



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 18 September 2023
at 6.00 pm

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Orleen Hylton

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Tariq Dar MBE

COUNCILLORS:

Aden	Afzal
Agha	Ahmadi Moghaddam
Ahmed	Akram
Bajwa	Begum
Benea	M Butt
S Butt	Chan
Chappell	Chohan
Choudry	Collymore
Conneely	Crabb
Dixon	Donnelly-Jackson
Ethapemi	Farah
Fraser	Gbajumo
Georgiou	Grahl
Hack	Hirani
Johnson	Kabir
Kansagra	Kennelly
Knight	Long
Lorber	Mahmood
Matin	Maurice
Mistry	Mitchell
Moeen	Molloy
Nerva	J.Patel
Rajan-Seelan	Rubin
Shah	Smith
Tatler	

1. **Mayors Introductory Statement**

The Mayor welcomed all those present to the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

The Mayor reported that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Kelcher, Miller, Mili Patel, Ketan Sheth, Krupa Sheth and Southwood.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the of the Council meeting held on Monday 10 July 2023 be approved as a correct record.

4. **Declarations of Interest**

The following interests were declared at the meeting:

(a) Agenda Item 8 Petitions – Protection of Brents Parks & Open Spaces:

- Councillor Lorber declared a personal interest as a Director and Trustee of Barham Park Community Library given the reference to Barham Park within the motion.
- Councillor Donnelly-Jackson declared a personal interest as a Trustee of Actionspace given the reference to Barham Park within the motion, who were an art-based charity supporting emerging and established artists with learning disabilities that had used studio space provided through ACAVA (one of the tenant organisations in the Barham Park building).

(b) Agenda Item 18.3: Motion – Rogue Landlords

- Councillors Ahmed, Dixon, Ethapemi, Hirani, Johnson, Kansagra and J.Patel all declared a personal interest as landlords within the borough;
- Councillors Ahmadi Moghaddam & Rubin declared a personal interest as members of Brent Renters Union;
- Councillor Donnelly-Jackson declared a personal interest given her previous involvement in the Action for Renters campaign.

There were no other declarations of interest made at the meeting.

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

The Mayor made the following announcements:

(i) 100th Birthday Celebration

The Mayor began her announcements with news of a recent visit she had made to a local resident (Mrs Ida Studdart) in order to celebrate her 100th birthday. Highlighting the role Mrs Studdart had played as a resident of Brent and in supporting her local community since 1965 the Mayor thanked her for the contribution made and on behalf of all members wished her a happy 100th birthday.

(ii) Brent Health and Social Care Awards

On behalf of both herself and the Council, the Mayor advised she would like to congratulate everyone who had been honoured at the recent Brent Health and Social Care Awards. Highlighting the success of the awards, the Mayor outlined how much of a privilege it had been to be able to recognise and celebrate the achievements of so many health and social care staff across Brent.

(iii) Organ Donation Week

The Mayor took the opportunity to remind members about National Organ Donation week and to encourage as many members as possible to participate and encourage others to register as organ donors.

(iv) Paryushan Festival

Recognising the importance of the week for members of the Jain community across Brent observing the Paryushan festival the Mayor hoped that Paryushan Parv would bring happiness and prosperity.

(v) Earthquake in Morocco and Flooding in Libya

In reflecting on the devastating consequences of the recent earthquake in Morocco and flooding in Libya, the Mayor advised that the Council's thoughts remained with all those whose lives had been affected by the terrible disasters.

(vi) Death of Fran Pearson (Independent Chair of Brent's Adult Safeguarding Board and Safeguarding Children's Partnership)

The Mayor advised that it was with sadness she had to inform members of the recent death of Fran Pearson who was the Independent Chair of Brent's Safeguarding Adults Board and had also recently been appointed as Independent Chair of Brent's Children's Safeguarding Partnership.

In paying tribute to Fran, the Mayor highlighted the high level of respect in which she had been held locally and nationally not only in terms of her expertise but also for the way in which she had championed and driven safeguarding activity.

In recognising how much she would be missed, the Mayor ended by expressing the Council's deepest sympathy and condolences to Fran's family, friends and colleagues at such a difficult time.

(vii) Tributes following the death of former Councillor Ruth Moher

The Mayor advised that it was with regret and sadness she also had to inform members of the recent death of former Councillor Ruth Moher who had passed away following a long illness. In paying tribute, members were reminded of Ruth's dedication and passion as a public servant who had served on the Council from 2005 to 2018 where she had represented Fryant ward and also spent time as Deputy Leader. In recognising her compassion and commitment to making a difference, the Mayor advised that she had agreed to allow other members, at this stage of the meeting, to pay further personal tribute in commemoration of Ruth.

In opening the tributes, Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) began by offering his personal condolences to Ruth's husband Jim, who was also welcomed as guest at the meeting. Highlighting how well he had known Ruth, Councillor Muhammed Butt felt it important to outline her caring and compassionate nature along with the advice and guidance she had provided when he had first joined the Council. In recognising the dedication and commitment she had demonstrated in representing and supporting residents across Brent and within her ward, he ended by highlighting how much she would be missed by all those who had known and served with her over the years.

Following on, Councillor Tatler also took the opportunity to offer her personal condolences to Ruth's family, again highlighting the compassion and social values she had demonstrated and been so keen to share in supporting and mentoring other members and the local community she had served over the years. Referring to the personal support she had received from Ruth, Councillor Tatler felt there was also a need to recognise her style and how much she would be missed not only by herself but many other colleagues on the Council.

In echoing the tributes previously made, Councillor Kansagra also took the opportunity to recognise the caring, passionate and sometimes forceful nature of Ruth whom he had previously served with as a member of the Planning Committee and to offer his condolences to her family on their loss.

Councillor Mahmood, again echoing the previous comments made, also paid tribute to Ruth's caring and helpful nature recalling the support she had provided during his time as Mayor and took the opportunity to pass on his deepest sympathy to Jim and her family.

Councillor Mistry and Kabir also spoke in personal tribute to Ruth highlighting the dignity, warmth, kindness and support she had offered to them both as newly elected councillors and her dedication to serving the residents and communities across the borough, which would be greatly missed.

Councillor Lorber then spoke to pay tribute to Ruth on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group having known her both in terms of her role as a former councillor and also through the Memory Lounge Dementia café. In terms of any wider tribute the Council could make he felt the most appropriate way to honour her memory would be to ensure support continue to be provided for those organisations working to support those with dementia and their carers.

In concluding the tributes, Councillor Nerva reflected on the previous comments made and how much Ruth would be missed as a colleague, friend and advocate for residents across Brent. Recognising the challenges associated for those living with dementia and their carers he felt it important, in response to the previous comments made by Councillor Lorber, to commend all those involved in the provision of community based dementia support across the borough. He ended by offering his deepest sympathy to Jim and the rest of Ruth's family and also by recognising the significant loss to the safeguarding regime within Brent as a result of the sad death of Fran Pearson.

Having thanked all councillors who had contributed for their kind tributes the Mayor ended by expressing the Council's sincere condolences to Ruth's family and

inviting all members to join her in observing a period of silence in memory and honour of former Councillor Ruth Moher.

All present at the meeting then stood to join the Mayor in observing a minutes silence.

(viii) Petitions

As a final announcement, the Mayor referred members to the list of current petitions tabled at the meeting, in accordance with Standing Orders which also detailed the action being taken to deal with them.

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.

Having considered the changes outlined it was **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To note that the Leader of the Council had appointed Councillor Tatler to cover the role of Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform during Councillor Mili Patel's period of maternity leave. This was in addition to Councillor Tatler's existing remit as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Growth.
- (2) The following changes in committee membership:
 - (a) General Purposes Committee – Councillor Farah to replace Councillor Mili Patel as a full member with Councillor Tatler to be appointed as Vice-Chair. Councillor Farah to be replaced by a vacancy as substitute member.
 - (b) Health & Wellbeing Board – Councillor Tatler to replace Councillor Mili Patel as a full member.
 - (c) Joint Borough IT Committee Brent, Lewisham & Southwark – To note that the Leader of the Council had appointed Councillor Tatler to replace Councillor Mili Patel as a full member and Brent's lead.
 - (d) Barham Park Trust Committee – To note that the Leader of the Council had appointed Councillor Knight to replace Councillor Mili Patel as a full member with an accompanying vacancy as substitute member.
- (3) The following change in appointments to Outside Bodies:
 - (a) London Councils Leaders Committee – Councillor Tatler to replace Councillor Mili Patel as deputy representative.
 - (b) London Councils Greater London Employment Forum – To note the Leader of the Council had appointed Councillor Tatler to replace Councillor Mili Patel as deputy representative.

- (c) London Councils Grants Committee – To note the Leader of the Council had appointed Councillor Donnelly-Jackson to replace Councillor Mili Patel as Brent’s full representative with Councillor Tatler appointed as deputy representative.
- (4) To confirm the appointment of Rhys Jarvis to fill the vacant position (following the resignation of Rachel Tiffen) as an Independent co-opted Member on the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee for a four-year term of office expiring at the Annual Council meeting in May 2027 (subject to confirmation of the ongoing appointment at the Annual Council meeting each year).

7. Deputations (if any)

The Mayor advised that she had accepted a request for a deputation to be presented at the meeting by Satvinder Riyat, representing Sudbury Matters Forum as a local community group, regarding the future of Barham Park.

Unless otherwise indicated by members, the Mayor advised that she intended to allow up to five minutes for presentation of the deputation before then allowing Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Chair of the Barham Park Trust Committee, up to two minutes to respond.

As no objections were raised on the approach outlined, the Mayor welcomed Satvinder Riyat to the meeting and invited her to present the deputation.

