



## **LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT**

**Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL held as an online meeting on  
Monday 23 November 2020 at 6.00 pm**

### **PRESENT (in remote attendance):**

**The Worshipful the Mayor**  
Councillor Ernest Ezeajughi

**The Deputy Mayor**  
Councillor Lia Colacicco

### **COUNCILLORS:**

Abdi	Aden
Afzal	Agha
Ahmed	Akram
M Butt	S Butt
Chan	Chappell
Chohan	S Choudhary
A Choudry	Colwill
Conneely	Crane
Daly	Dar
Denselow	Dixon
Donnelly-Jackson	Ethapemi
Farah	Gbajumo
Georgiou	Gill
Hassan	Hector
Hirani	Johnson
Kabir	Kansagra
Kelcher	Kennelly
Knight	Lloyd
Lo	Long
Mashari	Maurice
McLeish	McLennan
Miller	W Mitchell Murray
Naheerathan	Nerva
M Patel	Perrin
Sangani	Shah
Shahzad	Ketan Sheth
Krupa Sheth	Southwood
Stephens	Tatler
Thakkar	

1. **Welcoming Statement**

Prior to formally opening the meeting, the Mayor took the opportunity to welcome everyone and invited Carolyn Downs, as Chief Executive, to run through the guidance issued in relation to conduct of the online meeting. Having noted the guidance, the Mayor then moved on to the formal agenda for the meeting.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

The Mayor advised that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Hylton, Mahmood and Ramesh Patel. It was noted that Councillor Murray had also been unable to attend due to illness.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 14 September 2020 and the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 16 October 2020 be approved as a correct record.

4. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

The Mayor then moved on to make the following announcements:

(i) LGC Council of the Year 2020

The Mayor began by advising it was with pride he was able to announce the Council had been named 'Council of the Year' 2020 at the prestigious Local Government Chronicle Awards. As part of the award the Council had been recognised for embracing its communities in a celebration of diversity with the award seen as recognition for the hard work undertaken by officers and councillors in supporting the residents of the borough.

(ii) Queen's Birthday Honours List

In addition to Councillor Liz Dixon, who had been congratulated at the previous meeting, the Mayor advised that he was delighted to announce that Sarah Smith, Libraries Development Manager, had been awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. The award was for services to public libraries and the Mayor, on behalf of the Council, congratulated Sarah on her award.

(iii) Black History Month

The Mayor then moved on to offer his thanks and congratulations to all those involved in the successful delivery of the online event to celebrate Black History Month during October. The event's theme was Black Lives Matter and he was pleased to note how successful it had been.

(iv) Former councillor Jon Mordecai

The Mayor announced that it was with sadness he had to inform members about the recent death of former Councillor Jon Mordecai, who had been a councillor in the 1980s and served as Chair of the Housing Committee. On behalf of the Council, the Mayor passed on his condolences to former Councillor Mordecai's family and loved ones.

The Mayor then invited attendees to observe a minute's silence in tribute and memory of Jon.

*The online meeting was then paused to observe a minute's silence.*

Councillor Nerva was then invited to pay tribute to Jon. Before also passing on his condolences he highlighted former Councillor Mordecai's passion for housing and trade union activity and advised how much he would be missed by his friends, former colleagues and family.

(v) Protests against police brutality in Nigeria

The Mayor advised that it was with great sadness he had witnessed the recent unrest in Nigeria. Highlighting the impact which this had had on many residents of Nigerian descent across the borough he expressed his sympathies to the families and friends who had lost loved ones during the recent protests and wished all those injured a quick recovery.

(vi) Remembrance Sunday

The Mayor advised members he had been honoured to attend the recent ceremony held to commemorate Remembrance Sunday. This year's ceremony had been undertaken as a socially distanced event at the Barham Park Memorial and honoured all those in the borough and beyond who had given their lives whilst serving in the Armed Forces in conflicts throughout the world. He thanked all those who had attended and been involved in organising the ceremony.

(vii) London Borough of Culture – No Bass like Home

The Mayor then moved on to thank and congratulate all those involved in the London Borough of Culture No Bass like Home online festival which had taken place in November and been a huge success. This had involved an online celebration of reggae culture, which was enjoyed by many across the borough and beyond, and included guests from Harlesden, Jamaica and Florida.

(viii) Petitions

The Mayor ended his announcements by drawing members' attention to the list of current petitions along with action being taken to deal with them, which had been tabled at the meeting, in accordance with Standing Order 66.

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

The Mayor referred members to the list of changes circulated in relation to appointments to Council Committees, Sub Committees and other bodies.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following changes in Committee and Outside Body membership:

- (1) Councillor Mahmood to be replaced as a full member of the Planning Committee by Councillor Kennelly.
- (1) Councillor Kennelly to be replaced by a vacancy as a substitute member of the Planning Committee.
- (3) Councillor Denselow to be replaced by Councillor Saqib Butt as the Council's nominated representative on the i4B & First Wave Housing Ltd Boards.
- (4) Councillor Lloyd to be replaced by a vacancy as the Council's nominated representative on Chalkhill Community Centre.

## 7. **Deputations (if any)**

The Mayor advised that he had accepted a request for a deputation to be presented at the meeting relating to the progress on implementation of the Scrutiny Air Quality Task Group recommendations and Brent's Transport Strategy. The deputation had been requested by the Chair of Harlesden Area Action Group.

The Mayor advised that unless otherwise indicated by members, he intended to allow the speaker up to five minutes to present the deputation. He would then allow Councillor Krupa Sheth, as Lead Member for Environment, up to two minutes to respond to the deputation.

As no objections were raised on the approach outlined, the Mayor welcomed the Chair of Harlesden Area Action Group to the meeting (as a remote attendee).

Having noted the recommendations contained within the report from the Council's Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee in relation to Brent's Transport Strategy, the Chair of Harlesden Area Action Group advised that she was seeking an update on progress being made towards implementation of the Council's greener parking strategy. Specific reference was made to the following areas:

- The suggestion made that the Council consider extending the surcharge on residential parking permits for diesel vehicles to pay and display parking, as was already the case in Camden, Islington and Westminster;
- To consider reviewing and potentially reducing the maximum number of parking permits allowed per household;
- To ensure, as had been recommended by the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 14 July 2020, that any new parking strategy was designed to make it cheaper to park a bike than car in Brent;
- The suggestion made that residential and pay and display permit schemes should be extended to motorcycles and scooters, as was the case in Kensington & Chelsea, Islington and Westminster.

Whilst recognising the impact of the pandemic in delaying progress and supporting the positive steps made with the creation of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (including

Nicoll Road within the Harlesden Area), Schools Streets and to encourage more active modes of travel the deputation ended with concerns being raised about the need to progress action in order to deliver the improvements and positive action being sought.

The Mayor thanked the Chair of Harlesden Area Action Group for the deputation and then invited Councillor Krupa Sheth, as Lead Member for Environment, to respond to the comments made.

