



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
held in the Grand Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 12 July 2021 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Lia Colacicco

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Abdi Aden

COUNCILLORS:

Afzal	Agha
Ahmed	M Butt
S Butt	Chan
Chappell	Chohan
S Choudhary	A Choudry
Dar	Ethapemi
Ezeajughi	Farah
Gbajumo	Georgiou
Grahl	Hassan
Hector	Hirani
Hylton	Johnson
Kabir	Kansagra
Kelcher	Kennelly
Knight	Lo
Long	Mahmood
Mashari	Maurice
McLeish	McLennan
Miller	Murray
W Mitchell Murray	Naheerathan
Nerva	M. Patel
Sangani	Shahzad
Ketan Sheth	Krupa Sheth
Southwood	Stephens
Tatler	Thakkar

1. **Mayors Introductory Statement & Order of Business**

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the first in person Full Council which it had been possible to hold since the start of the Covid 19 pandemic. Before consideration of the formal agenda, the Mayor informed members of a change to the order of business. Given that some members were unable to attend the meeting in person due to underlying health conditions or other issues relating to Covid-19, she

intended to move the order of items so that the report listed as item 18 on the agenda (Approval of resolution for reason of member non-attendance at meetings) was taken as the first item of business.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- (1) The business to be considered at the meeting be re-arranged in the following order:

Agenda Item 18 be considered as Agenda Item 1 – (Approval of resolution for reason of member non-attendance at meetings);

- (2) The remaining items of business to follow in the same order as listed in the agenda.

2. **Approval of resolution for reason of member non-attendance at meetings**

Having agreed to the change in the order of business, the Mayor then invited Councillor M Butt (Leader of the Council) to introduce the report from the Director of Legal, HR, Audit & Investigations seeking approval to extend the reasons under which a waiver might be granted for the non-attendance of any member at a meeting of the Council, Cabinet or any committee or sub-committee of the Council within a six-month period, for circumstances related to Covid-19.

As no members indicated they wished to speak on the item, the Mayor put the recommendations in the report straight to the vote and they were unanimously declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to approve in relation to each member of the Council (in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972) the following reason in respect of the non-attendance of any member until the Council's Annual meeting in May 2022:

“The councillor has been unable to attend as a member (including remote attendance during the period that the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 were in force) any relevant meeting (as defined within paragraph 3.1 of the report) throughout a 6-month period due to the circumstances set out in section 3.4 of the report.”

3. **Apologies for Absence**

The Mayor reported that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Abi, Akram, Colwill, Conneely, Crane, Daly, Denselow, Dixon, Donnelly-Jackson, Lloyd, R.Patel, Perrin and Shah.

An apology for lateness was received from Councillor Chan.

4. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 29 April 2021 be approved as a correct record.

5. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

6. **Mayor's Announcements (including any petitions received)**

Prior to the Mayor's Announcements, the Mayor invited Carolyn Downs (as Chief Executive) to make a statement on the scenes witnessed around Wembley Stadium in the build up to the UEFA European Championship final on Sunday 11 July 21.

Referring to the unacceptable nature of the scenes witnessed, the Chief Executive advised of the work being undertaken with partners at the FA, Police and within the Wembley Safety Advisory Group to review what had happened in order to avoid anything similar being experienced and improve the management of future major events at Wembley. Turning to the more positive nature of the championships, the opportunity was also taken to congratulate the England Team (including Brent's Raheem Sterling) for their achievements and inspiration provided both on and off the pitch and to thank all those involved for the work in ensuring the overall tournament, during which Brent had hosted eight matches at Wembley Stadium, was delivered successfully. This was highlighted as a particularly achievement given the extent to which the borough had also been impacted by the Covid pandemic and work which had needed to be undertaken in response. The subsequent racist abuse received by players within the England squad was also condemned on behalf of the Council in the strongest possible terms.

Members fully endorsed the statement made by the Chief Executive and the Mayor then moved on to make the following announcements:

(i). UEFA European 2020 Championship

The Mayor thanked all staff involved for their efforts in supporting the safe delivery of the UEFA European 2020 Championship tournament during the previous month. Whilst England had not won the tournament, she felt it was still a great achievement to have reached the final. She also recognised the work that had been undertaken to deliver the testing arrangements at the Civic Centre and by the Council's Highways, Regulatory Services, Community Safety and Enforcement teams as well as Veolia in supporting each match been hosted at Wembley Stadium.

(ii). Brondesbury Park by-election – Welcome to Councillor Grahl

The Mayor then took the opportunity to formally welcomed Councillor Grahl to her first Full Council meeting as the newly elected ward member for Brondesbury Park following a by-election held on 7 May. She thanked the Returning Officer and all staff involved for the safe and efficient delivery of both the by-election and the London Mayoral and Assembly elections.

(iii). Queen's Birthday Honours List

The Mayor congratulated Councillor Southwood, who she advised had received an MBE in the recent Queen's Birthday Honours List. The award was given for Councillor Southwood's service to charity and local government, and in particular

her leadership of and campaigning for the Royal National Institute of the Blind and her time as an elected member.