In thanking the Mayor for the opportunity to address the meeting, Satvinder Riyat began by outlining the history of Barham Park and its buildings and nature of their gift as a community asset by Titus Barham in 1937 with the Council acting as Trustee. In noting the current governance arrangements, with the Council discharging its duties as Trustee through the Barham Park Trust Committee and the Council supporting the Trust in terms of the maintenance and upkeep of the Park and its facilities, the Sudbury Matters Forum (having recognised the limited awareness amongst residents of the Parks status) were keen to ensure that the local community had the opportunity to establish a mechanism and voice that could be used to assist in shaping and securing the future use and management of the Park and its buildings. This was felt to be particularly important given the feasibility exercise currently being undertaken by the Trust, with Satvinder Riyat announcing that as a result, the Forum were now in the process of establishing a “Friends of Barham Park” Group.

The aim of the Group was to ensure that local residents, as the beneficiaries of the Park following its gift as a community asset, were able to have a voice in its future. Satvinder Riyat advised that the Friends Group was being established as an independent, inclusive and non-partisan body which all interested parties would be welcome to join (irrespective of their proximity to the Park) in order to ensure it was as representative of the diverse communities across Brent as possible. Members were advised that the key aim of the Group would be to preserve the historical and ecological value of the Park and its buildings ensuring that they remained sustainable for present and future generations to enjoy, based on the following objectives:

1. To serve as the voice of the beneficiaries in collaboration with the Trustees to influence the future of the Park and its buildings
2. To actively participate as volunteers in the maintenance, conservation and preservation of the Park for future residents.
3. To engage with the Trustees in conducting a comprehensive survey of the Park, in order to detect the presence of any protected wildlife species.
4. To capture and preserve the history of the Park, including the architectural importance of its buildings, its previous owner and occupants, which may have cultural significance for the borough's diverse communities.
5. To educate about the Park's historic significance.

Whilst recognising the current nature of the challenges facing the Trust in supporting the upkeep and maintenance of the Park and its buildings, Satvinder Riyat ended by highlighting that the Group were committed to working with the Barham Park Trust and Council officers in order to safeguard the Park as a much valued community asset gifted to the people of the borough with anyone interested in joining the Group urged to contact: www.friendsofbarhampark.org

In welcoming and responding to the deputation, Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Chair of the Barham Park Trust, thanked the Sudbury Matters Forum for their efforts to engage with the Trust and Council, supported through Councillor Benea. In recognising the need to ensure a collaborative approach was taken to preserving the benefit and future of the Park, Councillor Muhammed Butt outlined the Trust's commitment to safeguard and build on its legacy as a much valued community asset and welcomed the established of the Friends Group through the Sudbury Matters Forum as a means of focussing future collaboration and engagement.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Muhammed Butt for his response and advised as this concluded consideration of the deputation she would move on to the next item.

8. **Questions from Members of the Public**

The Mayor advised that four questions had been received from members of the public, which were as follows:

Question 1 from Martin Francis to Councillor Knight (Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters Security) regarding the safety of high-rise, and high-risk, residential buildings in the borough following the introduction of the Building Safety Act in April 2022.

Question 2 from John Cox to Councillor Farah (Cabinet Member for Safer Communities and Public Protection) concerning the noise pollution in Harley Road, NW10, arising from the nearby HS2 works in the London Borough of Ealing.

Question 3 from Charlotte Child to Councillor Krupa Sheth (Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action) highlighting concerns relating to pedestrian safety in Cavendish Road, Willesden Lane and The Avenue NW6 and requesting the installation of a pedestrian crossing at the junction.

Question 4 from Naishadh Patel to Councillor Nerva (Cabinet Member for Public Health and Adult Social Care) regarding the monitoring, suspension and removal of care providers that were deemed unsatisfactory and the options that were currently available to businesses who wished to become a provider of care services.

Members noted the written responses provided on each of the questions, which had been circulated with the agenda. The Mayor advised that each member of the public had been invited to the meeting in order to ask a supplementary question and whilst John Cox had been unable to attend, she was pleased to be able to welcome Martin Francis, Charlotte Child (who was attending online) and Hitesh Patel (who members were advised was attending the meeting in place of Naishadh Patel) to the meeting.

The following supplementary questions were asked of the relevant Cabinet Member(s).

Question 1 Supplementary Question from Martin Francis to Councillor Knight, Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters Security.

In thanking Councillor Knight for the written response provided to his original question, Martin Francis, in reiterating the importance of building safety and the Council (as landlord) meeting its requirements under the Building Safety Act sought further detail as to whether the Council had conducted full structural surveys on those buildings in scope under the Act. As part of the question details were also sought on whether any surveys had included the testing of core samples to determine the robustness of the building materials in order to identify any structural defects or issues and also the presence of any Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC).

In thanking Martin Francis for his question and attendance at the meeting, Councillor Knight (as Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renter's Security) referred to the detailed response already provided on his original written question. In terms of structural assessments, she confirmed that a Building Safety Strategy was in place for each of the High-Rise buildings in scope managed by the Council. This included FRA4 inspections being in place for each building and proactive checks having been conducted by Brent Housing Management in terms of evacuation plans and to ensure that fire stopping measures met the appropriate standards. In addition to the physical mitigations, the Council remained committed to ensuring tenants were provided with regular updates and up-to-date information on evacuation plans and Fire Risk Assessments.

Question 3 Supplementary Question from Charlotte Child to Councillor Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action.

In highlighting concern at the response provided, in terms of the low prioritisation for a pedestrian crossing at the junction between Cavendish Road, Willesden Lane and The Avenue NW6 based on the number of reported accidents and pedestrian collisions over recent years, Charlotte Child queried the approach and felt there was a need for more proactive intervention to avoid any more serious accidents involving pedestrians. As an additional concern, she also highlighted issues regarding the potential discontinuation of the 'Street Safe' app, which residents had

been able to use to provide information regarding street safety concerns and sought details on how residents should continue to report concerns relating to pedestrian safety and issues at the junction.

As Councillor Krupa Sheth (Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action) had submitted her apologies for absence at the meeting, the Mayor advised that a written response would be provided on the supplementary question following the meeting. In addition, the Mayor advised (responding to a Point of Order by Councillor Georgiou) that she would be willing to allow Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) to provide a further brief update at the meeting in order to supplement the written response provided on the original question. Following on, Councillor Muhammed Butt reassured Charlotte Child that the Lead Cabinet Member and officers would also be willing to meet with local residents to continue discussions and consider the safety concerns highlighted.

Question 4 Supplementary Question from Hitesh Patel (representing Naishadh Patel) to Councillor Nerva, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Adult Social Care.

Having thanked Councillor Nerva for the written response to the submitted question, Hitesh Patel, as a supplementary question, sought further detail on the measures in place and action being taken to encourage smaller and more local companies to engage in the procurement process for award of social care contracts.

In response, Councillor Nerva (as Cabinet Member for Public Health & Adult Social Care) advised that the Council were currently assessing bids received under the procurement process for the reablement service and to appoint providers to join Brent's homecare framework contract. This had included a significant market warming exercise with providers to make them aware of the opportunities along with specific support for local providers in terms of the procurement and bidding process. Whilst not able to comment, at this stage, on the outcome of the bidding process an assurance was provided about the Council's ongoing commitment to support local businesses in order to encourage their involvement in provision of local care services. In reiterating the responsibility that the Council had to ensure high quality care provision, Councillor Nerva detailed that an announcement regarding the outcome of the current procurement process was expected in the coming weeks.

Having noted the responses provided, the Mayor thanked the members of the public in attendance for their supplementary questions and Cabinet Members for their response and, with no further questions to be considered, advised that this concluded the public question session.

9. Petitions (if any)

The Mayor advised that she had accepted a request for a petition to be presented at the meeting by Councillor Lorber, representing local residents, which contained 1170 signatures and related to the Protection of Brents Parks and Open Spaces.

Unless otherwise indicated by members, the Mayor advised that she intended to allow up to five minutes for presentation of the petition before then allowing

Councillor Tatler (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Growth) up to two minutes to respond.

As no objections were raised on the approach outlined, the Mayor invited Councillor Lorber to present the petition.

In presenting the petition, Councillor Lorber highlighted his focus on Barham Park given concerns identified as to how it was felt proposals presented at the recent meeting of the Barham Park Trust Committee would set an unwelcome precedent not only in terms of the risk to the Council's long established Core Strategy of protecting and safeguarding Brent parks and open spaces but also in relation to local neighbourhood planning.

In outlining the historical context to the gift of Barham Park and its use as a much valued community asset, concerns were expressed at the management and maintenance of the Park and buildings by the Barham Park Trust along with the cost and outcome of the recent strategic property review and feasibility study presented to the Barham Park Trust Committee on 5 September 2023. Referring to the design options identified for the Park building as part of the architectural feasibility study presented to the Trust Committee, concerns were highlighted at their potential impact on the existing community based organisations currently occupying the building as tenants (given the social value they generated) and suggested alternative use including a mixture of a hotel, Airbnb, offices, café and shop units. Given approval of the recent planning application relating to development of the housing site located along the north-west corner of Barham Park and the Trust's recent agreement to progress negotiations on the possible variation of the restrictive covenant protecting against development on that site, Councillor Lorber felt the petition also served to highlight the level of concern expressed about the need to protect parks and open spaces across the borough from potential future development.

In concluding presentation of the petition, Councillor Lorber called on all members to recognise the strength of local feeling and prioritise the preservation and promotion of the borough's parks and open spaces as valuable and vital assets for local communities across the borough.

Having thanked Councillor Lorber for presenting the petition, the Mayor then invited Councillor Tatler (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Growth) to respond.