In responding, Councillor Krupa Sheth advised of the work being undertaken to develop a new Parking Strategy designed to reflect the Climate Emergency Strategy and the Air Quality Task Group's recommendations. In terms of the specific issues highlighted, members were advised of the need to recognise the different circumstances in each of the boroughs referred to as examples and need for consideration to be given to the impact of these proposals taking account of the circumstances in Brent. As a result, not all of the measures suggested were regarded as appropriate for the borough, with Councillor Sheth advising she would be happy to share further details of the assessments undertaken, if required.

In terms of the position regarding the extension of the diesel surcharge to pay and display it was pointed out this would need to be considered as part of a business case taking into account the cost (in terms of changes required to the existing infrastructure) and potential impact in persuading motorists to switch to non-diesel vehicles. Councillor Sheth also advised that it was not proposed to take forward any potential reduction in household parking permits given the potential disadvantage this may create for residents living in extended households.

In concluding her response, Councillor Sheth was pleased to be able to highlight the ongoing work in relation to the provision of bike hangars with officers already considering how best to minimise costs and encourage greener car ownership and more active modes of travel. In thanking the Harlesden Area Action Group for their deputation, she also advised that the comments in relation to Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and the specific scheme at Nicoll Road in Harlesden would be referred to the Lead Member for Regeneration, Property and Planning for consideration and review.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Krupa Sheth for her response and advised as this now concluded consideration of the deputation he would move on to the next item.

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

The Mayor advised that whilst no questions had been received from members of the public the following questions had been received from representatives of the Brent Youth Parliament:

Question 1 from Ben Maher to Councillor Tom Stephens, Lead Member for Schools, Employment & Skills on the potential of secondary schools across the borough including student Associate Governor roles on their Governing Bodies.

Question 2 from Bashra Mahamed to Councillor Southwood, Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform on the Council's plans to address the rising poverty rates in Brent and to provide families with support.

Members noted the written response provided on each of the questions with the Mayor advising that both representatives from the Youth Parliament had been invited to attend the meeting in order to ask a supplementary question. Whilst Bashra Mahamed had been unable to attend, the Mayor advised that Ben Maher had joined the meeting in order to ask a supplementary question. The Mayor welcomed Ben to the meeting (as a remote attendee) and invited him to put his supplementary question to Councillor Stephens, as Lead Member for Schools, Employment and Skills.

**Supplementary Question from Ben Maher to Councillor Stephens, Lead Member for Schools, Employment & Skills.**

Having thanked Councillor Stephens for the written response provided, Ben Maher asked what impact was expected as a result of the contact with secondary schools in order to encourage them to consider student Associate Governor roles on their Governing Bodies and how he would keep Brent Youth Parliament updated on progress.

In response, Councillor Stephens began by recognising and commending the work undertaken by Brent Youth Parliament in championing the voice of young people and confirmed his commitment to continue liaising with schools regarding the benefits of student Associate Governor roles on Governing Bodies. In terms of monitoring progress he would ensure that regular updates continued to be provided for Brent Youth Parliament.

Having noted the response provided, the Mayor thanked Ben Maher for his question and for joining the meeting. As there were no further questions the Mayor concluded the public question session.

**9. Petitions (if any)**

Following on from his announcements, the Mayor referred members to the list of petitions which had been tabled at the meeting. The list included details of a petition relating to the regeneration of St. Raphael's Estate which due to the number of signatures the Mayor advised he had agreed, in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme, to be presented at the meeting.

The Mayor advised that unless otherwise indicated by members, he intended to allow the representative nominated by the lead petitioner up to five minutes to present the petition. He would then allow Councillor Southwood, as Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform, up to two minutes to respond to the petition.

The Mayor then welcomed Tariq Abdul to the meeting, as representative of the lead petitioner, and invited him to present the petition.

Due to technical difficulties experienced by Mr Abdul in being able to connect to the meeting remotely he was unable to fully present the petition. Members were able to note, however, that the petition was objecting to the proposed redevelopment plans for St Raphael's Estate and supporting, as an alternative to redevelopment, a scheme involving refurbishment and infill with limited new build. Given that no written statement had been provided by the lead petitioner for reference in case of

technical difficulties and the petition had been referred to the Lead Member for Housing & Welfare Reform and Strategic Director of Community Wellbeing the Mayor (having provided an opportunity for the connection to be re-established) advised that he would need to proceed, given the remaining business on the agenda.

On the above basis the Mayor, having noted receipt of the petition, advised that he would be willing to provide Councillor Southwood, as Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform, with the opportunity to respond to the petition for the benefit of any residents following the meeting via the webcast.

In responding to the petition, Councillor Southwood advised that the Council had first been made aware of the petition prior to work on the master planning process with the local community having begun. The process since then had involved a series of resident events and workshops through which the redevelopment plans had been developed in consultation with the local community. Members were also advised of the work undertaken to support this process with the Resident Board in order to secure resident input at each stage of the process. The master plan process had therefore evolved through resident input and with each stage subject to detailed local communication.

Whilst building affordable housing was a key objective for the Council, Councillor Southwood reaffirmed the Council's commitment to community-led development and was also keen to point out that this provision needed to be in the interests of both current and future residents and members of the local community. In concluding her response, Councillor Southwood highlighted that it would ultimately be the residents of St Raphael's estate who had the opportunity to decide whether and how any scheme was progressed in the form of a resident ballot.

Recognising the technical difficulties experienced, Councillor Southwood ended by offering to liaise direct with the lead petitioners on her response and the way forward, should they wish to do so following the meeting.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Southwood for her response and advised that as this now concluded consideration of the petition he would move on to the next item.

#### **10. Annual Report from the Leader of the Council**

The Mayor advised members that the Leader's Annual Report would be provided verbally. He then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Leader of the Council, to present his Annual Report on the work of the Council and the state of the borough.

Councillor Muhammed Butt opened his annual report by reflecting on the effect that the Covid-19 pandemic had had on the borough, whilst sharing his optimism at the local response provided and progress being made in terms of the vaccine. He shared his sympathies with those who had lost loved ones; those who had lost their jobs and seen their businesses affected and those who had seen their education put on hold. He also paid tribute to residents for the way that had risen to the challenges created by the pandemic and for the support provided to those within their communities that had needed it the most.

Recognising that much of the fallout of the pandemic had not yet been realised, he expressed his concern about the possible impact of further austerity measures on the local economy and labour market. In terms of the action being taken by the Council, he highlighted the important work undertaken in relation to the Poverty Commission, development and implementation of the Black Community Action Plan and Climate Emergency Strategy all of which would be central to the Council's ongoing response to the recovery process and overall aim to ensure the best possible outcomes were delivered for residents of the Borough. Whilst recognising the extent of the work ahead, the Leader was also keen to acknowledge the success of the Council in being awarded LGC Council of the Year and being the Borough of Culture for 2020.

In summing up, Councillor Muhammed Butt felt there was a need to recognise the effect that austerity had had on frontline services and reaffirmed the Council's resolve to fill these gaps and provide the best possible support to the residents of the borough. He then ended by taking the opportunity to pay tribute and offer his condolences (on behalf of the Council) to the family of Jamalie Maleek Deacon Matthew, the teenager recently murdered in Northwick Park, who was described as an ambitious young man with huge potential.

The Mayor thanked the Leader for his Annual Report and then advised that he would open up the debate for contributions from other members, starting with a response from the Conservative Group.