(iv). Royal British Legion – 100th Anniversary

The Mayor advised that she had been honoured to attend a small wreath laying ceremony at Barham Park to mark the 100th Anniversary of the founding of the Royal British Legion. She felt the event had demonstrated the borough's support and duty to the Royal British Legion.

(v). Garden Studios

The Mayor then informed members she had been pleased to have been invited to visit the new Garden Studios built in Harlesden. Commenting on the tour, she felt that the borough was lucky to have such an amazing facility to be shared with local residents.

(vi). Vaccination Events

The Mayor took the opportunity to thank all those involved in supporting the Max Vaccine event at Bridge Park, the vaccine bus in Cricklewood and the pop up vaccination centre in Willesden. She was keen to recognise the important role these events and facilities were playing in encouraging and supporting the community vaccination programme.

(vii). Windrush Day

The Mayor then advised that she had been pleased to attend the virtual celebrations for Windrush Day on 22 June, which honoured the British Caribbean community and the half a million Caribbean people who travelled to the UK after the Second World War. Highlighting the efforts and commitment made by the Council to mark the day since it had first been commemorated in 2018 she felt this was an important way in which to recognise and support the contribution made by the Windrush Generation.

(viii). NHS, Social Care and Frontline Workers' Day

The Mayor advised Members of her involvement in supporting the first NHS, Social Care and Frontline Workers' Day on 5 July, which had been held to celebrate the founding of the NHS. The Mayor felt it was important to recognise the way in which NHS, Social Care and frontline workers had all mobilised since the start of the pandemic to keep the nation afloat and felt they were all owed an enormous debt of gratitude. She also advised how the event had provided an opportunity to remember those who had lost their lives during the pandemic.

(ix). Srebrenica Memorial Event

The Mayor also advised Members of her attendance at a virtual remembrance event commemorating those who had been displaced during the genocide and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia in the 1990s. The theme of the event had been focussed on those who had settled in the UK and how they had been able to rebuild their lives.

(x). Petitions

Finally, the Mayor drew members attention to the list of current petitions tabled at tonight's meeting, in accordance with Standing Orders, which also shows the action being taken to deal with them.

7. **Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies and Appointment of Chairs/Vice Chairs (if any)**

The Mayor advised that there were no membership changes to be considered at the meeting so moved straight on to the next item.

8. **Deputations (if any)**

The Mayor advised that no requests for any deputations had been received for consideration at the meeting.

9. **Questions from Members of the Public & Brent Youth Parliament**

The Mayor advised that no questions had been received from members of the public or from representatives of the Brent Youth Parliament.

10. **Petitions (if any)**

The Mayor advised that no requests for any debates on petitions had been received for consideration at the meeting.

11. **Reports from the Leader and Cabinet**

The Mayor then invited Councillor M Butt, Leader of the Council, to introduce the report updating members on the work undertaken by the Cabinet and significant issues identified within their remit. In presenting the report, Councillor M Butt highlighted the extent of work being undertaken across a number of key service areas including housing & welfare support, environment, planning & regeneration, public health, schools, employment, social care and community safety and thanked the Lead Members for their work and efforts to support continued service provision for residents during both the pandemic and recovery process. Finally, members were asked to note the list of Executive decisions tabled at the meeting which had been taken under the Council's urgency procedures.

The Mayor thanked the Leader for his report and it was **RESOLVED** to formally note the update provided.

12. **Questions from the Opposition and other Non-Cabinet Members**

Before moving on to consider the questions submitted by non-Cabinet members, the Mayor reminded Members that a total of 30 minutes had been set aside for this item, which would begin with consideration of the written questions submitted in advance of the meeting along with any supplementary questions. Once these had been dealt with, the remaining time available would then be opened up for any

other non-Cabinet members to question Lead Members (without the need for advance notice) on matters relating to their portfolio.

The Mayor advised that four written questions had been submitted in advance for response by the relevant Lead Member. The written responses supplied had been circulated within the agenda. The Mayor invited supplementary questions from the Members who had submitted the written questions. The following questions were raised and responses provided:

12.1 Without raising any specific supplementary question Councillor Ahmed took the opportunity to thank Councillor McLennan, as Deputy Leader, for her response to his question and noted the continued support being provided for local residents and businesses as part of the Covid-19 recovery programme.

12.2 Councillor Hylton thanked Councillor Krupa Sheth, as Lead Member for Environment, for the written response in relation to her question on the Council's efforts to build back better from the pandemic and deliver on its climate emergency commitments. Councillor Hylton then asked a supplementary question seeking details on the involvement of local businesses as part of the Brent Environment Network.

In response, Councillor Krupa Sheth advised that a number of local businesses had signed up to the Brent Environment Network and that the Council had regular meetings with these businesses to support them to fulfil their climate obligations.

12.3 Councillor Grahl thanked Councillor Southwood, as Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform, for the written response to her question in relation to the Council's efforts to tackle poverty within the borough. Councillor Grahl then asked a supplementary question on the work being undertaken to tackle food poverty.