In responding, Councillor Tatler began by thanking all residents who had signed the petition for highlighting the value placed on Brents parks and green spaces. In seeking to focus and address the issues highlighted within the main petition, rather than wider rhetoric expressed, the opportunity was taken to reassure local residents of the Council's commitment to protecting and enhancing the boroughs parks as evidenced not only through the significant level of investment already provided by the Administration but also the ongoing use and allocation of over £2m of the Community Infrastructure Levy and planning process to secure a number of new parks and open public spaces including areas such as, Staples Corner, Neasden, Church End, Wembley Park, South Kilburn and Grand Union in Alperton. In highlighting what she regarded as the progressive nature of the Council's planning policies in seeking to balance the need for housebuilding with the wider demand for

infrastructure like parks and wider sustainability objectives, Councillor Tatler also took the opportunity to remind members of the measures adopted within the Local Plan to protect and safeguard parks and open spaces. These included Local Plan policies in Growth Areas identifying specific local park provision, a series of play areas and open spaces within new developments and the requirement for developments to provide an urban greening factor, bio-diversity gain, replacement tree canopy cover (with over 4000 new trees planted to date) and space for water and habitats that would not have existed before, with members reminded that the Liberal Democrats had opposed initial adoption of the Local Plan.

In concluding, Councillor Tatler took the opportunity to end her response to the petition by once again reassuring residents how seriously the current Administration took its ongoing responsibility to protect the boroughs parks and green spaces.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Tatler for her response and advised as this concluded consideration of the petition she would move on to the next item.

10. Annual Report from the Leader of the Council

The Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Leader of the Council, to present his Annual Report on the work of the Council and State of the Borough.

Councillor Muhammed Butt opened the Annual Report by reflecting on the impact which the brief tenure of former Prime Minister Liz Truss, had created in terms of the current economic and financial challenges facing the country and public services in particular. Reference was also made to the current Prime Minister and how far removed the Government seemed to be from the impact of their policies on local communities and ongoing underfunding of public services with specific reference to schools, prisons, NHS waiting times, growing housing demand, and the part-cancellation of HS2. In contrast, he highlighted how the Labour Administration were working to support local residents, particularly those more vulnerable who relied on public services, in order to ensure no one was left behind.

In outlining the work of the Council over the past year, the Leader commended the Council's investment in services that supported residents, such as the Resident Support Fund, Council Tax Relief Scheme, the delivery of new Social and Affordable housing and the commitment to a cleaner and greener borough. In highlighting the protection being provided for local residents given the nature of the wider financial and economic challenges being faced as a result of the cost-of-living crisis he also felt it important to recognise that these investments had been delivered despite the Government's ongoing programme of austerity and also opposition from the Conservative Group who, he reminded members, had proposed removal of the Resident Support Fund as an alternative budget proposal. The stance of the Liberal Democrat Group was also queried, given their opposition to various social housing development schemes and the previous role of the Party nationally as part of the Conservative led coalition Government which had introduced the programme of austerity still impacting on public services today. To illustrate the impact of austerity across the UK, the Leader highlighted that 2.5 million food bank packages had been distributed across the UK in 2021, compared with 60,000 when the coalition had first come into power in 2010.

As an alternative, Councillor Muhammed Butt highlighted the way in which the Labour Party nationally and Administration in Brent were working to protect public services and local residents based on continued investment in the economy, education, health and social care, the environment and local communities. Within Brent this had involved continuing to support local businesses, investment in early years support and school improvement, health prevention services and integrated care along with work to tackle the climate emergency, improve air quality and provide community facilities and support in order to promote social cohesion, community safety and more vulnerable members of society. In commending the work of each Cabinet Member in support of the Council's objectives, Councillor Muhammed Butt concluded by recognising the extent of work still required to mitigate against the damage being caused through the actions of the current Conservative Government and in seeking to continue improving the lives of residents and to make the borough an even better place to live and work.

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

In responding to the Annual Report, Councillor Kansagra (as Leader of the Conservative Group) queried why the Annual Report had not been focussed on the Administration's delivery of the Council's objectives and instead had sought to criticise the Government, despite the significant package of financial support provided and what he felt had been the favourable financial settlement provided for the Council, which had been achieved within the context of the economic challenges created as a result of the pandemic and war in Ukraine. In highlighting the significant package of financial support provided by the Government for businesses and individuals to assist in managing the impact of the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis he concluded by questioning the Leaders recollection about how the funding provided by Government had been used by the Labour Administration in Brent to assist local residents in tackling these issues.

The Mayor then invited a representative from the Liberal Democrats Group to respond, with Councillor Lorber nominated to speak. In referencing the earlier discussion surrounding support for residents living with dementia, Councillor Lorber highlighted concerns regarding the progress by the current Administration in working towards Brent being recognised as a Dementia Friendly borough. In raising this as an issue, Councillor Lorber commended the work of the Barham Memory Lounge and Café in providing support for those living with dementia and their carers. This had been supported through space provided within the Barham Park building by Barham Community Library alongside a successful bid for Lottery Funding. Reference was also made to a successful bid for Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) funding to support refurbishment of the existing facilities in order to enable the establishment of a dementia hub operated in partnership with the Memory Lounge to provide community support and further outreach work, which it had not been possible to progress as a result of decisions taken by the Barham Park Trust relating to the lease of units within the Barham Park building. In highlighting the commitment made by the Leader to improve the lives of residents across the borough, Councillor Lorber felt this should also extend to the Council taking positive action to support those living with dementia in Brent and their carers.

Having thanked Councillors Kansagra and Lorber for their contributions, the Mayor then moved on to open up the debate and invite contributions from other members.

As a Point of Order, following Councillor Lorber's comments on the Annual Report, Councillor Crabb highlighted a need to ensure appropriate language was used in relation to the reference of those living (as opposed to suffering) with dementia and commended the Council's efforts to ensure that the borough was genuinely dementia friendly.

In echoing Councillor Crabb's comments regarding the need for care with the language used when referring to dementia, Councillor Donnelly-Jackson urged members to avoid the use of ableist language. The work being undertaken by organisations such as Ashford Place & Community Action on Dementia as part of the wider activity being undertaken around the provision of dementia support across Brent was also recognised along with the way in which NCIL funding had been used to make a positive impact in supporting community based projects, including funding provided for the Dementia Hub initiative.

Moving on, Councillor Maurice addressing the remarks made by the Leader regarding austerity, felt it was important to recognise the poor financial state of the country inherited from the previous Labour Government in 2010 and nature of the challenges faced since then in relation to the fiscal deficit which had needed to be addressed. In terms of other issues impacting Brent, Councillor Maurice also highlighted what he felt were growing concerns being expressed by local residents in relation to crime and safety across the borough. In addition, he felt there was need to recognise and commend the Government for the level of investment provided to address issues such as highway and pothole repairs and improve access to health and social care services which had all directly benefitted residents in Brent.

As additional Points of Order, in response to Councillor Maurice's comments, Councillor Crabb felt there was a need to recognise the process and precedent for the exchange of power between incoming and outgoing Governments with Councillor Nerva also clarifying the position regarding the limited access to funding provided by the Government for Transport for London, in relation to highway maintenance and repairs and associated impact on the borough. Councillor Lorber also took the opportunity to comment in highlighting that reference to the start of austerity could, in his view, be traced back to the Labour Government in 2008.

In support of the approach outlined by the Leader within his Annual Report and challenging the views expressed by the Conservative Group, Councillor Kennelly felt it was important to recognise the positive benefits of the additional investment provided by the Labour Administration especially in relation to the maintenance and repair of roads and pavements across the borough, including within his ward, along with the plans for wider investment to ensure the economic stability of the country being developed by Labour on a national basis.

As no further members indicated that they wished to speak, the Mayor then invited the Leader to sum up and close the debate on the Annual State of the Borough Report.

Councillor Muhammed Butt began his response by reminding members of the achievements delivered by the current Administration despite the financial difficulties facing the Council as a result of the funding restrictions and programme of austerity which had been imposed by the Conservative and coalition led Government. This had resulted in the Council having to manage a reduction of £210m in its budget since 2010 accompanied by a range of additional pressures, including changes in the welfare and asylum system which had resulted in the Council needing to step in and provide additional support. Within this context, the Leader assured members that the Council remained committed to investing in the delivery of new homes, creation of jobs and working to improve community safety, education, health and social care provision and the local environment in order to ensure the best possible outcomes for local residents and those needing support.

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

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

The Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Leader of the Council, to introduce the report updating members on the work being undertaken across each Cabinet portfolio in order to provide ongoing support and services to residents within the borough. In presenting the report, the Leader highlighted the work being undertaken to continue delivering the Council's key corporate objectives and in providing ongoing support and services to meet the needs of residents across the borough. Members were also asked to note that no Executive decisions had been taken under the Council's urgency procedures, since the previous update provided for the Council meeting in July.

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 Cabinet Members (without the need for advance notice) on matters relating to their portfolio.

The Mayor advised that five written questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting for response by the relevant Cabinet Member and the written responses circulated within the agenda were noted. The Mayor then invited supplementary questions on the responses which had been provided:

12.1 Councillor Gbajumo thanked Councillor Grahl, as Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools, for the written response to her question regarding the examination results achieved by young people across Brent. In commending the work being undertaken by the Council to support schools, further detail was sought as a supplementary question on the wider

measures being taken to maintain and support levels of educational attainment across the borough and potential challenges identified.

In response, Councillor Grahl (as Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools) began by taking the opportunity to recognise and celebrate the educational attainment and success achieved by young people across the borough. This had, she pointed out, been achieved against the background of a national trend in lower grades driven in part by a change to pre pandemic grading protocols, with Councillor Grahl supporting the calls being made for the return to a fairer grading system. Focussing on the positive results achieved across Brent which had exceeded the national average, Councillor Grahl was keen to ensure the results achieved by young people supported by their families, schools and teachers was formally recognised given the difficult circumstances and significant hardship posed by wider challenges such as the cost-of-living crisis. Councillor Grahl also commended the role of the Setting and School Effectiveness Service along with the measures put in place by the Council to support families through initiatives such as the Holiday Activities and Food Programme and Resident Support Fund. Furthermore, Councillor Grahl highlighted the importance of the Council's investment in Special Education Needs and early needs provision in terms of the wider impact on young people's future life chances and ended by once again congratulating and praising the efforts of Brent's young people which had resulted in such positive exam results in such challenging circumstances.