In response to the Annual Report Councillor Kansagra, as Leader of the Conservative Group, felt it was important to highlight the level of funding received by the Council from the government in support of its work responding to the pandemic, including the funding provided to cover furloughed employees' wages. Whilst recognising the efforts of the Council in responding to the pandemic locally, he felt it should not be forgotten this had been with the support of significant funding provided by the government.

The Mayor then moved to invite contributions from other members. Councillor Georgiou shared the Leader's sentiment in paying tribute to how Brent residents had responded to the pandemic but also expressed concern regarding individuals, not properly following the restrictions in place under the lockdown rules.

With no further issues raised, the Mayor invited the Leader to sum up and respond to the comments made on the Annual Report. Councillor Muhammed Butt began his response by emphasising the role he felt the governments ongoing austerity measures had played in creating the inequalities which had been highlighted by the pandemic. He also felt it was possible to question the extent of the role played by the government in supporting the Council's response to the pandemic, and felt it would be more appropriate to recognise and praise the hard work undertaken by staff, members and local residents in ensuring the necessary support was provided. In summing up the Leader reaffirmed the Administration's ambition to continue to support the most vulnerable people in the borough in order to fulfil their potential and provide better outcomes for all.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Muhammed Butt for his response and advised that this concluded the debate. As an outcome of the debate, it was **RESOLVED** to formally note the Annual Report.



## 11. Reports from the Leader and Cabinet

The Mayor advised members that the Leader's report for this meeting would be provided verbally. He then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Leader of the Council, to present his update.

Councillor Muhammed Butt began by thanking all Council staff and members for their hard work over the past year, which had been recognised with Brent awarded the title of LGC Council of the Year 2020. This was seen as a particularly significant accomplishment within the context of the response being delivered to the pandemic. He also expressed his concern at the recent announcement by the government of their public sector pay freeze for 2021/22 and impact this would have on staff across the Council, many of whom had been at the heart of delivering the response to the pandemic. Finally, members were asked to note the list of decisions tabled at the meeting which had been taken under the Council's urgency procedures and thanks were also extended to all those involved in the London Borough of Culture No Bass like Home event which he was pleased had been such a success in highlighting the borough's cultural diversity.

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.

11.1 Councillor Sangani thanked Councillor Stephens, as Lead Member for Schools, Skills and Employment, for his written response in relation the Council's actions to ensure that no child went hungry over the October half-term. Councillor Sangani then asked a supplementary question regarding the level of government funding being provided to support the actions taken by the Council and in order to address the longstanding inequalities identified.

In response, Councillor Stephens advised that since the original written response had been provided the government had reversed its position and announced a set of measures to tackle school child hunger over the Christmas school holiday break. The Council had, however, needed to fund its own response during the October half-term and it looked unlikely these costs would be met.

- 11.2 Councillor Hassan thanked Councillor Southwood, as Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform, for her written response in relation to the Council's work to enhance fire safety protection in council homes. Councillor Hassan in recognising the work undertaken to date, asked a supplementary question regarding the steps the Council would take to work with Housing Associations and other providers to enhance fire safety protections residents and support the 'End our Cladding Scandal' ten-step plan.

In response, Councillor Southwood outlined the work that the Council had already undertaken as a landlord and its responsibilities in relation to privately owned properties to enhance fire safety protections. As part of this process the Council continued to support residents in liaising with private landlords and Housing Associations and, where required, with the Social Housing Regulator. The issues highlighted in relation to cladding and approach taken over general fire safety protections continued to be raised regularly with the borough's housing associations. Efforts were also being made to encourage the government to ensure that Housing Associations and other providers had access to the necessary funding available to support this response.

- 11.3 Councillor Long thanked Councillor Tatler, as Lead Member for Regeneration, Property and Planning, for her written response in relation to the rollout of the Healthy Neighbourhoods scheme. Councillor Long then asked a supplementary question regarding the Council's plans to improve traffic flows along main routes across the borough.

In response, Councillor Tatler advised that the Council was looking to update its Parking Strategy to enable safe parking and reduce car ownership and usage. There was also the potential to increase the amount of Healthy Neighbourhoods across the borough and to ensure new developments were car free. Schemes on the borough's main routes attracted funding from Transport for London (TfL), and as such the Council would continue to work closely with TfL in order to lobby government over the provision of adequate funding.

- 11.4 Councillor Maurice thanked Councillor Krupa Sheth, as Lead Member for Environment, for her written response in relation to the Council's plans to repair faulty paving along Kingsbury High Road. Councillor Maurice then asked a supplementary question regarding the funding for these repairs.

Councillor Krupa Sheth assured members that appropriate action was being undertaken with the contractors in order to secure funding for the remedial works required, with the repairs to be carried out at no cost to local residents

The Mayor thanked members for their written questions and Lead Members for the response provide to the supplementary questions. He 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 thanked local residents and emergency services for their response to a recent fire and incident of violent crime in Kensal Green and also sought assurances regarding the Council's response to these incidents.

Councillor Knight, as Lead Member for Community Safety and Engagement, responded by paying tribute to local residents and emergency services for their response to these incidents. In response to the question raised an assurance was provided that the Council continued to proactively work with community organisations, public partners and voluntary partners to target and respond to concerns regarding these type of incidents.

- (ii) Councillor Kennelly expressing concern over the government's recent decision to cut funding to organisations that dealt with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual (LGBT) bullying in schools, asked for an assurance about the Council's commitment and plans to continue working with these organisations and schools on anti-bullying measures.

In response, Councillor Stephens, as Lead Member for Schools, Employment & Skills, confirmed that he would raise the issue of LGBT bullying with schools directly and highlighted the importance in the Council continuing to ensure their existing offer of support in relation to bullying was offered to schools across the borough.

- (iii) Councillor Choudhary sought details regarding the lessons learned by schools during the pandemic, particularly in relation to online learning

In response, Councillor Stephens, as Lead Member for Schools, Employment & Skills, confirmed that a majority of schools in the borough had stayed open during the pandemic and took the opportunity to pay tribute to the teachers and support staff who had made this possible. In response to the question he outlined how the Council had worked with schools to ensure they received the necessary information, guidance and support in order to comply with the Covid-19 regulations. This had also included support around online learning, with schools commended for the work undertaken to improve their online infrastructure and ensure blended learning was available.

- (iv) Councillor Afzal, referring to the comments made earlier in the meeting regarding the government's response to the pandemic asked the Leader of the Council for his view as to whether the Council had anything to be thankful for terms of that response.

In response Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Leader of the Council, highlighted what he felt had been the government's failure to tackle social issues such as homelessness and impact of the austerity measure in relation to emergency services, healthcare and education all of which had been exposed by the current pandemic. The reduced level of funding available had led to local authorities and other public sector services having to make difficult choices in order to focus on supporting their most vulnerable residents. Taken alongside the impact of the recently announced pay freeze on many of those at the forefront of the pandemic response he felt there was little to be thankful for in terms of the government's overall response.

- (v) Councillor Gbajumo asked if further details could be provided regarding the Council's plans to tackle gender poverty, particularly period poverty and asked whether any plans were being developed to introduce free sanitary products at the Civic Centre.