In response, Councillor Southwood highlighted the extent to which food poverty was an issue providing the example locally of food banks within Brent having supported over 13,000 residents. She advised that the Council would continue to work alongside foodbanks to ensure relevant support could be accessed. Moving forward, she also highlighted the work being undertaken by the Council to support fresh food projects and community gardens as an additional means of promoting healthy and sustainable food sources.

12.4 Councillor Maurice thanked Councillor Krupa Sheth, as Lead Member for Environment, for the written response to his question in relation to the impact of the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) charge on users of the Household Waste and Recycling Centre at Abbey Road. Councillor Maurice then asked a supplementary question seeking further clarification on the answer provided and whether the Council would make representations to Transport for London seeking an exemption from the charge for Brent residents using the Household and Recycling Centre.

In response, Councillor Krupa Sheth advised that Brent had made a commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 but highlighted that difficult

choices would be required in order to reach this objective which may unfortunately inconvenience residents. Whilst the boundaries for the ULEZ had now been set, other options were available for those residents likely to be impacted in terms of use of the Household Waste and Recycling Centre at Abbey Road which it was pointed out also included the Council's bulky waste service and community skips.

The Mayor thanked members for their written questions and Lead Members for the responses provided to the supplementary questions. She then advised that the remainder of the time available would be used for an open question time session to the Cabinet. The following questions were raised and responses provided:

- (i). Councillor Kelcher sought details on action being taken to address residents' concerns around noise, pollution and anti-social behaviour from a funfair at Roundwood Park.

Councillor Knight, as Lead Member for Community Safety and Engagement, responded by advising that the Council had sought assurances from the operators of the event that sound protective cladding would be fitted to their generators and that alternative locations for the generators would be considered, if necessary. Additionally, members were advised that the operators had outlined their commitment to engaging with local residents regarding noise concerns and that the Council's Nuisance Control team were also available to visit and investigate any further complaints. Whilst no specific anti-social behaviour complaints had been received by the Council, members were encouraged to report any further concerns they may have to ensure they were properly investigated.

- (ii). Councillor Georgiou sought further detail on the support available to help home-based small and micro businesses during the pandemic.

Councillor McLennan, as Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Resources, advised that the Council had discharged over £100 million pounds in business grant support and continued to look at the ways in which it could support local businesses. She also highlighted that further detail on the support being made available to local businesses, as the Council moved forward into the recovery phase of the pandemic, had been included in the Covid-19 recovery paper to be considered later on the agenda.

- (iii). Councillor Kennelly referring to local protests within the borough on the issue, sought further detail on the approach being taken by the Council and support available to leaseholders affected by the cladding scandal along with efforts being made to ensure the problems identified were addressed and could not happen again.

In response, Councillor Tatler, as Lead Member for Regeneration, Property & Planning, provided assurance that the Council continued to lobby central government to ensure adequate support was provided for leaseholders affected by the cladding scandal. Regarding planning applications, she advised that the Council's remit did not allow it to consider the past history of developers as landlords. She encouraged all Members (including those from the Conservative Group) to join the Administration in their continued efforts to

lobby central government to ensure the issue was properly addressed and funded.

- (iv). Councillor Thakkar was keen to explore what had been learned from the vaccination rollout and concerns around the effects of Long Covid.

In response, Councillor Nerva, as Lead Member for Public Health, Culture and Leisure, advised that whilst the Council was not directly responsible for the vaccine rollout it was supporting its health partners in the process. He thanked everyone who had come forward to receive their vaccination, as well as the NHS and volunteers who were administering them. He advised that the Council had been working in partnership to ensure vaccines were taken up throughout the community, for example by using vaccination buses and collaborating with community leaders. Regarding Long Covid, he advised that the Council and its partners were awaiting the outcome of the mass pilot events and studies on the effects of Long Covid with further updates on any implications in terms of the future planning and provision of local services to be provided for the Health & Wellbeing Board.

- (v). Councillor Afzal referring to the recent incidents of racial abuse on social media directed towards members of the Enfield Football squad sought further details on how it was felt the Council could support and work with its partners to tackle the issue of discrimination and abuse on social media.

In response, Councillor Krupa Sheth, as Lead Member for Environment, assured members of the Councils stance against hate and discrimination of any kind. Referring back to the statement made by the Chief Executive earlier in the meeting, she advised that further discussions were planned with the Stadium Safety Group and partners to ascertain what had happened in the build up to the UEFA European Championship Final and how any issues identified could be addressed going forward. She ended her response by also thanking all Council staff for the work they had undertaken to support delivery of the tournament at Wembley Stadium.

- (vi). Referring to the concerns highlighted earlier in the session, Councillor Mahmood queried what support was being provided for residents likely to be impacted by introduction of ULEZ charges in the borough.

In response, Councillor Krupa Sheth, as Lead Member for Environment, advised members of the initial support likely to be available from the GLA for those residents in financial hardship who may be impacted by the introduction of the ULEZ charge and potential for the Council to also look at other forms of support over the longer term.

- (vii). Councillor Choudhary sought further details on the actions being taken by the Council to develop its Covid-19 economic recovery programme.