- 12.2 Having thanked Councillor Nerva, as Cabinet Member for Public Health and Adult Social Care, for the written response provided to her question regarding the impact of the recent decision by a private sector provider to seek a buyer for the GP practices they currently operated, including those within Brent, Councillor Long highlighted the impact and confusion being created amongst local resident given the uncertain future of the affected practices and the threat of further GP privatisation. As a supplementary question Councillor Long, having outlined her concern at the proposals, sought further detail on their potential impact both in terms of patients and the wider primary care sector across Brent and North West London.

Having thanked Councillor Long for highlighting the concerns raised, Councillor Nerva advised he would ensure these were relayed to the Integrated Care Partnership. Whilst not responsible for managing the provision of NHS and Primary Care Services across the Borough, Councillor Nerva outlined the close partnership working between the Council and health providers and reiterated the Council's aspiration for everyone to be able to access quality primary healthcare, which it was not felt the proposals would support. The issue raised had already been identified as a potential risk and would continue to be with health partners in terms of both their impact locally and across the wider North West London region with Councillor Nerva concluding his response by highlighting Labour's commitment towards maintaining and supporting the NHS including a move away from GP contracts.

- 12.3 Having noted the apologies for absence submitted by Councillor Krupa Sheth and thanking her, as Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure

and Climate Action, for the written response on the measures taken to address concerns relating to the introduction of the new Resident Parking Permit contract and transition to the new permit system Councillor Dixon advised she had no specific supplementary question. In recognising the work undertaken to address the concerns identified by local residents in relation to the transition the opportunity was, however, taken to highlight the need to ensure that lessons learnt, particularly in relation to engagement with local residents, were recognised.

- 12.4 Councillor Maurice began by expressing disappointment at the written response provided by Councillor Knight, as Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters Security, regarding the measures taken to deal with rough sleepers in Woodcock Park. In expressing concern at what was felt to be a delay in appropriate action being taken to address the concerns identified by local residents and other stakeholders neighbouring the park, further details were sought as a supplementary question at the reasons for the delay in appropriate and permanent action being taken to address the initial concerns when first raised.

In response, Councillor Knight began by highlighting as additional context the concerning increase in homelessness and number of rough sleepers across London. The pressures created as a result had been made worse as a result of the cost-of-living crisis and limited supply of suitable alternative temporary accommodation both across London and within Brent. In highlighting the need for care in the language used around homelessness and to describe rough sleepers, Councillor Knight outlined the specific measures which had been taken in response to the concerns identified relating to the two rough sleepers in Woodcock Park. Given the immigration status of both individuals members were advised that the main issue had related to neither currently having EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) status meaning they were not currently eligible for housing support and with no recourse to public funds. The Rough Sleeper Outreach Team (commissioned through St Mungo's) had ascertained that one of the individuals was planning to return to their country of origin whilst the second was now engaged with the immigration service in seeking to resolve his current status under the EUSS. Pending the completion of that process, the individual had been offered one of the two bed spaces available for non eligible rough sleepers. In highlighting the difficulties and challenges created by the current immigration system, Councillor Knight ended by reassuring members that the Rough Sleeper Outreach Team would continue to engage with individuals until a more effective solution was achieved in order to ensure the necessary support could be provided for those most in need.

- 12.5 Councillor Georgiou, in noting the written response to the question submitted regarding the use of Shared Ownership housing by Councillor Knight as Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters Security, felt the details provided appeared to contradict the Council's position on different housing schemes. In highlighting concerns regarding use of shared ownership he therefore sought further clarification, as a supplementary question, as to the Council's position on the appropriateness of Shared Ownership being classified as a genuinely Affordable Housing option in the development of housing schemes across Brent, particularly

given the difference in approach between schemes such as Grand Union, Alperton and Watling Gardens.

Whilst recognising the context in which the question had been raised, Councillor Knight felt it important to highlight that Shared Ownership was included as a permitted model of affordable housing by the Greater London Authority under their Affordable Homes delivery programme with Brent as one of the delivery partners. Although aware of the concerns highlighted, Councillor Knight advised that the model had been able to deliver benefits for different groups of Brent residents but again outlined how decisions on individual sites had needed to be taken on a case-by-case basis. This was in order to reflect the state of the market, housing demand and viability challenges impacting each site and development scheme and to ensure that the delivery of the Council's wider social housing programme was safeguarded. For these reasons, she advised, it was difficult to compare the status and approach adopted towards the inclusion of Shared Ownership schemes at Grand Union and Watling Gardens or on other sites. In highlighting the difficult nature of decisions needing to be taken given the increasing challenge in being able to meet housing need, Councillor Knight concluded her response by outlining how different schemes would need to include a range of tenures that provided affordability as well as a good standard of homes across Brent.

Having thanked members for their written questions and Cabinet Members for the responses provided to the supplementary questions, the Mayor then advised that the remainder of time available would be used for an open question time session to the Cabinet. Questions relating to the following issues were raised and responses provided, as set out below:

- (i) Councillor Kennelly, seeking further details on the recent change in approach announced by the Metropolitan Police in no longer attending calls to a majority of mental health related incidents introduced under the Right Care Right Person scheme and the wider impact it was anticipated this would have in terms of health services and professionals across Brent along with the action being taken to address the concerns identified.

In response Councillor Nerva, as Cabinet Member for Public Health and Adult Social Care, recognised the concerns raised explaining that the Police had decided to implement the policy based on a trial in a non-urban area outside of London which had led mental health practitioners to also express concerns regarding its appropriateness and impact across more urban areas. Members were reassured that concerns regarding the practical operation and impact of the policy had been raised by the health service with the police and assured members the Council also remained committed to working with health care partners and the police across the North West London region to monitor any impact arising from implementation of the policy and in order to ensure that individuals affected and mental health practitioners were kept safe.

- (ii) Councillor Hirani, supporting the concerns highlighted by Councillor Maurice in his written question relating to the delay in identifying a solution to tackle the rough sleepers in Woodcock Park with a request for further details on

visits undertaken by the Leader and Cabinet Member(s) to the Park in order to explore the concerns being raised and engagement with local ward councillors on any lessons learnt as a result.

In response Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Leader of the Council, highlighted the importance in ensuring that the individuals involved received the support and care needed and assured Councillor Hirani that relevant lead members had visited the Park to ensure the necessary action was being taken and support provided.

- (iii) Councillor Lorber highlighting concern and seeking an apology for the way he felt the Barham Park Trust Committee held on 5 September 23 had been conducted in relation to the opportunity provided for tenant organisations and representatives of the local community to speak at the meeting and the specific treatment of the representative from Barham Community Library.

In response, Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Chair of the Trust Committee, clarified that representatives from tenant organisations in the Barham Park building had all been invited to attend the Trust meeting in order to make representations and update Trust members on the activity their organisations had been involved in delivering over the previous year. Whilst representatives of the other organisations who had addressed the meeting had accepted the remit, the representative from the Friends of Barham Library had sought to raise a number of other issues, which had led to the subsequent exchange during the meeting and the representative having to be reminded of the scope agreed for any representations.

In responding to an issue raised by Councillor Lorber as a subsequent point of clarification in relation to the response and rights of the public to speak at meetings, Debra Norman (as Corporate Director of Governance) advised that as the concerns highlighted had also been formally raised in written correspondence by Councillor Lorber they would be subject to a separate written response.

- (iv) Councillor Mistry highlighting concerns regarding the problems being caused by the use of paan along Kingsbury Road and requesting the introduction of a similar approach towards prevention, education and enforcement as that implemented along Ealing Road in order to tackle the issue.

Given the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action had submitted her apologies for absence at the meeting, the Mayor advised that a written response would be provided on the issue raised following the meeting.

- (v) Councillor Jayanti Patel seeking further detail on the action being taken by the Council against Utility Companies undertaking works without the necessary permission or who were found not to have completed highway repairs to the necessary standard following the conclusion of their work, with reference as specific examples to works along Stag Lane, Dryburgh Gardens and Kingsbury Road.

Given the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action had submitted her apologies for absence, the Mayor once again advised that a written response would be provided on the issue raised following the meeting.

- (vi) Councillor Georgiou seeking details as to when the next scheduled update in relation progress on the New Council Homes Programme would be available.

In responding, Councillor Knight, as Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters Security, advised that the update was now expected to be presented to Cabinet before the end of the year. Whilst recognising the delay it was explained this had been caused as a result of the current economic challenges which had resulted in the need to undertake further assessment of the funding position on individual schemes to ensure their ongoing viability. Despite the delay in the update, Councillor Knight reassured members that the Council remained on track to deliver against its targets in relation the provision of affordable social housing across the borough.

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

As Councillor Ketan Sheth had given his apologies for the meeting, the Mayor advised that the report on the activity of the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee would be noted as submitted.

The Mayor then invited Councillor Conneely as chair of the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee to introduce the update report on the work being undertaken by that Committee. The following issues were highlight as part of the update:

- The broad and dynamic nature of the Committee's work programme being delivered during 2023-24.
- Key issues considered since the previous update had included a review of the operational performance of the Shared Technology Service (STS) along with an update on progress in implementing the Brent and STS cyber security strategies; a review of the performance and resourcing of the planning enforcement process and progress being made in development of the

- Council's Community Engagement Framework, including the engagement process with local stakeholders and communities.
- The Committee had also been involved in actively monitoring the Council's financial forecast position and medium-term financial outlook along with the risks and uncertainties regarding the budget setting position for 2024 – 25 and 2025-26 which, given the challenges identified, had resulted in a number of priority protection areas being outlined for consideration. The Committee had also now also established its cross Committee Scrutiny Budget Task Group in order to review and feed into the consultation process on the budget proposals for 2024-25 and 2025-26 and ensure the proposals being developed remained transparent in nature and were designed to meet the needs of Brent's residents, with members thanked for their participation in the process.

With no further issues raised, the Mayor thanked Councillor Conneely for presenting her update and it was **RESOLVED** that the contents of both scrutiny update reports be noted.

Following the updates provided, the Mayor advised that as no members indicated they had any questions she would move straight on to the next item.