In response, Councillor Southwood, as Lead Member for Housing & Welfare Reform, advised of the plans being developed as part of the Council's response to the Poverty Commission to address these issues, including period poverty. As part of this process the Consultative Group tasked with implementing the recommendations of the Poverty Commission had specifically been asked to explore the issues and advised members that she would ensure they were kept updated on the specific actions arising from this work.

- (vi) Councillor Daly sought further details and assurances over the public health work the Council had been undertaking to protect and inform residents during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In response Councillor Nerva, as Lead Member for Public Health, Culture and Leisure, commended the work of the Public Health team in relation to operation of the local test and trace system and information being provided for local residents. Urging residents to remain cautious and follow the guidance and restrictions in relation to social contact he also highlighted a need to ensure that the government was encouraged to provide the necessary financial support for those who could not afford to self-isolate when asked to.

At this stage in the proceedings, the Mayor advised that the time available for the open question session had expired. He therefore thanked all members for their contributions and advised that he 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 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:

- The work due to be undertaken by the Committee at their next meeting, which would include scrutinising the impact of Covid-19 on Education and Children's Services, progress against the Action Plan for raising attainment of boys of Black Caribbean heritage and the Brent Youth Offending Service post-inspection Action Plan;
- Although the review of specialist services at the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre, had been paused as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, plans were being made for this to recommence. Once completed proposed options from the review were expected to be published next year for public consultation;
- Following concerns expressed about the proposed closure of Wembley Ambulance Station, the Committee had invited representatives from the

London Ambulance Service to attend their next meeting, in order to clarify the current position.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Ketan Sheth for his update.

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 strong focus within the Committee's Work Plan for 2020-21 on the Council's strategic and policy framework, with a particular emphasis on how the Council had responded to the pandemic, revival of the local economy and employment and its response to the Black Community Action Plan and Poverty Commission;
- The establishment of the annual Task Group to scrutinise the Council's budget performance and draft budget proposals, which would include as a specific focus progress against delivery of the Borough Plan and key services along with the financial impact of Covid-19;
- The proposed changes to the operation of the Committee aimed at improving its responsiveness, accountability and accessibility including the introduction of community witnesses and a review of the existing work programme to provide capacity for the inclusion of current issues at shorter notice;
- The Committee would be considering a range of issues at its next meeting, including the Council's proposals to tackle the climate emergency and the impact of Covid-19 on unemployment in Brent.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Mashari for her 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) Councillor Long asked whether the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee had plans to scrutinise the work of the Royal Free London NHS Trust within the borough.

In response, Councillor Ketan Sheth advised members of the plans to ensure the Committee fully engaged in the work of all NHS trusts operating within the borough.

- (ii) Councillor Choudhary asked what plans the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee had to review the status and plans to provide access to those health services within the borough that had been or continued to be restricted due to the pandemic, including face to face GP consultations.

In response, Councillor Ketan Sheth explained that whilst a Task Group had been established to explore this issue in detail, its review had currently been paused in order to support the response being provided to the ongoing pandemic and pressures on the health service. It was intended to

recommence the review once these pressures had eased and he advised he would be willing to liaise further on the issue following the meeting.

- (iii) Councillors Kennelly and Maurice both highlighted concerns regarding the potential closure of Wembley Ambulance Station and the wider impact this would have on service response times across the borough. Both supported representatives from the London Ambulance Service being requested to attend the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee in order to review and clarify the position.

Councillor Ketan Sheth assured both members of the plans to fully scrutinise the issue at the Scrutiny Committee's upcoming meeting, with all interested members invited to attend or follow the proceedings via the live webcast.

At this stage in the proceedings, the Mayor advised that the time allocated for questions had now expired and he would therefore be moving on to the next item with all members thanked for their contributions.

#### **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, with the following issues highlighted:

- During its last meeting, the Committee had discussed a range of topics including the annual review of the Members' Code of Conduct complaints procedure, gifts and hospitality registered by members and the attendance record for members in relation to mandatory training sessions, the i4B and First Wave Housing Ltd Company accounts and audits, the Council's annual statement of accounts and progress update from the Council's external auditors;
- As part of the review of the Statement of Accounts the Committee had recognised the efforts made by the Council to ensure it maintained a strong balance sheet and reserves as it looked to recover from the costs of the pandemic;
- The Committee had been invited to participate in the Budget Scrutiny Task Group to enhance the level of co-operation and co-ordination between the Scrutiny and Audit & Standards Advisory Committees. This proposal had been welcomed by the Committee;
- The Committee intended to discuss a range of topics at its next meeting, including internal audit and counter fraud progress, external audit progress, Treasury Management and the performance and management of i4B and First Wave Housing Ltd.

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 Brent's commitment to tackling racial inequalities.

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 Shahzad to introduce the motion. As context for the debate, Councillor Shahzad highlighted the efforts of people around the world to bring attention to racial injustice through the Black Lives Matter movement, beginning with condemnation of the murder of George Floyd. It was recognised that the inequalities faced by Black people had been further highlighted by the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities across the world, as a result of the structural inequalities faced in relation to health, education and housing. He therefore urged all members to support the motion put forward for debate regarding the Council's commitment to tackling racial inequalities.

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

Councillor Ethapemi, speaking in support of the motion, highlighted the inhumanity of the murder of George Floyd and need to ensure that enforcement agents, such as the police were not regarded as being above the law. He hoped that those impacted by such events received justice, with the unrest recently witnessed in Nigeria provided as a further example and governments encouraged to condemn such acts of violence.

Councillor Maurice also expressed his support for the motion and pointed to the structural inequalities faced by Black people in Britain. He stressed the need to stamp out all forms of racism and ensure equality for all those living in the country.

In supporting the motion, Councillor Johnson highlighted the borough's history in welcoming diverse cultures as celebrated through the London Borough of Culture programme. From his perspective, the approach to tackling deprivation, opportunity for education, employment, housing and wellbeing had been hampered by the treatment of Black and minority ethnic communities whether through institutional or individual racism. He expressed his pride in the Council for its steps to tackle racial inequality in the borough and to level the playing field for future generations.

Councillor Kansagra also expressed his support for the motion, whilst highlighting the need to recognise how tolerant and welcoming Britain was as a place to live when compared to many other countries across the world with justice usually served in cases of violence or discrimination.

Councillor Afzal took the opportunity to recognise and highlight the benefits arising from the level of the diversity across the borough. In outlining the responsibility to seek to reverse historical injustices he also highlighted and supported the Council's commitment to tackling racial inequalities in health, housing, employment and education as well as individual racism.

Councillor Hassan recognised that the inequalities faced by Black people in Britain had been further highlighted by the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on BAME communities and emphasised the need to tackle all aspects of racial inequality. She

also spoke of her own experiences of racism and encouraged everyone to call racism out whenever it was experienced.

Councillor Mitchell-Murray also speaking in support of the motion highlighted the Windrush scandal as an ongoing example of the government's inability to deal with the type of racism the Black community had and continued to experience.

Councillor Dixon, speaking of her experience as both a councillor and in working in the criminal justice system, noted the level of institutional racism present in society. She cited the work of community figures in the borough and Britain as a whole to encourage people (particularly those in more privileged positions) to reflect on the ways in which they may contribute to racial inequalities and to challenge these types of behaviours in order to ensure racism and discrimination were eradicated at all levels of society.