Taking the opportunity to highlight what he felt had been the limited response from central government to provide adequate support for local residents during the pandemic and impact of ongoing reductions in funding for local services, Councillor M. Butt, as Leader of the Council, assured members of the Council's continued commitment to supporting the most vulnerable residents

in the borough. Highlighting the various approaches being developed to support residents moving forward, he again (in response to the specific question) referred members to the detail contained within the Covid-19 recovery paper to be considered later on the agenda.

- (viii). Councillor Long highlighting specific issues within Willesden Green, sought details about how the Council would be working with Thames Water to resolve rainwater drainage issues across the borough.

In response, Councillor Sheth, as Lead Member for Environment, advised that the concerns expressed had been raised direct with Thames Water with the Council keen to work with them in order to ensure the issues highlighted were progressed and improvements were secured in terms of their operation across the borough.

- (ix). Highlighting concerns about recent local social media content, Councillor Kennelly sought details on the funding available to tackle violent crime within hotspots identified in the north of the borough.

Councillor Knight, as Lead Member for Community Safety and Engagement, outlined the work being undertaken by the Council and funding available to tackle crime within a range of identified hotspots across the borough. She asked Councillor Kennelly to forward any information he may have regarding the specific incident highlighted so that it could be investigated further.

- (x). Following on from his previous question, Councillor Georgiou asked the Deputy Leader whether she would be willing to meet with residents who had advised they felt excluded from access to pandemic-related grant funding.

In response, Councillor McLennan, as Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Resources, advised that she would be happy to meet with any residents who felt they had felt excluded from the range of support which had been made available during the pandemic.

At this stage in the proceedings, the Mayor advised that the time available for the open question session had expired. She therefore thanked all members for their contributions and advised that she would now move on to the next item.

13. Report from Chairs of Scrutiny Committees

Before being presented with the updates from each Scrutiny Committee Chair, the Mayor reminded members the time set aside for this item was 12 minutes, with each Chair having up to three minutes in which to highlight any significant issues arising from the work of their Committees. Once these updates had been provided, the remaining time available would then be opened up for any other non-Cabinet members to question (without the need for advance notice) the Scrutiny Committee Chairs on matters relating to the work of their Committee.

Councillor Mashari was then invited to introduce the update report on the work being undertaken by the Resources and Public Realm Committee, with the following issues highlighted:

- The wide ranging remit of the Committee and its work programme which included waste and recycling, welfare and benefits, employment and skills, planning and regeneration, climate and community safety.
- The wide scope of work undertaken by the Panel over the previous year which, amongst other issues had included a focus on the impact of pandemic on employment, fly tipping, the future of high streets and local business support.
- The Committee's engagement with a range of stakeholders and external witnesses at their meetings including the business representatives as well as the voluntary and community sector. It was felt this had provided an interesting and diverse perspective to the Committee's work.
- The Committee's intention to include a review at its next meeting of the safety concerns already referred to at the meeting in relation to the scenes witness in and around Wembley Stadium in the build up to the UEFA European Championship Final.
- As outlined in the Committee's Work Plan for 2021/22, future focus would be on a range of topics including fire safety, CCTV provision and collaboration and consultation with members of the public on a range of issues including the budget.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Mashari for her update.

Councillor Ketan Sheth was then invited to introduce the update report on the work being undertaken by the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, with the following issues highlighted:

- Members were advised of the establishment by the Committee of a Scrutiny Task Group to review GP access, chaired by Councillor Daly. The Task Group review was currently ongoing with three wide ranging evidence gathering sessions having been held to date.
- Following publication of the recent Care Quality Commission (CQC) review of maternity services at Northwick Park Hospital, the Committee had agreed to convene a special meeting in order to consider the report and areas for improvement which had been identified.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Ketan Sheth for his update and it was **RESOLVED** that the contents of both update reports be noted.

Following the updates provided, the Mayor advised that the remainder of time available would be open for questions from non-cabinet members to the Scrutiny Chairs. The Mayor reminded members of the need to ensure that questions raised were focused on the updates provided or the work being undertaken by each Committee. The following questions were raised and responses provided:

- (i). Following on from the update provided in relation to the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Thakkar sought further details on the planned review of the CQC inspection report in relation to maternity services at Northwick Park Hospital and how and action or improvements identified would be taken forward with partners.

In response, Councillor Ketan Sheth advised that the arrangements for the special meeting of the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee were currently being finalised but would include representatives from the main partner organisations with a focus on the key areas for improvement identified and plan to address those areas. He advised that any interested members would be welcome to attend.

As no further questions were raised the Mayor thanked both Chairs and members for their contribution before moving on to the next item.

14. **Report from the Vice-Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee**

The Mayor invited Councillor Lo, as Vice-Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee, to introduce the report updating members on the work of the Committee.

In terms of issues highlighted, Councillor Lo drew members attention to the important role which the Committee had in reviewing and approving the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts and commended Finance officers for the significant work undertaken to ensure the accounts had been completed and submitted on time for review by the Council's External Auditors.