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

The Mayor invited Councillor Chan, as the 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 Chan drew members' attention to the important role and work undertaken by the Committee in relation to monitoring and advising on various governance matters relating to audit activity, the Council's finance, accounting and regulatory framework and members standards of conduct. As one of their key responsibilities, members were advised that the Committee were currently in the process of signing off the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts 2022–23. This had included the opportunity to review and seek assurance around the management responses on the External Audit findings and Enquiries of Management, with Councillor Chan highlighting the importance of the process in terms of the wider financial challenges, risks and pressures being faced by local authorities as a result of the current economic climate and Government's programme of austerity. Whilst no significant issues had been identified to date in relation to the external audit process, the Committee would continue to maintain a focus on the adequacy of the Council's governance, risk and control arrangements in order to provide assurance and confidence on compliance and control of the Council's key governance, financial management and accounting arrangements.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Chan 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 provision of support regarding cases of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in Brent Schools.

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

Prior to the introduction of the motion submitted for debate, Councillor Kansagra raised a Point of Order regarding the limited notice provided of the subsequent amendment to the original motion which had submitted by the Labour Group. As a result, he advised he would be seeking to raise the process and timing for the submission of amendments to motions at the next Constitutional Working Group in an effort to ensure sufficient time was provided for amendments to be properly considered in advance of the relevant meeting.

Having noted the comments highlighted by Councillor Kansagra, the Mayor then invited Councillor Mistry to introduce the motion which had been submitted as the basis for the Non-Cabinet Member debate. As context for the debate, Councillor Mistry outlined the background to the use of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in building construction and safety concerns relating to its use in the construction of school buildings. As a result of an inspection programme initiated by the Department for Education (DfE), the Secretary of State for Education had recently confirmed a total of 156 schools across England as having identified RAAC within their buildings of which 52 now had mitigations in place. In terms of Brent, one school had initially been identified within the list (St Gregory's Catholic Science College School) with another having subsequently been identified at Kingsbury High School but she was pleased to note that work was now underway to complete repairs following the introduction of safety measures and liaison with the Council. In recognising that there would be no financial impact on the Council in terms of St Gregory's Catholic Science College, as the school operated as an Academy, Councillor Mistry advised that the motion was seeking to ensure the necessary support was in place for any further schools identified as being affected moving forward, recognising the issue as one which fell under the responsibility of successive Governments since the 1980s.

In addressing the amendment submitted to the motion by the Labour Group, Councillor Mistry expressed disappointment at the extent of the changes proposed as it was hoped that members from all groups on the Council would be seeking the same outcome in terms of the support and financial assistance being sought from the DfE to mitigate and ensure the necessary repairs could be undertaken to ensure the safety of all sites affected. Whilst recognising the support provided for St Gregory's Catholic Science College School, Councillor Mistry reiterated the need to recognise this as a failure of successive governments and hoped that on this basis all members would support the original motion in seeking to pledge support for those schools currently affected by RAAC or which may be identified in future and to ensure any mitigations required as a result were fully funded at no cost to the schools and with the use of construction materials in schools continuing to be closely monitored to prevent any similar safety concerns in future.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Mistry for introducing the motion and then drew member's attention to an amendment submitted by Councillor Grahl on behalf of the Labour Group, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

In moving the amendment Councillor Grahl began by highlighting a need to recognise what she felt was the incompetence of the current and previous Conservative Governments in the neglect of capital and infrastructure investment for vital public services, including schools compounded by the impact of austerity and their current education policy. In recognising that RAAC had been a long standing issue she highlighted and commended the steps taken by the previous Labour Government in launching the Building Schools for the Future programme which had been designed to rebuild/refurbish all secondary schools in the UK and expressed concern at the impact which the subsequent scrapping of the scheme by the coalition Government in 2010 was now having in terms of the school estate and on the reduction in level of funding provided and programme delivered for the rebuilding of schools. In summarising the cumulative impact of the Conservative Government's actions, Councillor Grahl felt this had led to a funding and accountability crisis in the oversight of educational provision, with buildings at risk of collapse, difficulties in relation to the funding of school budgets, teacher recruitment and a lack of SEND provision that was ultimately failing children and schools. As a result, Councillor Grahl advised the Labour Group would be seeking to oppose the original motion in favour of the amendment moved, as set out below, which whilst focussed on the support required by schools had also been designed to reflect the concerns identified in relation to the impact of the Conservative Governments approach towards austerity and the funding of vital public services such as schools. As a result, the amendment moved as was follows:

To add the wording underlined and delete the wording indicated:

“Provision of support to deal with cases of RAAC (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete) in Brent Schools

This Council notes:

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) is a lightweight form of concrete pioneered in Sweden whose use swept across Europe particularly in schools, colleges, and other building construction from the 1950's until the mid-1990s. Used in flat roofing, floors, and walls it offered a cheaper alternative to standard concrete, but its short lifespan means its use in permanent buildings has caused problems. The Secretary of State for Education has clarified, out of 22,500 schools in England, 156 have been confirmed to have RAAC and 52 of these have already got mitigations in place and are dealing with repairs.

To date, it has been identified that only one Brent school, although not maintained by the Council, has RAAC. St. Gregory's Catholic Science College discovered it had RAAC in its Maths block in November 2022. Safety measures were introduced, and work ~~is under way which~~ was completed by Tuesday 12th September ~~should be completed by Monday 11th September~~. The Council was informed by the school's CEO/Headteacher in January 2023 of the discovery of RAAC. There is no current financial impact to the Council as the school affected is operated by an academy trust ~~not a community school~~, therefore the local authority is not the responsible body.

Upon notification in January 2023, DfE have supported the school in arranging surveys and discussing the management of RAAC. Since the summer, a dedicated

case officer has been assigned to the school from the DfE to manage the next steps of removing RAAC from the school with all costs to be reimbursed by the DfE as it rightfully should.

When Brent residents apply for rear building extensions, building control officers demand high quality materials be used. If this RAAC was known to have a recommended 30-year lifespan there must be question as to why it was approved in long term school and civic developments and what reviews were put in place by Building Control to undertake regular checks on its safety?

~~Let's also not get carried away with the way Parents, teachers and pupils across the country have been rightly concerned about the news of RAAC and this has been reflected in how it has been reported. We all remember Gordon Brown's comments about a Rochdale constituent calling her a "bigoted woman" and who later went on to deliver a personal grovelling apology. Never has it been so evident that the journalists of this country lead and dictate the news agenda, something the Secretary of State for Education Gillian Keegan MP should have learnt from is the tenth Conservative Secretary of State for Education since 2010 and showed no sympathy for parents' concerns across the UK in her highly unprofessional behaviour when she was being interviewed by ITV news.~~

As a result, this Council recognises:

- That ~~the Conservative successive Governments of different political persuasions since in the 1980s have all colluded in neglecting capital and infrastructure investment to service despite insatiable public demand for increased revenue spending on vital public services. This has been worsened by the effects of Austerity which decimated the country's public services and de-funded buildings provided for our nation's schoolchildren.~~ People a century ago were truly building schools for the future; today's squabbles are much more about 'Patching Schools for the Present'. The uncomfortable truth is that this really, if anything, has been a pass-the-parcel problem ~~by successive made worse by the current Conservative governments, putting at risk school children and staff.~~
- That ~~whilst It was a Labour Government that launched may cite the Building Schools for the Future Programme, which was the biggest school building programme since the Victorian times allocating £55billion to rebuild every secondary school in the country. In the first months of the Conservative-led Coalition Government in 2010, then Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove scrapped the scheme and offered no replacement. Gove has later called the cancellation of this programme his biggest mistake in office. there was criticism of the scheme in a National Audit Office (NAO) report and a review of the scheme commissioned by the government, which found the allocation of funding for school buildings had been "complex, time-consuming, expensive and opaque".~~
- Covid has taught us so many things and lead us to deal with issues that we thought would never be achieved. We will also deal with this. and learn the valuable lesson of investing in our public services to ensure good practice and safety for all of our residents.

- Whilst global events continue, there is also a need to recognise that the safety of our children comes first. The issue of RAAC has been missed by successive governments of all colours, including the coalition, for over 30 years. In 2002 the Labour government first became aware of the deterioration and risks of RAAC via a BRE (Building Research Establishment) report. In 2018 Conservative Minister Damian Hinds ordered an urgent and comprehensive review of RAAC in all schools. It is because of these inspections that we know the extent of the current risks. Senior officials at the Department of Education told the treasury while Rishi Sunak was Chancellor at the time that there was a need to rebuild 300 to 400 schools a year in England, Sunak only allowed funding for 100 schools which was then halved to 50.

This Council therefore resolves:

- To request the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools writes to the Secretary of State for Education to call for urgent additional funding to be secured for buildings affected by RAAC in Brent and across the UK, and for her to outline what measures the Government is doing to ensure the safety of our schoolchildren.
- To pledge to support, in any way we can guide and advise St Gregory's Catholic Science College, which is the only Brent schools currently affected with RAAC while also noting that there are limitations to how we as a Council can assist as the school is operated by an Academy and we pledge to support, guide and advise any schools which may become known in future.
- To recognise that school requests for planning permission and other compliance issues from the council should be dealt with expeditiously. while following the planning and safety legislation that underpins all planning decisions.
- To work cross party to expedite planning permissions where required for the temporary classrooms and Portacabins schools may require and should they go down this route, to house the classrooms on site or alternatively assist in finding suitable accommodation across the borough. For example, when schools ask for planning permission there should be no complacency in recognising any defects and dealing with them quickly.
- To communicate with the affected schools should they need help with contractors for remedial works.
- In the case of schools which are affected by RAAC but are not the council's responsibility, if the schools are short of funds to remedy the defects the Council to call on the Government to provide the necessary funding and not rely on already stretched Local Government budgets. consider providing financial support recognising that the DfE has already committed to refund all costs associated with RAAC."
- To continue closely monitoring through building control functions all schools for cases of unsafe materials.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Grahl for moving the amendment on behalf of the Labour Group and then opened the debate for contributions from other members in relation to both the original motion and amendment.