In supporting the motion, Councillor Thakkar pointed out the inaction of previous generations in tackling racial inequality. She spoke of her own experiences of racism as a child and how little she felt society had moved forward. She expressed her hope that the words of today did not turn into the inaction of tomorrow.

Echoing Councillor Mitchell-Murray's sentiment regarding the Windrush scandal, Councillor Daly shared the experience of a deceased resident from the Windrush generation who had lived in her ward. In highlighting her support for the motion, she expressed her sadness that racism remained so pervasive within the country.

Councillor Chohan also expressed his support for the motion and his pride in the work that the Council was currently undertaking to tackle racial inequality in the borough. He also recognised the diversity of the borough and the efforts of residents to ensure different cultures could thrive across the borough.

As a final contribution to the debate, Councillor Sangani highlighted the importance of education in tackling racism with an emphasis on teaching children that all forms of racism were wrong.

As no other members had indicated they wished to speak the Mayor then invited Councillor McLennan, as Deputy Member and Lead Member for Resources to sum up and close the debate.

Councillor McLennan began by thanking Councillor Shahzad for bringing the motion forward for debate and all the contributions made by members during the debate. She expressed her pride at the Council's recent work to tackle racial inequality in all its forms, including antisemitism and Islamophobia. She also highlighted and praised as an important step, the Black Community Action Plan developed by the Council in tackling the disproportionate racial inequality faced within the black community.

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:

"The Council Notes:



- Brent is the most diverse borough in London, with a long and proud tradition of celebrating diversity and welcoming people from all backgrounds and communities to live, learn and work here.
- Brent has the seventh highest Black community in London by numbers; with generations of unique stories of trial and unsung achievements.
- The murder of George Floyd in the United States of America has justifiably triggered global protests against institutional racism faced by Black people, including here in the United Kingdom.
- That alongside this monstrous act of police brutality, the world is looking on with growing alarm at the ongoing situation in Nigeria, in which peaceful protestors, campaigning for change – are being killed by security forces.
- That these global protests have come alongside all the inequalities faced by Black people, in the wake of the devastatingly disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on BAME communities in Britain and other parts of the world.
- That it is clear that this impact has been made far worse by the structural inequalities Black people face when it comes to health, education and housing.
- The welcome commitment to embed equality and diversity in all the activities the council undertakes through the ten point Brent Black Community Action Plan.

This Council believes:

- That Black Lives Matter.
- That George Floyd's murder must be a catalyst for permanent change both at home and overseas.
- That no institution can absolve itself of the responsibility to do more to tackle racial inequalities.
- That there is no place for racism, anti-Semitism, islamophobia or any form of xenophobia or bigotry anywhere in our democracy.
- That language is a powerful tool for inspiration and change, as well as oppression and ignorance and must be used wisely and respectfully.
- That it is vital all efforts are taken to understand the impact of Covid-19 on BAME communities in Brent and that we should work with all relevant stakeholders to mitigate the impact now and into the future.

This Council Resolves:

- To show continued leadership in the campaign to rid our city and world of racism.
- To continue working to achieve the ten point Brent Black Community Action Plan, which includes tackling health inequalities, developing community spaces that will be run and managed by members of the community and an internal review of processes in the council.
- That the work of elected representatives in this chamber must play a substantive and public role in ensuring racism and discrimination are challenged and eradicated at all levels.
- To continually seek the views of our diverse communities across Brent on the issues arising from the Black Lives Matter protests.
- To call on the government to fully uphold the protections contained in the Equality Act of 2010 and to implement the recommendations contained in the:

- (i) Public Health England report into the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on our BAME communities;
- (ii) The Lammy report;
- (iii) The Angiolini review;
- (iv) The Home Office Windrush review;
- (v) McGregor-Smith review."

#### 16. **A Fairer Future Ending Poverty in Brent - Delivery Plans**

The Mayor then moved on to invite Councillor Southwood, as Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform, to present the report on the delivery plans to take forward implementation of the Poverty Commission's recommendations.

In introducing the report, Councillor Southwood advised members that whilst the Poverty Commission had not been established in response to the pandemic, that had served to highlighted many of the existing systemic inequalities the Commission had been set up to challenge and address. In outlining some of the work already underway to implement the Commission's recommendations, Councillor Southwood highlighted the Council's work to conduct a whole market review of the private rented sector with a focus on tenants' perspectives and its continued commitment to its house-building programme. Support was also being stepped up with a focus on tackling food and fuel poverty, as well as in the provision of debt advice. The introduction of the Resident Support Fund, which included the availability of grants and interest free loans (managed through a credit union), was also highlighted as an important element in the Council's response to the immediate financial impact of the pandemic.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Southwood for her introduction. As no other members indicated that they wished to speak, Councillor Southwood ended by taking the opportunity to reaffirm the Administration's commitment to delivery of the recommendations from the Poverty Commission, including the issue highlighted earlier during the meeting in relation to gender and period poverty.

The Mayor then put the recommendations in the report to the vote and they were unanimously declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1)** To note and endorse the delivery plans outlined in the report.
- (2)** To refer the delivery plans to Cabinet for approval.

#### 17. **Treasury Management 2019/20 Outturn Report**

The Mayor then moved on to invite Councillor McLennan, as Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Resources, to present the report on Treasury Management activity and the Council's compliance with its Prudential Indicators for 2019/20. Councillor McLennan in introducing the item advised members that the report was being presented for information following its consideration by the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee on 29 July 2020 and Cabinet on 7 September 2020.

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

Referring to section 3 in the report, Councillor Crane sought further details on the Council's approach towards borrowing. In response, Councillor McLennan advised that the Council had considered all possibilities when considering its borrowing requirements and commitments, including UK Municipal Bonds.

Councillor Choudhary highlighted the financial situation at Croydon Council and its subsidiary housing company and sought assurances around the performance of the Council's own housing company i4B Ltd. In response, Councillor McLennan assured members that i4B was performing well and was subject to extensive financial scrutiny. She explained that the company was created to provide permanent, high quality housing and investment to deliver regeneration and financial benefits for the Council (as its sole shareholder).

As no further issues were raised, the Mayor then put the recommendations in the report to the vote and they were unanimously declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To note the 2019/20 Treasury Management outturn report in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code).
- (2) To note that for 2019/20 the Council had complied with its Prudential Indicators which were approved by Full Council on 25 February 2019 as part of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Capital Strategy Statement.

## 18. **Motions**

Before moving on to consider the motions listed on the summons, the Mayor reminded members that a total of 30 minutes would be set aside for the consideration of all three 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 he advised that the remaining time available would be split between the remaining motions on a rolling basis.

### **18.1 1st Motion (Conservative Group) – Management of Transport for London (TfL) funding**

The Mayor invited Councillor Maurice to move the first motion which had been submitted on behalf of the Conservative Group. Councillor Maurice in moving the motion began by highlighting the financial situation currently faced by Transport for London (TfL) despite the recent additional government funding it had received. He felt it important to note the impact of the increase in the congestion charge and its potential extension to the North and South Circular Road, given the effect this would have on Brent residents. The motion, he felt, highlighted the mismanagement of TfL by the Mayor for London and on that basis he commended the motion to members.