Focussing specifically on the Committee's role in relation to compliance and control he also outlined and commended the robust nature of the work being undertaken in relation to various governance matters including internal audit activity, the regulatory framework and members' standards of conduct.

Finally, Councillor Lo also took the opportunity to draw members attention to the Corporate Risk Register and Annual Governance Statement, which had both been subject to review and approval by the Committee. The Committee had focussed on a number of risks including the ongoing pressure on local government finance and recovery from the pandemic and identified the need to ensure these risks were kept under review and that members were aware of the importance of both documents given their significance to the Councils overall control and governance arrangements.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Lo for the update provided and it was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

15. **Non Cabinet Members' Debate**

In accordance with Standing Order 34, the Mayor advised that the next item on the agenda was the non-cabinet member debate, with the subject chosen for consideration being the Council's commitment to solving the housing crisis.

Members were advised that the motion submitted as the basis for debate had been circulated with the agenda and that the time available for the debate was 25 minutes.

The Mayor then invited Councillor Johnson to introduce the motion. As context for the debate, Councillor Johnson highlighted the importance of secure and affordable housing provided for residents. In outlining his own experiences, he felt it was

important to recognise the impact created by the lack of universally affordable, readily available and high quality accommodation within London. To that end, Councillor Johnson urged all members to support the motion submitted as the basis for the debate and the Council in its efforts to build on its record of delivering affordable homes through its own delivery programme and regulation of the borough's private rental market.

The Mayor then opened up the debate to other members, with the following comments made during the discussion that followed:

Councillor Choudhary, speaking in support of the motion, felt it was important to recognise the Council's impressive record on providing affordable housing despite the Government's programme of austerity. He spoke in support of a range of planned developments across the borough such as in Neasden and Alperton, highlighting the positive impact they would have not only in providing much needed social and affordable housing but also various improvements to the public realm.

Councillor Miller also expressed his support for the motion, citing the difficulties being experienced by many in becoming homeowners and the resulting over reliance on the private rented sector. As a result, he felt there was need to continue encouraging central government to recognise the provision of social and affordable housing as a key means of addressing the housing crisis, which he felt could provide not only permanent solutions for residents but also the necessary assistance for those looking to be able to afford a permanent home.

Councillor Georgiou, whilst supporting the sentiments expressed in the motion, questioned the types of housing being delivered within his ward in Alperton. He felt that too many new developments were high-rise, offered too few affordable units and were being let under what he felt was a flawed leaseholder model.

Councillor Tatler, Lead Member for Regeneration, Property and Planning, also felt it was important to recognise the impact of the housing crisis not only within the borough but across London as a whole. In supporting the motion she expressed her pride in the Council's record of delivering affordable housing. She also called on all members, including those from the Conservative Group, to support the stance within the motion being taken against the Government's proposed national planning reforms, which she felt would remove the democratic right of residents to participate in the planning process and ability of the Council, as local planning authority, to support local employment, affordable housing provision and community cohesion.

Echoing the sentiments expressed by Councillor Miller, Councillor Mahmood also highlighted the importance of providing affordable high quality social housing as a means of tackling the housing crisis. Whilst supportive of the Council's record in delivering new affordable housing he also took the opportunity to highlight, as an example of the problems needing to be addressed, a case of a disabled resident he had been involved with who had experienced a wait of over a year for a permanently adapted home.

In supporting the motion, Councillor Kabir also commended the Council's record in delivering new social housing stock but recognised that more was needed to tackle the current housing crisis. As a specific example she highlighted the issue of leaseholders and those families needing to support children with special

educational needs and was keen to ensure these issues were also addressed as part of the action needing to be taken to address the current crisis.

In responding to comments made during the debate, Councillor Maurice highlighted his own as well as the Conservative Groups concerns regarding the proposed national planning reforms, feeling that planning control should remain with local authorities and the democratic rights of residents to participate in the process should be protected. At the same time, he also pointed out his dissatisfaction with proposed developments within the borough which did not provide adequate levels of affordable housing due to a lack of viability, and the continued construction of high-rise developments, which he felt also adversely affected communities.

Councillor Kennelly, speaking in support of the motion, thanked the Council for its efforts to bring rogue landlords to justice and protect the safety and wellbeing of private tenants. He highlighted the efforts of the Council in delivering affordable housing across the borough and, in praising the development of key worker housing in Wembley Park, also encouraged the Council to ensure returning army veterans had access to high-standard, affordable housing upon their return.

As a final contribution to the debate, Councillor Kansagra also expressed concern over some types of housing being built in the borough and subsequent developer contributions. He also felt there was a need to ensure the Council complied with its planning policy at all times as well as ensure it spent all available Community Infrastructure Levy contributions.

As no other members had indicated they wished to speak the Mayor then invited Councillor Southwood, as Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform, to sum up and close the debate.

