Annual Council meeting.</p>

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		(2) note that delegated powers 1 – 4 in Appendix 1 of the report had also been agreed by the Leader for the same period in respect of executive functions.
16	Motions	<p>(1) The following motion submitted by the Conservative Group was declared lost:</p> <p><u>Illegal use of E-Scooters</u></p> <p>This Council is concerned at the rise in the illegal use of E-scooters which are often dangerously ridden and ridden on pavements without insurance.</p> <p>This Council is especially concerned that it is only a matter of time before a pedestrian, cyclist or other vulnerable person is seriously injured or killed as a result of the illegal actions of the E-scooter rider.</p> <p>This Council will not take part in any plans to join a scheme, whereby riders can hire these scooters as there is no guarantee that they will be ridden safely.</p> <p>This Council notes and praises the Police for taking action against illegal scooter riders by confiscating the scooter and charging the rider with driving without insurance and driving not in accordance with a licence.</p> <p>This Council would also like to see those individuals who are caught riding E-scooters on the pavement, charged with dangerous driving as well as having no insurance.</p> <p>Having given consideration to the above, this Council agrees to lobby the Government to ban the sale, importation and use of these dangerous machines in the UK.</p> <p>Councillors Colwill, Kansagra and Maurice voted in favour of the above motion.</p>

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		<p>All other members present at the meeting voted against the above motion.</p> <p>(2) The following Motion submitted by the Labour Group was AGREED unanimously:</p> <p><u>End the Fire and Rehire Practice</u></p> <p>This council notes the unethical use of the fire and rehire tactics by certain employers, forcing their staff to accept unfair terms and conditions, leaving many having to work longer hours and for lower pay.</p> <p>While the Prime Minister has called this “unacceptable” he has continually refused to take action to outlaw the practice, raising concerns that he will not intervene in this race to the bottom by some employers.</p> <p>This council notes that this practice has been rejected here at Brent as is specifically outlined in the procurement strategy. Furthermore, we have ensured all our service providers abide by these terms.</p> <p>This council stands with the campaign that has been promoted by our local member of parliament, Barry Gardiner MP who has spotlighted this unsavoury practice, working with trade union partners to defend the right of workers against unscrupulous employers.</p> <p>Workers should not be scapegoated to carry the burden of lost profits.</p> <p>This council therefore believes action is required to ensure local residents are protected against such unethical practices and agrees:</p>

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		<p>(1) To request that the Leader of the Council write to the Prime Minister demanding the full protection of employees subject to these terms and conditions.</p> <p>(2) To continue to encourage fellow councils to exclude from their authorised list of suppliers any business' using these Fire and Rehire Tactics and to update their procurement and social value policy to reflect that of ethical practices. Furthermore we call upon them to update existing contracts with suppliers in accordance with this commitment.</p> <p>(3) To continue to foster good working relationships with Trade Unions here at Brent.</p> <p>(4) To work with our anchor institutions and key partners to bring forward plans for the introduction of a local employer charter for companies to work toward with Trade Unions. This should include worker rights, support for the TUC Great Jobs' agenda and with the real living wage campaign at its heart.</p> <p>Brent council notes its records as a good and ethical employer, and truly believes that all workers deserve well-paid secure and meaningful work.</p> <p>(3) The following Motion submitted by the Labour Group was also AGREED unanimously:</p> <p><u>Refugee Support</u></p> <p>This Council notes with deep sadness the unfolding and ongoing humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.</p>

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		<p>This Council profoundly regrets the developments over the last few months following two decades of progress towards a more stable, and prosperous Afghanistan. Our thoughts are with the Afghan people and our residents who have family there at this time.</p> <p>This Council is therefore ashamed at the slow and inadequate efforts this government has pledged for the near quarter of a million displaced Afghan people, the number which continues to grow rapidly.</p> <p>As a Council we call on the UK government to stand by what should be a non-negotiable obligation to provide sanctuary to those in need, not least our British Nationals and Afghan partners who remain in-country desperately awaiting evacuation.</p> <p>Thus far, this government has pledged to home 5000 Afghan refugees this year who have supported the Armed Forces through the ‘Afghan locally employed scheme’, with a view to increase this number to 20,000 in the coming years. This would equate to a meagre six people rehomed per constituency in the UK, falling extremely short of our humanitarian duty as a nation.</p> <p>Focussing on the humanitarian crisis, the Council remains committed to providing as much direct and immediate help and support as possible to inbound refugees, and is determined – highlighting the need for adequate resources to be made readily available by government – to enable our newest residents to regain control of their lives and, in time, build for themselves real and lasting futures.</p> <p>As part of this approach, the Council is working closely with the Home Office and has provided shelter for two Afghan families, whilst planning a more cohesive welcome programme for further Afghan families arriving in Brent in the coming months.</p>

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		<p>Furthermore, this Council notes the lobbying efforts it and other Councils have launched to highlight the needs of its migrant communities and the necessity to appropriately resource Councils in this endeavour. In terms of the wider picture, this Council also notes the support and shelter it has provided for refugees from other parts of the world and is committed to continuing to lead these efforts for our new residents.</p> <p>The Council recognises that the scale of the refugee crisis will require an international response and urges the UK to lead that effort by committing to a much more extensive and balanced Afghan resettlement scheme. Along with the creation of safe and legal routes for those suffering at the hands of the Taliban.</p> <p>The Council therefore reiterates its call:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) For open safe and legal routes for all those seeking a sanctuary from danger. (2) To increase the number of families given asylum and the need for a balanced refugee resettlement across the UK. Not just a heavy focus on London. (3) To increase funding to support councils such as our own, in further more extensive resettlement schemes as well as humanitarian aid. <p>This Council is proud that it is able to give sanctuary to the thousands of refugees that call Brent home. We want to be able to offer a brighter future for families through a chance at a proper education, good employment opportunities and a safe place to call home.</p>
17	Urgent Business	No urgent items of business were raised at the meeting.