Councillor Maurice in opening the debate and supporting the original motion moved by Councillor Mistry, highlighted what he felt was the importance in recognising that it had been successive Governments, including both Conservative and Labour, who had failed to recognise the issue and neglected to provide the necessary capital and infrastructure investment required over the years. Whilst recognising the concerns highlighted, he also felt it important to note that to date only 156 schools out of 22,500 across England were confirmed to be affected by RAAC (with only two in Brent) and 52 of these already having mitigations in place. The limited lifespan associated with RAAC had been known since its use in construction from the 1950's through to 1990's with initial risks first identified in 2002 and the Conservative Government in 2018 having started the comprehensive review process involving schools and having advised they would cover the cost for any repairs. It was on this basis he advised he would be supporting the original motion rather than amendment moved by the Labour Group.

Speaking in support of the amendment, Councillor Donnelly-Jackson felt it was important to recognise the failings of the current Conservative Government in addressing the multiple warnings and safety concerns highlighted in relation to the use of RAAC, especially from 2020 onwards and queried why the extent of the problem in terms of school and the wider public sector infrastructure (including hospital buildings) had still not been clarified. In highlighting the need to recognise austerity as a political ideology which had led to the neglecting and defunding of capital and infrastructure investment, Councillor Donnelly-Jackson felt the current and previous coalition Government had failed to recognise the need for ongoing investment in vital public services, which as a result had placed the safety of school children and other local residents at risk.

Councillor Ethapemi, again speaking in support of the amended motion, also expressed concern at what he felt to be the lack of crucial infrastructure investment by the Conservative Government to ensure that schools were able to provide the safe environments pupils needed to learn and grow. Concern was also highlighted in relation to the timing of guidance and advice issued by the DfE on RAAC towards the end rather than at the start of the summer school holiday period in order to provide additional time to prepare and plan for the impact on individual schools and minimise the level of disruption and impact on young people. In emphasising that opportunities to resolve the issue had been missed, Councillor Ethapemi also attributed this issue to Government austerity and called for sufficient investment in public services.

Councillor Kennelly, also speaking in support of the Labour Group amendment, highlighted the mistake he felt had been made by Michael Gove as Secretary of State for Education in 2010 in cancelling the previous Labour Government's Building Schools for the Future Programme and offering no alternative in relation to a school building programme, leading to the problems now being experienced. As an alternative, he felt members could be assured of the investment that would be provided by a future Labour Government in the future of schools and ensuring prosperity for all.

In further support of the amendment, Councillor Rubin firstly took the opportunity to thank officers and school staff for their efforts in safeguarding children and expressed surprise that the Conservative Group had decided to highlight the issue of RAAC, given the failure of the Conservative Government to have addressed the issue and provide adequate infrastructure investment. In response to the criticism of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme outlined within the original motion which had been moved by the Conservative Group as the basis for the debate, Councillor Rubin outlined that BSF had been based on a costed programme of scheduled work with its subsequent cancellation by the Conservative led coalition Government and subsequent defunding of further infrastructure investment felt to have represented a short-term approach that had led to the problems now being experienced. In concluding, Councillor Rubin also questioned the current model of school governance, highlighting that approx. 69% of schools impacted by RAAC had been identified as not under local authority control and once again was assured of the plans for any future Labour Government to invest in the future of schools and country as a whole.

As a final contribution Councillor Tatler also spoke to question the stance taken within the original motion regarding Building Schools for the Future, having highlighted her personal experience of the positive difference made by the programme during her teaching career. Members were also reminded of the repeated attempts by the Labour Party to raise concerns in Parliament about the plans to address the problems associated with RAAC in school and other public sector buildings, which had been dismissed by the Conservative Government and she felt highlighted why they could not be trusted to protect public services. As a result, Councillor Tatler advised she would also be supporting the amendment moved by the Labour Group.

As there were no further contributions, the Mayor then invited Councillor Grahl, as Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools, to summarise and close the debate.

In drawing the debate to a close, Councillor Grahl thanks members for their comments and reassured members that at this stage only one school in Brent had been significantly impacted by RAAC, with another school identifying a small amount of RAAC in a storage area which had now been sectioned off. In outlining the measures in place to deal with the issues which had been identified, Councillor Grahl ended by thanking all schools and their staff across the borough for their ongoing support in response to the challenges identified and for the reasons outlined during the debate hoped members would support the amendment moved.

Having concluded discussions, the Mayor then moved to the vote on the motion moved as the basis for the Non-Cabinet Member debate starting with the amendment moved by the Labour Group. The amendment, as set out above, was then put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

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

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to approve the following motion as the outcome of the non-cabinet member debate:

“Provision of support to deal with cases of RAAC (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete) in Brent Schools

This Council notes:

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Upon notification in January 2023, DfE have supported the school in arranging surveys and discussing the management of RAAC. Since the summer, a dedicated case officer has been assigned to the school from the DfE to manage the next steps of removing RAAC from the school with all costs to be reimbursed by the DfE as it rightfully should.

When Brent residents apply for rear building extensions, building control officers demand high quality materials be used. If this RAAC was known to have a recommended 30-year lifespan there must be question as to why it was approved in long term school and civic developments and what reviews were put in place by Building Control to undertake regular checks on its safety?

Parents, teachers and pupils across the country have been rightly concerned about the news of RAAC and this has been reflected in how it has been reported. The Secretary of State for Education Gillian Keegan MP is the tenth Conservative Secretary of State for Education since 2010 and showed no sympathy for parents' concerns across the UK in her highly unprofessional behaviour when she was being interviewed by ITV news.

As a result, this Council recognises:

- That the Conservative Government in the 1980s colluded in neglecting capital and infrastructure investment despite insatiable public demand for increased revenue spending on vital public services. This has been worsened by the effects of Austerity which decimated the country's public services and de-funded buildings provided for our nation's schoolchildren. People a century ago were truly building schools for the future; today's squabbles are much more about 'Patching Schools for the Present'. The uncomfortable truth is that

this really, if anything, has been a pass-the-parcel problem made worse by the current Conservative Government, putting at risk school children and staff.

- It was a Labour Government that launched the Building Schools for the Future Programme, which was the biggest school building programme since the Victorian times allocating £55billion to rebuild every secondary school in the country. In the first months of the Conservative-led Coalition Government in 2010, then Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove scrapped the scheme and offered no replacement. Gove has later called the cancellation of this programme his biggest mistake in office.
- Covid has taught us so many things and lead us to deal with issues that we thought would never be achieved. We will also deal with this and learn the valuable lesson of investing in our public services to ensure good practice and safety for all of our residents.
- Whilst global events continue, there is also a need to recognise that the safety of our children comes first. The issue of RAAC has been missed for over 30 years. In 2002 the Labour government first became aware of the deterioration and risks of RAAC via a BRE (Building Research Establishment) report. In 2018 Conservative Minister Damian Hinds ordered an urgent and comprehensive review of RAAC in all schools. It is because of these inspections that we know the extent of the current risks. Senior officials at the Department of Education told the treasury while Rishi Sunak was Chancellor at the time that there was a need to rebuild 300 to 400 schools a year in England, Sunak only allowed funding for 100 schools which was then halved to 50.

This Council therefore resolves:

- To request the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools writes to the Secretary of State for Education to call for urgent additional funding to be secured for buildings affected by RAAC in Brent and across the UK, and for her to outline what measures the Government is doing to ensure the safety of our schoolchildren.
- To pledge to support in any way we can St Gregory's Catholic Science College, which is the only Brent school currently affected with RAAC while also noting that there are limitations to how we as a Council can assist as the school is operated by an Academy and we pledge to support, guide and advise any schools which may become known in future.
- To recognise that school requests for planning permission and other compliance issues from the council should be dealt with expeditiously while following the planning and safety legislation that underpins all planning decisions.
- To work cross party to expedite planning permissions where required for the temporary classrooms and Portacabins schools may require and should they go down this route, to house the classrooms on site or alternatively assist in finding suitable accommodation across the borough. For example, when

schools ask for planning permission there should be no complacency in recognising any defects and dealing with them quickly.

- To communicate with the affected schools should they need help with contractors for remedial works.
- In the case of schools which are affected by RAAC but are not the council's responsibility, if the schools are short of funds to remedy the defects the Council to call on the Government to provide the necessary funding and not rely on already stretched Local Government budgets.

To continue closely monitoring through building control functions all schools for cases of unsafe materials.”

16. **Brent Youth Justice Plan 2023-24**

The Mayor invited Councillor Grahl, as Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools, to introduce a report from the Corporate Director of Children & Young People presenting the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2023/24. In introducing the report members were advised that the Youth Justice Plan included an overview of local youth justice progress and priorities along with the arrangements for monitoring performance, with the Plan (in accordance with statutory requirements) having been submitted to the Youth Justice Board for review and approval prior to its formal consideration by Cabinet in advance of its recommended adoption by Full Council.

In recognising the commitment and achievements of the Youth Justice Service and the wider partnership work being undertaken to support children and young people who were at risk of or had entered the youth justice system, attention was also drawn to the overall performance achieved by the service particularly in respect of the reduction in number of young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time and low numbers of young people in custody. The strong performance identified was attributed to the Council's focus on prevention and engagement with children and young people, with the positive feedback provided through young people and their parents and carers also highlighted and thanked expressed to all those working within the Youth Justice Service for their efforts, diligence and innovation in supporting young people.

As no other members had indicated they wished to speak and Councillor Grahl 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 declared **CARRIED**.

Council therefore **RESOLVED** following its referral by Cabinet on 11 September 2023 to approve formal sign off and adoption of the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2023-24.