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

Councillor Hirani, speaking against the motion, outlined and challenged what he felt to be the misinformed basis of the motion. He stated that 72% of TfL funding came through fares and that, prior to the pandemic, its finances were in a good position as verified by independent auditors. There was also a need to recognise that at the peak of the pandemic passenger income was down by 90% compared to the previous year. He also emphasised that the current TfL management had sought to reduce the operating deficit (left by the former Conservative Mayor for London) by 71% prior to the pandemic. Councillor Hirani also felt it was important to note that the proposals to extend the congestion charge to the North and South Circular roads, as highlighted in the motion, had been raised as options by the government rather than TfL itself. Having challenged the basis of the motion, he therefore urged all members to reject and vote against it.

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

In summing up, Councillor Maurice reemphasised his belief that the current financial situation at TfL had been caused by mismanagement rather than the pandemic and that the basis of his motion therefore remained valid.

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

“This Council is seriously concerned about the massive waste of Brent and Londoners’ hard earned money by TfL and Sadiq Khan and therefore calls for his resignation.

Through mismanagement and incompetence, TfL is virtually bankrupt. Twice Sadiq Khan has gone to the Government cap in hand begging for bailouts, and the UK taxpayer has already given him £3.3bn in bailouts this year so far.

Since Sadiq Khan won the Mayoralty in 2016, TfL’s debts have gone from bad to worse, rising to £11.7bn, and this was pre-covid!

These include:

- £640m to subsidise tourist travel;
- £1.59bn debt interest;
- £5.25bn due to Crossrail delays;
- £45m spent on service contracts including £24m to provide taxis for TFL staff. I thought the mayor was encouraging people to walk, cycle or take buses and trains;
- £828m spent on pension overpayments;
- Over 100 extra staff being paid over £100,000 per annum.

In order to attempt to recoup this wasted money, Sadiq Khan has increased the Congestion Charge to £15 per day every day until 10pm, hitting thousands of people and businesses, including those in Brent, very hard.

Sadiq Khan tells us that he's managed to resist the Government's demands to extend the Congestion Charge to the North and South Circular Roads, but fails to tell people that the Government never made those demands in the first place.

Of course he does not want an extension to the Congestion Charge. There is an election next year. But make no mistake; if Sadiq Khan is re-elected, then it is very likely that he WILL extend the Congestion Charge. He needs the money to fund his incompetence and his main source of income is milking the poor hapless motorist.

Sadiq Khan blames Covid for the loss of revenue but conveniently fails to inform people that the Government would cover that loss. What the Government will not cover is money lost through waste and incompetence.

This Council therefore believes that Sadiq Khan is not a fit and proper person to be in charge of London's Transport network and calls on him not only to resign but also to stop using motorists, including those from within Brent, to fund TfL."

## **18.2 (2<sup>nd</sup> Motion) Labour Group Motion – Green Economic Recovery**

The Mayor then invited Councillor Chappell to move the second motion which had been submitted on behalf of the Labour Group. Councillor Chappell began by highlighting the economic impact of the pandemic on the borough, with nearly half of all residents being furloughed and unemployment rising. He also felt it was important to emphasise the government's reluctance to provide the required economic support during the pandemic, highlighting concerns in relation to the provision of free school meals over school holidays, operation of the furlough scheme and proposal to cease funding the uplift for Universal Credit. Given the economic impact of the pandemic and the continued climate emergency, Councillor Chappell felt there was a need for immediate action to support residents into employment and ensure a green economic recovery and therefore urged all members to support the motion.

Following the original motion being moved the Mayor advised members of an amendment submitted by Councillor Maurice, which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Councillor Maurice formally moved the amendment, highlighting that whilst the Conservative Group were not unsupportive of the original motion, they felt it was also important to recognise the government's efforts to support the green economic recovery and commitment to talking climate change. On this basis the amendment moved was as follows:

"The Council notes:

- That in Brent we face a looming jobs and climate emergency.
- That unemployment in Brent has increased by at least 3,000 people in the period between June 2019 and 2020.
- Nationally there has been over a million jobs lost due to Covid-19; with the Bank of England estimating this will rise to 2.6 million people out of work.
- Earlier this year in Brent Central, nearly half of all our workers were furloughed – the highest proportion in the United Kingdom.
- That before the pandemic, the poverty rate in Brent was 33% higher than the average; with an unemployment rate 6% higher than the national average.

- The work of the Poverty Commission in Brent has highlighted that far too many of our constituents are reliant upon informal and unstable employment – compounded now by a looming jobs crisis.
- The latest U-turn by the Government to extend the furlough scheme until March will come too little too late for many of our residents now out of work.

The Council welcomes the Government's Plan for a Green Industrial revolution together with this ~~Labour~~ administration's continued commitment to:

- Support our existing and new businesses to survive in the short term and adapt and thrive in the new post-Covid economy.
- Support residents into employment pathways, through an award-winning council-run jobs brokerage service, Brent Works; aiding over 1,000 residents with employment advice, since lockdown began.
- Enable our residents to unlock their potential through upskilling, reskilling, training provision and apprenticeships through our very own adult education college, Brent Start which regularly provides education and training to around 2,500 learners a year.
- Create a skills system responsive to the needs of the future by expanding the range of courses offered by Brent Start, through a £43m investment at Morland Gardens to develop a state of the art education centre, council homes and affordable workspace.
- Working in partnership with our anchor institutions and major employers to use our supply chains and spending power to unlock social value in our procurement processes.
- End low pay - as a big local employer we've led by example and have been accredited as a London Living Wage Employer for seven years in a row since 2013.

This Council believes in a Green economic recovery:

- Brent and its residents have powered London's success story as a global city for decades – our borough is home to people with aspiration, ambition and the ideal that if you work hard, your children will have a better future.
- The Government must provide support to Brent to help us rebuild our local economy and help tackle the climate emergency.
- An international comparison of green stimulus packages suggests that the UK has fallen behind many other advanced economies, which are taking the climate and ecological challenge more seriously.
- The Government's own advisory body, the Committee on Climate Change, has made clear, we are not on track to meet our net zero 2050 target.
- Many manufacturers and construction businesses have been at the forefront of the transition to the low-carbon, green economy of the future; and others are keen to engage in that transition, but currently lack the levers to do so. It has been estimated that to meet the net zero target, sectors such as steel and cement will need to reduce emissions by 94% and 93% respectively, by 2040.
- It's time for a bold and ambitious plan to deliver thousands of jobs in Brent which can also tackle the climate crisis. We can harness the opportunities for green growth and the technologies of the future – but only if the Government makes the right decisions and works with Brent to recover jobs, retrain workers and rebuild businesses.

- With looming unemployment, the right thing to do for our economy is to invest in the jobs of the future now.