Councillor Southwood began by reaffirming the Council's commitment to ensuring current and prospective residents had access to safe, secure and high quality affordable housing in order to maintain the Council's approach towards tackling the housing crisis. She recognised that affordability remained a significant issue for residents, whilst praising the contribution of i4B and Capital Letters in accessing and regulating the private rental market. She also highlighted the Council's efforts to ensure newly built homes were of a suitable standard and in adapting existing homes to provide more accessible accommodation for those with specific needs. As a final point, she felt it was important to recognise the Council's record and progress being made against delivery of its new homes programme as well as in tackling homelessness and seeking to develop other initiatives to maximise use of available housing stock. She ended by also thanking the public for their engagement and support in delivery of the new homes programme in order to address local needs.

With one minute left for the debate, the Mayor then invited Councillor Johnson to provide the closing remarks. Councillor Johnson thanked all members who had contributed in the debate. Whilst recognising the progress made alongside the extent of work still required to address the current housing crisis and ensure the provision of adequate levels of safe and affordable housing within the borough, he also highlighted the need to ensure the Government was encouraged to properly fund and support the delivery programme in order to meet the needs of local residents.

The Mayor thanked all members for their contributions and as an outcome of the debate it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve the motion as set out below:

“This Council understands that housing is amongst this city’s greatest social and economic challenges.

This Council recognises that there are no quick fixes or easy options, but remains nonetheless determined to make things better.

This Council can be proud of how far it has come in tackling the many problems afflicting the borough’s many housing markets and systems.

This Council notes its record of:

- Helping deliver more than 11,000 new homes, almost 30% of which at social or affordable level, including more than 1,000 brand new council homes;
- Bringing council housing services back in-house, leading to improvements in performance;
- Beginning the process of properly regulating and responding to the needs of people living in this borough’s substantial private rental market; and
- Tackling homelessness by developing i4B, an ethically managed, council-owned private rental service.

That said, this Council is of course alive to the fact that there is obviously much more to do if housing is to be made universally affordable, readily available, and of the highest possible standards.

To that end, this Council is determined to build on its proud record, and is committed to continue:

- Pressing government on giving us the powers we need to roll out landlord licensing across the borough;
- Campaigning against government plans to strip local residents of their democratic rights to participate in and contribute to the planning process;
- Intervening earlier when residents are at risk of homelessness, giving them the best possible chance of getting back on their feet;
- Helping every resident who loses their home find another they can afford;
- Working with other London boroughs and local partners to provide guaranteed emergency shelter to anyone forced to sleep rough;
- Growing i4B, changing the nature of the rental market from the inside, making it a fairer, more affordable, and decent place to live;

- Developing a new generation of Key Worker housing;
- Making it easier for those residents who need help to downsize, relocate or find a more suitable home;
- Encouraging and supporting the formation of independent Tenants and Residents Associations in the homes that we provide and manage, calling on Housing Associations to do the same; and
- Pressuring government to properly fund and support essential fire safety works across the public and private sectors.”

16. **Interval**

In accordance with Standing Order 24 the Mayor agreed to take a short 2 minute break at this stage in proceedings.

The meeting reconvened at 7:36pm

17. **Recovery from Covid-19**

The Mayor then invited Councillor McLennan, Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Resources, to introduce the report from the Director of Finance presenting members with a sustainable and inclusive Covid-19 recovery programme for the borough. In introducing the report, Councillor McLennan advised members that Brent’s response had highlighted the strengths in its approach to cross-sector engagement and partnership working. Whilst the recovery programme had been designed to build on the successes to date it also recognised those areas on which there was a need to refocus attention moving into the pandemic recovery phase in order to ensure the process was equitable, inclusive and environmentally sustainable and was able to address issues exacerbated by the pandemic in relation to health inequality and poverty. In concluding her introductory comments, attention was also drawn to the way in which the proposals in the report had been designed to provide a sustainable recovery process which was fully aligned to the Council’s Borough Plan priorities.

The Mayor then opened the debate inviting other members to speak on the report.

Councillor Shahzad in supporting the proposals within the report took the opportunity to thank the NHS, the Council and all partner organisations for their hard work in supporting residents during the pandemic, which he commended as having brought the best out of everyone within the borough.

As no other members indicated they wished to speak on the item and Councillor McLennan had confirmed she did not need to exercise her right of reply, the Mayor then put the recommendations in the report to the vote and they were unanimously declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To agree the establishment of a £17m reserve as detailed in the report as part of the borough’s COVID-19 recovery plan.

- (2) To agree that the new £17m reserve be established through re-designation of existing reserves that were set aside to manage the financial impact of Covid-19 and, where dealing with health inequalities, the ring fenced Public Health reserves.

18. Treasury Management Outturn Report 2020-21

The Mayor then invited Councillor McLennan, Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Resources, to introduce the report from the Director of Finance on Treasury Management activity and confirming the Council's compliance with its Prudential Indicators for 2020/21. In introducing the item members were advised that the report was being presented following its consideration by the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee on 11 May 2021 and Cabinet on 14 June 2021.

As no members indicated they wished to speak and Councillor McLennan had confirmed she did not need to exercise her right of reply the Mayor then put the recommendations in the report to the vote and they were unanimously declared **CARRIED**.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To note and approve the 2020/21 Treasury Management outturn report, in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code).
- (2) To note that for 2020/21 the Council had complied with its Prudential Indicators which were approved by Full Council on 19 February 2020 as part of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Capital Strategy Statement.