17. **Treasury Management Outturn Report 2022-23**

The Mayor then invited Councillor Tatler, as Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform Leader, to introduce a report from the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources updating members on the Council's Treasury Management Activity during 2022 - 23. In introducing the report, the Deputy Leader felt it important to recognise the economic background in relation to

the current outturn position which included the continuing economic volatility and challenges arising from the war in Ukraine and increase in both inflation and interest rates. In recognising the importance of the Treasury Management function in managing and planning for the level of funding required to support the Council's activities, services and affordability of the capital programme members noted that the activity looked to optimise the effect of borrowing costs and investment income whilst managing the associated risks in line with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators, which had been approved by Full Council in February 2022 and in accordance with relevant professional codes and legislation.

In noting that the Council had complied with its Prudential Indicators for 2022–23, members attention was also drawn to a review of the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) undertaken following a recommendation from the Council's external auditor which had resulted in a change of approach for assets acquired prior to 2008. This had resulted in the expected economic life of these assets having to be revised downwards with the changes reflected in the updated MRP statements for 2021–22 through to 2023–24 included within Appendices 4 – 6 of the report.

As no other members had indicated they wished to speak and Councillor Tatler 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 declared **CARRIED**.

Council therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To note and approve, following its consideration by Audit & Standards Advisory Committee on 18 July 2023 and Cabinet on 11 September 2023, the 2022 - 23 Treasury Management outturn report and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Strategies in Appendix 4 – 6 of the report, in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code).
- (2) To note that for 2022 - 23 the Council had complied with its Prudential Indicators which were approved by Full Council on 22 February 2022 as part of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Capital Strategy Statement.

18. **Changes to the Constitution**

The Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt, Leader of the Council, to introduce a report from the Corporate Director of Governance outlining a number of proposed changes to the Constitution. In introducing the report, it was noted that the changes related to an update of the Terms of Reference for the Health & Wellbeing Board and arrangements under Standing Order 42 for the withdrawal of motions at Council meetings.

The Mayor thanked the Leader for introducing the report and then opened the debate for contributions from other members.

In view of the proposed amendment to Standing Orders relating to the withdrawal of motions, Councillor Kansgara (referring to the comments made at the start of the Non-Cabinet Member debate) reminded members that he would also be seeking to

raise the timing for the submission of amendments to motions at the next Constitutional Working Group.

Councillor Lorber also spoke in relation to the proposed amendment to Standing Order 42, expressing concern at the current rules relating to the submission of amendments on motions which he pointed out had caused the issue at the previous Council meeting that now required clarification. In view of the concerns which had been raised by both Opposition Groups relating to the use and timing of amendments and the criteria regarding their content, Councillor Lorber moved a further amendment in relation to Standing Order 42 relating to the Rules of Debate at Full Council Meetings seeking to prevent the submission of any amendment on motions which had been submitted for debate at Council meetings, with members (he pointed out) already having the ability to vote against motions they did not support.

In response to the proposal moved by Councillor Lorber, the Mayor advised that the usual process for dealing with matters such as these would have been for it to be considered by the Constitutional Working Group, prior to being raised at Full Council. On this basis, she ruled that consideration of the proposal should take place once it had been subject to consideration at the Constitutional Working Group.

As no other members indicated they wished to speak the Mayor thanked members for their contribution and invited Councillor Muhammed Butt to exercise his right of reply. In closing the debate, Councillor Muhammed Butt also took the opportunity to remind members of the role and function of the Constitutional Working Group which he advised would be the appropriate forum to undertake consideration of the concerns highlighted relating to the treatment of amendments to motions rather than tabling them (without prior cross-party consideration) at the Council meeting. On this basis, he commended the report as submitted and without amendment to the Council.

Having thanked Councillor Muhammed Butt for closing the debate, the Mayor then put the recommendations in the report to the vote and they were declared **CARRIED**.

Council therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To approve the amendments to the Constitution as detailed within Appendix 1 of the report relating to the updated Terms of Reference for the Health & Wellbeing Board and update to Standing Order 41 on the process for withdrawal of Council Motions.
- (2) Following on from (1) above, to authorise the Corporate Director, Governance to amend the Constitution accordingly, including making any necessary incidental or consequential changes.
- (3) To note that, to the extent that the changes related to executive functions of the Council, they had been approved by the Leader.

19. **Motions**

Before moving on to consider the motions listed on the summons, the Mayor advised members that a total of 30 minutes had been set aside for the consideration of the 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 she advised that the remaining time available would be rolled forward for consideration of the remaining motions.

19.1 1st Motion (Conservative Group) – Management of Road and Utilities Works Across the Borough

The Mayor invited Councillor Maurice to move the first motion which had been submitted on behalf of the Conservative Group. Councillor Maurice began by providing context to the motion which had been focussed on concerns regarding the lack of coordination and management of road works, repairs and temporary traffic lights in the borough. Whilst recognising that road and utilities works were often essential, Councillor Maurice highlighted the disruption being caused as a result of their lack of co-ordination across the borough and advised members that the motion had therefore been designed to seek and encourage greater cooperation and coordination between all stakeholders and agencies in planning and undertaking these type of works to ensure that disruption was minimised.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Maurice for moving the motion and then drew members' attention to an amendment submitted on behalf of the Labour Group, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Given that Councillor Krupa Sheth (in whose name the amendment had been submitted) had submitted her apologies for absence at the meeting, Councillor Muhammad Butt (as Leader of the Council) was invited by the Mayor to move the amendment on behalf of the Labour Group. In commending the ongoing work being undertaken by officers and the lead Cabinet Member to ensure that disruption arising from major road and utility works for residents travelling around the borough were minimised, Councillor Muhammed Butt, in moving the amendment, felt it important to recognise the efforts already being made to ensure these works were managed on a co-ordinated basis. This approach included quarterly coordination meetings between the Council and utility companies in order to plan and co-ordinate works, although it was pointed out there would still be times when emergency works would be required which may clash with other works in the same area and could not be planned for in advance. As a result, he advised the amendment moved was designed to recognise these efforts and ensure continued engagement between all stakeholders in an attempt to address the concerns highlighted and encourage further joined up working to ensure that wherever possible roadworks were co-ordinated and managed so as to cause minimal disruption for residents across all parts of the borough. On this basis the amendment moved was as follows:

To add the wording underlined and delete the wording indicated.

“Management of Road and Utilities Work across the Borough

~~The Brent Conservative Group is concerned about the lack of~~ The coordination and management of the many road works, repairs and temporary traffic lights in our

borough. continues to be of importance to Brent Council to ensure cohesion for our residents travelling around the borough.

This ~~The~~ Council have listened to had numerous complaints concerns from residents who whilst appreciating that these works need to be carried are apprehensive about the potential disruption this can cause to them are very unhappy at the way they are managed and the traffic chaos that they cause. and continues to work with utility companies and meet with officials regularly to ensure disruption to residents during necessary major works is kept to a minimum.

~~As an example; it has been taking up to an hour to get through the temporary lights on East Lane in Wembley.~~

The Council's Network Management Team hold quarterly coordination meetings with We are also concerned that the utility companies do not in order to coordinate works so that they are carried out together and with minimal and minimize disruption however there are times when emergency works are required and this can unfortunately clash with other works near the location.

~~There are numerous examples of roadworks being started, temporary traffic management put in place but nobody appears to be working for several days or even weeks. Stonebridge has had two sets of temporary lights working against each other for weeks, with no one working there, with disruption at Blackbird Hill, Preston Road, Watford Road near Northwick Park Hospital to give just a few further examples.~~

Council is therefore asked to note that in relation to the following concerns:

- Roadworks, though essential, can cause major traffic hold ups including in some cases gridlock, can lead to road rage and leads to an increase in pollution, and the Council continues to work with utility companies to prevent major disruption arising from these major works.
- The lack of regular interaction between the various agencies who own services beneath our streets - There is ~~no~~ regular interaction between the various agencies who own the services beneath our streets. with quarterly coordination meetings between the Council and utility companies to discuss major works.
- The coordination of roadworks - There is ~~no~~ coordination to ensure that roadworks are carried out in such a manner so they do not interact to cause further disruption. The Council requires 10 days notice for major works and 3 days notice for minor works. The permitting software used will automatically identify clashes should two sets of works be programmed in close proximity to each other during the same time period.
- Disruption to road users - There 'appears' to be ~~no~~ are measures put in place by the Council to ensure that roadworks are timed and coordinated so as to cause the minimum disruption to road users. However, there may be times where emergency and urgent works are required which may clash with other scheduled works.

Therefore, As a result of the concerns highlighted the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action is asked to ensure:

- (1) That, with the exception of emergencies e.g. burst water mains, when a utility company applies for permission to carry out road works, the Council continues its work with ~~notifies all other~~ utility companies to coordinate their planned works programme to ensure minimal disruption for residents across the borough. ~~see if they need to carry out works so that it can all be done at the same time.~~
- (2) That the Network Management Team continues to hold quarterly coordination meetings with utility representatives to discuss major works and assist in avoiding clashes. ~~That roadworks are planned so that other roadworks are not carried out at the same time within ½mile of the application.~~
- (3) That companies continue to ~~who~~ apply for permission to carry out works and in line with the regulations of their permit if granted must do so within a certain time frame and if not completed on time, should be fined by the local authority in accordance with the current Government legislation, unless an extension is agreed."

The Mayor thanked Councillor Muhammed Butt for moving the amendment on behalf of the Labour Group. As there were no other members who had indicated they wished to speak she then moved on to invite Councillor Maurice (as mover of the original motion) followed by Councillor Muhammed Butt (as mover of the amendment) to exercise their right of reply.

In exercising his right of reply Councillor Maurice, whilst recognising the intent behind the approach outlined within the amendment moved by the Leader of the Council, highlighted the frustration and level of concern still being expressed by local residents in relation to the disruption being experienced. On this basis he advised the Conservative Group would be supporting the original rather than amended motion which had been moved.

Councillor Muhammed Butt in closing the debate and exercising his right of reply on the amendment again outlined the extent of work being undertaken with all stakeholders to plan and co-ordinate road and utility works in order to minimise disruption for local residents and road users and on this basis advised that the Labour Group would be supporting the amendment rather than original motion which had been moved.