This Council Resolves:

- To call on the government to support a green economic recovery and with the help of British industry, accelerate energy retrofitting programmes - creating jobs, making homes warmer, reducing bills, and driving down emissions.
- To call on the government to fund a green economic recovery that would leave no worker behind, supporting them to build on their skills through existing programmes like Brent Start and equip our workers with the skills for our future economy.
- To reaffirm our commitment to the interlinked efforts of the council, aimed at improving the prosperity of our communities; from the work of Poverty Commission, the Brent Black Community Action Plan, the Climate Emergency strategy and the Keep Brent Working campaign.
- To request that the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment and Skills write to Government to call for:
  - A commitment to a major investment package in employment and skills support alongside the furlough scheme; and raise the wage floor for furloughed workers so nobody is left facing poverty during this difficult period;
  - An urgent re-think on plans to withdraw the £20 per week boost to Universal Credit, which has been a lifeline to many Brent residents out of work during the pandemic."

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

Councillor Stephens, as Lead Member for Employment and Skills, spoke in support of the original motion highlighting that in his view the government's plans did not go far enough especially when taken alongside their inadequate economic response to the pandemic. He also highlighted the work of the Council to support residents during the pandemic and in supporting the creation of green jobs in the borough, and took the opportunity to emphasise the need for the government to enhance their role in supporting a full economic recovery through the creation of green jobs, essential welfare support and investment in skills.

Councillor Daly, in support of the original motion, also felt that that government's plans for a green economic recovery did not go far enough and more needed to be done.

Councillor Hirani also supported the views expressed during the debate highlighting that the original motion was focused on the local economic response rather than the national economic response as proposed by the amendment.

As a further contribution, Councillor Shahzad thanked council staff for their hard work during the pandemic especially when faced with the challenges needing to be addressed within the local authority and other public sector partners as a result of the government's ongoing funding restrictions and programme of austerity.

At this stage the Mayor advised that the remaining time available for the debate on this motion (within the overall time limit provided) had expired so then invited Councillors Chappell (as mover of the original motion) and Maurice (as mover of the amendment) to exercise their rights of reply.

In summing up, Councillor Chappell thanked members for their contributions and asked members to consider rejecting the amendment moved to the original motion on the basis that it was not felt the government's commitment to a green economic recovery had gone far enough.

Councillor Maurice exercising his right of reply on the amendment felt there was a need to recognise the efforts made by the government in responding to the pandemic (including on welfare support) and felt they had done as much as possible to address the issues highlighted under such challenging and unprecedented circumstances.

Having thanked Councillors Chappell and Maurice for their closing remarks, the Mayor advised that he intended to move straight to the vote on the motion starting with the amendment.

The amendment, as set out above, was then put to the vote and declared **LOST**.

The Mayor then moved on to put the original substantive motion, as set out below, to a vote which was declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to approve the following motion:

"The Council notes:

- That in Brent we face a looming jobs and climate emergency.
- That unemployment in Brent has increased by at least 3,000 people in the period between June 2019 and 2020.
- Nationally there has been over a million jobs lost due to Covid-19; with the Bank of England estimating this will rise to 2.6 million people out of work.
- Earlier this year in Brent Central, nearly half of all our workers were furloughed – the highest proportion in the United Kingdom.
- That before the pandemic, the poverty rate in Brent was 33% higher than the average; with an unemployment rate 6% higher than the national average.
- The work of the Poverty Commission in Brent has highlighted that far too many of our constituents are reliant upon informal and unstable employment – compounded now by a looming jobs crisis.
- The latest U-turn by the Government to extend the furlough scheme until March will come too little too late for many of our residents now out of work.

The Council welcomes this Labour administration's continued commitment to:

- Support our existing and new businesses to survive in the short term and adapt and thrive in the new post-Covid economy.
- Support residents into employment pathways, through an award-winning council-run jobs brokerage service, Brent Works; aiding over 1,000 residents with employment advice, since lockdown began.



- Enable our residents to unlock their potential through upskilling, reskilling, training provision and apprenticeships through our very own adult education college, Brent Start which regularly provides education and training to around 2,500 learners a year.
- Create a skills system responsive to the needs of the future by expanding the range of courses offered by Brent Start, through a £43m investment at Morland Gardens to develop a state of the art education centre, council homes and affordable workspace.
- Working in partnership with our anchor institutions and major employers to use our supply chains and spending power to unlock social value in our procurement processes.
- End low pay - as a big local employer we've led by example and have been accredited as a London Living Wage Employer for seven years in a row since 2013.

This Council believes in a Green economic recovery:

- Brent and its residents have powered London's success story as a global city for decades – our borough is home to people with aspiration, ambition and the ideal that if you work hard, your children will have a better future.
- The Government must provide support to Brent to help us rebuild our local economy and help tackle the climate emergency.
- An international comparison of green stimulus packages suggests that the UK has fallen behind many other advanced economies, which are taking the climate and ecological challenge more seriously.
- The Government's own advisory body, the Committee on Climate Change, has made clear, we are not on track to meet our net zero 2050 target.
- Many manufacturers and construction businesses have been at the forefront of the transition to the low-carbon, green economy of the future; and others are keen to engage in that transition, but currently lack the levers to do so. It has been estimated that to meet the net zero target, sectors such as steel and cement will need to reduce emissions by 94% and 93% respectively, by 2040.
- It's time for a bold and ambitious plan to deliver thousands of jobs in Brent which can also tackle the climate crisis. We can harness the opportunities for green growth and the technologies of the future – but only if the Government makes the right decisions and works with Brent to recover jobs, retrain workers and rebuild businesses.
- With looming unemployment, the right thing to do for our economy is to invest in the jobs of the future now.

This Council Resolves:

- To call on the government to support a green economic recovery and with the help of British industry, accelerate energy retrofitting programmes - creating jobs, making homes warmer, reducing bills, and driving down emissions.
- To call on the government to fund a green economic recovery that would leave no worker behind, supporting them to build on their skills through existing programmes like Brent Start and equip our workers with the skills for our future economy.
- To reaffirm our commitment to the interlinked efforts of the council, aimed at improving the prosperity of our communities; from the work of Poverty

- Commission, the Brent Black Community Action Plan, the Climate Emergency strategy and the Keep Brent Working campaign.
- To request that the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment and Skills write to Government to call for:
    - A commitment to a major investment package in employment and skills support alongside the furlough scheme; and raise the wage floor for furloughed workers so nobody is left facing poverty during this difficult period.
    - An urgent re-think on plans to withdraw the £20 per week boost to Universal Credit, which has been a lifeline to many Brent residents out of work during the pandemic.”

### **18.3 (3<sup>rd</sup> Motion) Labour Group Motion – Thank you to our Keyworkers**

The Mayor invited Councillor Johnson to move the third and final motion submitted on behalf of the Labour Group. In doing so, Councillor Johnson highlighted the contribution and commitment of key workers during the pandemic and expressed concern at the way they had been treated by the government especially as a result of the recently announced public sector pay freeze for the coming year. In seeking members support for the motion he also took the opportunity to call on the government to honour their original commitment to fund local authorities for the full cost involved in them responding to the pandemic.