19. Changes to the Constitution

Moving on, the Mayor invited Councillor M Butt, Leader of the Council, to introduce the report from the Director of Legal, HR, Audit & Investigations detailing a number of recommended changes to the Constitution. Members were advised that these included the proposed re-designation of two statutory posts and potential further extension of officer delegations, which had been agreed on a temporary basis at the last Council meeting should they be felt to be required.

As no other members indicated that they wished to speak on the item and Councillor M. Butt had confirmed he did not need to exercise his right of reply, the Mayor put the recommendations in the report straight to the vote and they were unanimously declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To agree the designation of the Operational Director, Adult Social Care as the council's statutory Director of Adult Social Services (DASS).
- (2) To agree the designation of the Senior Lawyer, Constitution and Governance as the council's Data Protection Officer (DPO).

- (3) To agree that the delegation of council functions in Appendix 1 of the report remain in place until the next meeting of Full Council in September 2021.
- (4) To note that the delegation of executive functions in Appendix 1 of the report would remain in place until the next meeting of Full Council in September 2021, unless otherwise determined by the Leader.
- (5) To note that, to the extent the changes set out within the report related to executive functions of the Council, they had been approved by the Leader of the Council.
- (6) To authorise the Director of Legal, HR. Audit & Investigations to amend the Constitution accordingly, including the making of any necessary incidental or consequential changes.

20. **Financial Regulations and Scheme of Virements and Transfers**

The Mayor then invited Councillor McLennan, Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Resources, to introduce the report from the Director of Finance which members were advised detailed a number of proposed changes to the current Financial Regulations and Scheme of Virements and Transfers following the release of a new Financial Management Code and an updated Code of Audit Practice.

As no other members indicated they wished to speak on the item and Councillor McLennan had confirmed she did not need to exercise her right of reply, the Mayor then put the recommendations in the report to the vote and they were unanimously declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To agree the proposed Financial Regulations as set out within Appendix A of the report to replace the current Financial Regulations in the constitution.
- (2) To agree the proposed Scheme of Virements and Transfers as set out within Appendix B of the report to replace the current Scheme of Virements and Transfers in the constitution.

21. **Motions**

Before moving on to consider the motions listed on the summons, the Mayor advised members that a total of 20 minutes had been set aside for the consideration of the two motions submitted for debate, based on an initial allocation of 10 minutes per motion. Should the time taken to consider the first motion be less than 10 minutes she advised that the remaining time available would be rolled forward for consideration of the remaining motion.

1st Motion (Conservative Group) – Protect Our Environment

The Mayor invited Councillor Kansagra to move the first motion which had been submitted on behalf of the Conservative Group. Councillor Kansagra, in moving the motion, began by highlighting the detrimental impact which he felt hard

landscaping, in particular asphalt paving, was having on water run-off and flooding in the borough. Referring to a number of concerns raised by the recently established alliance Brent Residents against Asphalt Pavements in an email to the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, he supported the request made for a detailed review to be undertaken of the current policy and the return in its place of like for like repair and renewal of pavements.

The Mayor then invited other members to speak on the motion, with the following contributions received.

Councillor Long, speaking against the motion, advised she did not support the view that asphalt paving increased flooding and instead highlighted what she felt to be the benefits of asphalt pavements in terms of them providing an easier, safer and more cost effective method of maintenance, repair and renewal than existing slab or block paving. For these reasons she advised that she would not be supporting the motion.

Councillor Georgiou, speaking in support of the motion, highlighted his concerns regarding the sustainability and environmental impact of the policy, which he felt not only served to increase the Council's carbon footprint but also directly contradicted the Council's Climate Emergency Strategy. He also highlighted the extent of local residents opposition to the policy and concerns which had been raised by Brent Residents against Asphalt Pavements.

As a further contribution Councillor Mashari, as Chair of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, took the opportunity to confirm that a detailed response had been requested by the Committee on the email from Brent Residents against Asphalt Pavements in order to address the issues raised.

Councillor Kelcher, also speaking against the motion, outlined what he also felt to be the safety benefits from the use of asphalt rather than more traditional slab and block paving along with its more cost effective maintenance and repair. He also highlighted that not all local residents were objecting to the policy with many he had engaged with expressing their support.

As no further members had indicated that they wished to speak the Mayor invited Councillor Kansagra to exercise his right of reply.

In summing up, Councillor Kansagra advised that given the concerns raised by local residents regarding consultation on the policy and programme he would be seeking a formal response on the issues raised in the email from Brent Residents against Asphalt Pavements, which he was keen to ensure was also circulated to all members.

The Mayor then put the motion, as set out below, to a vote by show of hands which was declared **LOST**.

Protect Our Environment

This Council notes the concerns of Brent Residents against Asphalt Pavements, namely:

- a. The basis for the Council's policy adopted in May 2016 to replace paving slabs by asphalt when footways are being renewed; and
- b. The implementation and apparent further evolution of the policy up to the present time.

This Council believes that:

- The programme is atheistically ugly.
- The programme is environmentally harmful.