Having thanked councillors for their contributions, the Mayor then moved to the vote on the motion starting with the amendment moved by the Labour Group. The amendment, as set out above, was then put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

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

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

"Management of Road and Utilities Work across the borough.

The coordination and management of the many road works, repairs and temporary traffic lights in our borough continues to be of importance to Brent Council to ensure cohesion for our residents travelling around the borough.

The Council have listened to concerns from residents who whilst appreciating that these works need to be carried are apprehensive about the potential disruption this can cause to them and continues to work with utility companies and meet with officials regularly to ensure disruption to residents during necessary major works is kept to a minimum.

The Council's Network Management Team hold quarterly coordination meetings with utility companies in order to coordinate works and minimize disruption however there are times when emergency works are required and this can unfortunately clash with other works near the location.

Council is therefore asked to note that in relation to the following concerns:

- Roadworks, though essential, can cause major traffic hold ups including in some cases gridlock, can lead to road rage and leads to an increase in pollution, and the Council continues to work with utility companies to prevent major disruption arising from these major works.
- The lack of regular interaction between the various agencies who own services beneath our streets - There is regular interaction between the various agencies with quarterly coordination meetings between the Council and utility companies to discuss major works.
- The coordination of roadworks - There is coordination to ensure that roadworks are carried out in such a manner so they do not interact to cause further disruption. The Council requires 10 days notice for major works and 3 days notice for minor works. The permitting software used will automatically identify clashes should two sets of works be programmed in close proximity to each other during the same time period.
- Disruption to road users - There are measures put in place by the Council to ensure that roadworks are timed and coordinated so as to cause the minimum disruption to road users. However, there may be times where emergency and urgent works are required which may clash with other scheduled works.

Therefore, the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action is asked to ensure:

- (1) That, with the exception of emergencies e.g. burst water mains, when a utility company applies for permission to carry out road works, the Council continues its work with utility companies to coordinate their planned works programme to ensure minimal disruption for residents across the borough.
- (2) That the Network Management Team continues to hold quarterly coordination meetings with utility representatives to discuss major works and assist in avoiding clashes.

- (3) That companies continue to apply for permission to carry out works and in line with the regulations of their permit if granted must do so within a certain time frame and if not completed on time, should be fined by the local authority in accordance with the current Government legislation, unless an extension is agreed.”

19.2 2nd Motion (Liberal Democrats Group) - Making our Borough Clean and Safe

The Mayor then invited Councillor Georgiou to move the second motion which had been submitted on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group. Prior to addressing the motion, Councillor Georgiou expressed concern at what was felt to be the negative effect of the amendment to the motion which had been submitted by the Labour Group in advance of the meeting. In highlighting the aim of the original motion to address concerns being raised by local residents regarding the state and cleanliness of the boroughs streets it was felt the extent of the proposed changes within the amendment would have the effect of negating the original spirit and basis of the original motion and preventing effective scrutiny of the Administration. On this basis, he advised the Mayor that the Liberal Democrats Group were no longer minded to move the motion and would instead be seeking to withdraw it from consideration at the meeting.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** having been put to a vote, in accordance with Standing Order 42(I), to approve withdrawal of the Motion submitted by the Liberal Democrats Group from consideration at the meeting.

19.3 3rd Motion (Labour Group) – Rogue Landlords

The Mayor then invited Councillor Johnson to move the motion submitted by the Labour Group. In moving the motion Councillor Johnson, whilst recognising the contribution made by the Private Rented Sector (PRS) to the provision of housing across the borough and support by a majority of landlords working in close partnership with the Council, felt it important to recognise the problems being caused by the small number acting in a more unscrupulous way. In referencing the case involving Jaydipkumar Valand as a landlord within Brent issued with the first banning order preventing him from letting or engaging in any residential property management work across England, he advised the motion was focussed on highlighting the impact which rogue landlords could have on vulnerable tenants and the wider community as well as on the work being undertaken to protect local residents living in the PRS and in support of the Renters Reform Bill.

With renters in the PRS making up the largest proportion of occupiers in the borough, Councillor Johnson was keen to outline the impact for those having to live in substandard and unsafe accommodation as a result of rogue landlords failing to maintain their property to a safe condition or in seeking to harass their tenants in terms of not only their quality of life but also productivity and health & wellbeing. In concluding, he therefore hoped all members would join him in support to the motion and in seeking to support the work being undertaken to safeguard the rights of tenants and to deter and tackle unscrupulous landlords.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Johnson for moving the motion before inviting other members to speak, with the following contributions received.

In supporting Councillor Johnson's opening statement, Councillor Kabir also took the opportunity to highlight concerns regarding the impact of absent landlords in terms of them being held to account for management of their properties. In recognising the pressure on supply and affordability of rented accommodation and limited choices this presented to tenants given the demand identified, she felt this was an issue which also needed to be addressed and confirmed her support for the motion.

Councillor Maurice in welcoming the prosecution of the landlord identified within the motion and protection being offered through the Renters Reform Bill also supported the reference within the motion to the majority of good landlords in Brent who were operating in partnership with the Council. Whilst keen to ensure the necessary protections were in place to support tenants within the PRS he ended by also highlighting what he felt was a similar need for landlords to have the necessary protection and power to deal with tenants creating problems.

In response to the debate, Councillor Lorber whilst supporting the motion and action being taken to tackle rogue landlords and provide tenants with the necessary safeguards felt it was also important to recognise and strengthen the role of the landlord licensing scheme and wider regulatory system in the process, particularly in relation to those landlords seeking to convert residential properties into Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

Also speaking in support of the motion, Councillor Ahmadi Moghaddam reminded members of the Council motion passed in September 2022 seeking to support the safety and security of tenants in the private rented sector during the cost-of-renting crisis, which had called upon the government to introduce new legislation to regulate rent increases, strengthen enforcement and improve energy standards within the rental sector. In commending the work undertaken to date in tackling these issues and seeking to license and tackle rogue landlords in the PRS he outlined his support for the current motion as a means of further seeking to protect tenants and ensure, as a basic principle, everyone had access to a safe and affordable home.

As a further contribution to the debate, Councillor Kennelly also spoke in support of the Brent Renters Union and the motion, highlighting the need to ensure that issues relating to the provision of substandard accommodation in the private rented sector, including damp and mould, were tackled proactively and swiftly using all measures available to ensure the protection of renters rights and a decent standard of living for all residents.

Councillor Donnelly-Jackson also spoke in support of the motion based on her personal experience of the private rented sector and also in seeking to highlight and welcome the support being provided through organisations such as Shelter and Advice for Renters. In commending the selective licensing scheme introduced by the Council, Councillor Donnelly-Jackson advised she was keen to ensure effective regulation of landlords in the PRS including the removal of Section 21 evictions.

Councillor Smith also spoke in support of the sentiments and comments highlighted during the debate and need to ensure effective regulation of landlords operating in the private rented sector.

As final contributions to the debate given the time available, Councillor Grahl ended by expressing concern at the Government's delay in progressing the Renters Reform Bill given the impact in seeking to protect and enhance the rights of tenants in the private rented sector. In the same way, Councillor Kansagra also felt there was a need to recognise the Council's role and responsibilities as a landlord for the properties and tenants they managed.

Highlighting the limited time remaining, the Mayor then invited Councillor Johnson to exercise his right of reply. In responding and closing the debate, Councillor Johnson thanked members in the support expressed for the motion and the commitment being sought to ensure that no tenants living in the private rented sector across the borough had to live in substandard or unsafe accommodation or face harassment by their landlords. On this basis it was hoped that all members would support the motion.

Having once again thanked all members for their contributions, the Mayor then put the motion, to a vote which was unanimously declared **CARRIED**.

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

Rogue Landlords

This Council notes:

- The important contribution the Private Rented Sector (PRS) makes to the provision of housing in the borough, with renters of private accommodation making up the largest proportion of occupants in our borough.
- The majority of private landlords renting out properties in Brent are good landlords who work in close partnership with the Council.
- However, this is not the case for all landlords and the Council is fully committed to ensure that no private rented sector tenant is living in substandard accommodation. We believe everyone should live in a warm and dry home.
- A recent survey by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) showing that of those officers working on housing enforcement in the private rented sector, nine out of ten had encountered landlords engaging in harassment or illegal eviction, and 78% had dealt with landlords who persistently refuse to maintain their property to a safe condition.
- That rogue landlords can have a devastating impact on vulnerable tenants and the wider community.

This Council further notes:

- The Labour Administration's commitment to take a zero-tolerance approach to rogue landlords and to use the full range of tools and powers at its disposal to tackle rogue landlords.
- The case of Jaydipkumar Valand, who was found guilty of raking in £360,000 by packing up to 40 tenants in to a four bed semi-detached home in Napier Road, Wembley, back in 2018. Due to the hard work of Brent enforcement officers, Valand was issued with Brent Council's first ever banning order which now prevents him from letting out any houses in England or engaging in any sort of property management work in the country for the next five years.
- The new selective licensing scheme that the Council introduced on 1 August to protect renters' rights and secure a decent standard of living for all residents. Landlords who rent out properties in Dollis Hill, Harlesden & Kensal Green and Willesden Green are now legally required to have a property licence.

This Council resolves:

- To do more to publicise successful legal action against landlords and lettings agents, which will act as a deterrent to bad landlords and raise awareness of landlords duties and responsibilities.
- Request that the Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters Security calls on the Secretary of State for Housing, Levelling-Up and Communities to support Brent Council's commitment to further landlord licensing schemes in the borough.
- Request that the Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters Security calls on the UK Government to urgently bring forward legislation to bring the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector as proposed in the Renters Reform white paper.

To continue to work with the Mayor of London to lobby the Government to increase funding to London and its Boroughs for the delivery of affordable homes."

20. 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 which would be on Monday 20 November 2023.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm

COUNCILLOR ORLEEN HYLTON
Mayor