Following the original motion being moved the Mayor advised members of an amendment submitted by Councillor Maurice, which had been circulated prior to the meeting. In moving the amendment, Councillor Maurice advised that whilst supportive of the sentiments expressed within the motion the Conservative Group felt that specific political reference needed to be removed in order to highlight the cross party nature of support for the work being undertaken by all key workers. On this basis the amendment moved was as follows:

“This Council celebrates:

- The resilience and resourcefulness of Brent Council staff in responding to the challenges posed by a global pandemic, stepping in as the fourth emergency service to support the most vulnerable in our communities.
- That testament to the tireless work of our staff both before and during this pandemic, the Local Government Chronicle awarded this organisation ‘Council of the Year for 2020 – highlighting the council’s ability to ‘convene communities’ as ‘an antidote to today’s fractured society’.
- The enormous and continuing contribution of our entire family of essential keyworkers either employed or residing in Brent.
- That keyworkers on the frontline – from NHS colleagues, our social care heroes, Transport for London staff, our school teams, council officers, contractors, emergency services, refuse collectors, parking officers, and our retail workers keeping essential services open – have all made personal sacrifices without parallel; for the betterment of our borough.
- That communities across Brent have come together in a rousing display of solidarity to support their fellow residents. This network of mutual aid groups, our voluntary organisations, foodbanks, local businesses and faith groups –

they have shown true leadership when it has been found wanting in the corridors of power.

This Council believes:

~~We join the Labour Party leader Sir Keir Starmer in his declaration that:~~

- We can see so clearly now who the key workers really are.
- When we get through this it will be because of the hard work and bravery of every key worker as they took on this virus and kept our country going.
- For too long they have been taken for granted and poorly paid. They were last and now they should be first.
- In their courage and their sacrifice and their bravery, we can see a better future.

This Council resolves:

- To convey this Chamber's collective debt of gratitude to all of our keyworkers and recognise the personal sacrifices made in our boroughs hour of need.
- To do all we can to stand up and speak up for our key workers throughout the continuing pandemic.
- To call on the Government to recognise this moment of opportunity to thank all workers across the public sector, in deeds and not just words – by committing to a sector wide pay rise, acknowledging the vital services that keyworkers sustain and accounting for the decade of real-terms pay cuts since austerity began in 2010.
- To call on the Government to commit to giving the councils a funding package at the Spending Review that puts our essential services on long-term sustainable financial footing. This includes the urgent need for the Government to make good on the promise of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to fund the cost of 'whatever it takes' to tackle the pandemic."

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

Councillor Naheerathan, speaking in support of the original motion, took the opportunity to thank key workers for their efforts during the pandemic and felt the government also needed to consider providing tax allowances alongside the furlough scheme.

Councillor Chan, also speaking in support of the original motion, expressed his concern and disappointment at the government's recently announced public sector pay freeze given the impact on key workers many of whom had worked tirelessly in leading the response on the pandemic whilst also having been hit hardest by the virus.

At this stage in proceedings, the Mayor advised that as the remaining time available for the meeting was shortly due to expire he would be moving the suspension of Standing Order 44 (Council Guillotine Procedure) in order to extend the time of the meeting by five minutes and enable the conclusion of this motion as the final item

on the agenda. In accordance with Standing Order 42 (d) the procedural motion was put to the vote without further discussion and **AGREED**.

Continuing with the debate, Councillor Kennelly also expressed his support for the original motion highlighting the role of key workers throughout the pandemic despite the challenges created by the government's longstanding programme of austerity in relation to public services. He also felt it important to draw attention to the work of volunteers in supporting residents in the borough, providing an example of the mutual aid group covering Ashfield Place and worshippers at Neasden Temple in delivering meals to vulnerable residents.

Councillor Shahzad in supporting the motion, also took the opportunity to congratulate and thank all frontline workers including nurses, doctors, ambulance staff, cleaners and mental health workers who had worked so tirelessly and in such difficult circumstances responding the pandemic.

Councillor Georgiou, also speaking in support of the original motion, felt it was important to place on record the Council's gratitude to the full range of key workers across all sectors for their contribution and effort in responding to the pandemic.

As a final contribution, the comments expressed during the debate were also supported and commended by Councillor Afzal who felt it was important to not only recognise the efforts of key workers throughout the pandemic but also looking forward in terms of the effort that would be required once the pandemic was over.

As the additional time available had expired, the Mayor drew the debate to a close and thanked all members for their contributions. He then invited Councillors Johnson (as mover of the original motion) and Maurice (as mover of the amendment) to exercise their rights of reply.

Recognising the support expressed for the original motion, Councillor Johnson advised that he had no additional comments to make in summing up. Councillor Maurice was then invited to speak and reiterated his gratitude and support to all key workers for what he felt had been their outstanding effort and dedication during the pandemic. In urging members to consider accepting his amendment he ended by highlighting what he felt was the potentially negative impact of the healthy neighbourhood schemes on those key workers relying on motor vehicles for work.

Having thanked Councillor Maurice for his closing remarks, the Mayor advised that he intended to move straight to the vote on the motion starting with the amendment.

The amendment, as set out above, was then put to the vote and declared **LOST**.

The Mayor then put the original substantive motion, as set out below, to a vote which was declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to approve the following motion:

"This Council celebrates:

- The resilience and resourcefulness of Brent Council staff in responding to the challenges posed by a global pandemic, stepping in as the fourth emergency service to support the most vulnerable in our communities.
- That testament to the tireless work of our staff both before and during this pandemic, the Local Government Chronicle awarded this organisation 'Council of the Year for 2020 – highlighting the council's ability to 'convene communities' as 'an antidote to today's fractured society'.
- The enormous and continuing contribution of our entire family of essential keyworkers either employed or residing in Brent.
- That keyworkers on the frontline – from NHS colleagues, our social care heroes, Transport for London staff, our school teams, council officers, contractors, emergency services, refuse collectors, parking officers, and our retail workers keeping essential services open – have all made personal sacrifices without parallel; for the betterment of our borough.
- That communities across Brent have come together in a rousing display of solidarity to support their fellow residents. This network of mutual aid groups, our voluntary organisations, foodbanks, local businesses and faith groups – they have shown true leadership when it has been found wanting in the corridors of power.

This Council believes:

We join the Labour Party leader Sir Keir Starmer in his declaration that:

- We can see so clearly now who the key workers really are.
- When we get through this it will be because of the hard work and bravery of every key worker as they took on this virus and kept our country going.
- For too long they have been taken for granted and poorly paid. They were last and now they should be first.
- In their courage and their sacrifice and their bravery, we can see a better future.

This Council resolves:

- To convey this Chamber's collective debt of gratitude to all of our keyworkers and recognise the personal sacrifices made in our boroughs hour of need.
- To do all we can to stand up and speak up for our key workers throughout the continuing pandemic.
- To call on the Government to recognise this moment of opportunity to thank all workers across the public sector, in deeds and not just words – by committing to a sector wide pay rise, acknowledging the vital services that keyworkers sustain and accounting for the decade of real-terms pay cuts since austerity began in 2010.
- To call on the Government to commit to giving the councils a funding package at the Spending Review that puts our essential services on long-term sustainable financial footing. This includes the urgent need for the Government to make good on the promise of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to fund the cost of 'whatever it takes' to tackle the pandemic."

## 19. **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm

COUNCILLOR ERNEST EZEAJUGHI  
Mayor