The programme is costly in comparison to replacing and repairing existing slab and or block paving.

- The Residents were not and are not properly consulted and their views are ignored.

This Council therefore calls on the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet to halt the roll out of this programme forthwith and revert to repair and replace the pavement like for like.”

Councillors Georgiou, Kansagra and Maurice voted in favour of the above motion.

2nd Motion (Labour Group) – The Road to Recovery

The Mayor then invited Councillor Afzal to move the second motion which had been submitted on behalf of the Labour Group. Councillor Afzal in moving the motion began by highlighting the efforts undertaken across the Council, its partners and local communities who had come together to ensure the provision of essential support to those most in need during the pandemic. In commending the motion to members, he was keen to ensure that a commitment was secured to continue building on these successes and embrace change during the borough's road to recovery, in spite of what he felt were the inadequacies of the support being provided by central government to deal with the pandemic and its ongoing impact.

The Mayor then invited other members to speak on the motion, with the following contributions received.

Councillor Maurice began by also highlighting what he felt was the need to recognise not only the efforts of key workers in ensuring key services were sustained throughout the pandemic but also the Government for the support they had provided in seeking to mitigate the effects of the pandemic, as well as on the mass vaccination rollout. Concerns were, however, raised in relation to the limited support which he felt had been provided for the self-employed. Moving on to then focus on the borough's pandemic recovery programme, he urged the Council to consider car users when working towards its climate goals, and was keen to ensure that funding for business support was maintained.

As a further contribution, Councillor Kansagra, whilst commending the level of support provided by the Council in response to the pandemic felt there was also a

need to recognise the level of financial support which had been provided by the Government to assist in the response.

Councillor Tatler, Lead Member for Regeneration, Property & Planning, then spoke in support of the motion and reassured members that the Council was committed to a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the pandemic. In particular, she highlighted the work underway to ensure Brent's high streets remained vibrant, ensure the provision of affordable workspaces and ensure local businesses had access to basic digital skills.

Councillor McLennan, Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Resources, also spoke in support of the motion by highlighting the difficulty local authorities had in accessing the necessary levels of funding to support the response being led locally during the pandemic. She highlighted the promise by the Government to provide "whatever it took" in terms of funding and subsequent difficulties faced by the Council to ensure this commitment was met along with the challenges created as a result of the lack of a long term financial settlement for local government. Despite these issues, however, she felt the motion captured the huge civic efforts made to respond to the pandemic and ensure the necessary tangible support was provided locally for residents and business within the borough as part of the recovery programme.

As no further members had indicated that they wished to speak the Mayor invited Councillor Afzal to exercise his right of reply.

In summing up, Councillor Afzal highlighted the extent of the recovery that would be required as a result of the pandemic and the United Kingdom having one of the highest covid related death rates in the world. He felt the motion recognised the work of the Council, community and voluntary groups and key workers who had stepped up to support residents, which it was felt the Government had failed to do so. He ended by recognising the efforts made by all staff across the Council to support this response whilst also ensuring the continued delivery of essential services and for which he felt the Council had rightly been recognised as Council of the Year.

The Mayor then put the motion, as set out below, to a vote by show of hands which was declared **CARRIED**.

"This Council recognises how deeply the pandemic has impacted on the lives and livelihoods of the people of Brent.

This Council acknowledges the toll taken on all residents, not least those already enduring, pre-COVID19, the enormous difficulties of poverty and deprivation.

This Council commends the huge civic effort that enabled the speedy and sustained provision of essential support to those prevented by various lockdown restrictions from meeting their own needs.

This Council applauds communities that have come together in these difficult times, and commends key workers that have given so much of themselves in keeping vital services running.

This Council notes:

- The implementation of the invaluable Resident Support Fund through which thousands of households could access desperately needed financial assistance;
- The delivery of the Covid-19 Winter Grant Scheme supporting families in need over the winter period;
- The provision of nearly £100m for local business impacted by Covid-19;
- Its ability to help meet the third highest level of demand in England for self-employment support packages;
- The enhancement of Brent Start and Brent Works to ensure that Brent's workforce remains connected to nearby employment opportunities;
- The outstanding help and support provided to high numbers of clinically extremely vulnerable residents;
- The public health partnerships that have enabled the large scale and ongoing roll out of vaccinations;

This Council commits itself to continue building on these successes and embraces the fact that there remains much to be done on this borough's road to recovery.

To that end, this Council is determined to:

- Deliver on its Climate and Ecological Emergency pledge to become a carbon neutral borough.
- Launch the Business Support Fund and Additional Grant Scheme, providing local enterprise with access to a wide range of financial and advisory resources.
- Collaborate locally to provide affordable and creative co-working space in response to people's new working patterns."

Councillors Kansagra and Maurice abstained from voting on the above motion.

22. **Urgent Business**

There were no urgent items of business raised at the meeting so the Mayor, in closing the meeting, thanked all members for their co-operation and support and advised that she looked forward to seeing everyone again in person at the next Full Council meeting on Monday 20 September 2021.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm

COUNCILLOR LIA COLACICCO
Mayor