



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

Minutes of the ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
held in the Grand Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Wednesday 20 May 2026 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Amer Agha MB BS, MSc, PHCM

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Kanta Mistry

COUNCILLORS:

Aden	Ahmadi Moghaddam
P.Ahmed	Alexandre
Amadi	Anderson
Bajwa	Blackman
Brown	Burn
M Butt	S Butt
Chadha	Chauhan
Choudry	Chowdhury
Clinton	Dar
De Souza	Dixon
Donnelly-Jackson	Do Rosario
Gallagher	Georgiou
Grahl	Hack
Ibrahim	Jansali
Johnson	Kansagra
Kelcher	Knight
Lorber	Madabhushi
Mahmood	Malonga
Maurice	McLeish
Mishra	Mitchell
Mulaisho	A.Patel
HB Patel	N.Patel
Perrin	Rubin
Ryan	Shah
Thomas	Unger
Vakani	Want
Warsame	

1. Welcoming Statement

Prior to formally opening the meeting, the outgoing Mayor Councillor Hack took the opportunity to welcome all new and returning councillors following the outcome of the recent borough election as well as guests to the Annual Council meeting. He then invited Kim Wright (as the Council's Chief Executive) to provide a brief outline of the arrangements for the conduct of the meeting and Mayor Making ceremony. Having noted the outline provided, the Mayor then formally opened the meeting.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

The Mayor advised that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors I.Ahmed and J.Patel.

3. **To elect the Mayor of the Borough for the Municipal Year 2026 - 2027**

Prior to handing over to the Chief Executive for the conduct of the election process, Councillor Hack began by asking members for nominations to the office of Mayor of the London Borough of Brent for the 2026 - 2027 Municipal Year.

Councillor Muhammed Butt proceeded to nominate Councillor Amer Agha. In moving the nomination, he firstly took the opportunity to thank Councillor Hack for his hard work and dedication whilst serving as Mayor and commitment in seeking to represent local community groups and organisations. In taking the opportunity to congratulate all members on their election (whether as new or returning councillors) the Leader then moved on to advise how pleased he was to nominate Councillor Agha for the position of Mayor, recognising the importance of the role and qualities it was felt he would demonstrate in providing strong civic leadership across the borough.

No other nominations were received with the Chief Executive therefore advising members that they would need to confirm the appointment on the basis of a vote requiring a straightforward majority to be achieved.

Prior to the vote, Councillor Georgiou (as Leader of the Liberal Democrats Group) requested (under Standing Order 43 (c)) that this be undertaken on the basis of a roll call. Having confirmed the request, the outgoing Mayor then handed over to the Chief Executive for the appointment of the Mayor to be put to the vote.

On a recorded vote being taken the appointment of Councillor Amer Agha as Mayor was declared **CARRIED**. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that Councillor Amer Agha be elected Mayor of the London Borough of Brent for the 2026 - 2027 Municipal Year.

The voting recorded on the appointment of Councillor Amer Agha as Mayor was as follows:

For (34): Councillors Aden, Agha, P.Ahmed, Amadi, Anderson, Bajwa, Blackman, Burn, M.Butt, S.Butt, Chadha, Choudry, Chowdhury, Dar, De Souza, Dixon, Donnelly-Jackson, Do Rosario, Grahl, Ibrahim, Johnson, Kansagra, Kelcher, Knight, Madhabushi, Mahmood, Maurice, McLeish, Mishra, Mistry, A.Patel, H.Patel, Rubin and Thomas

Against: (20): Councillors Ahmadi-Moghaddam, Alexandre, Brown, Chauhan, Clinton, Gallagher, Georgiou, Jansali, Lorber, Malonga, Mitchell, Mulaisho, N.Patel, Perrin, Ryan, Shah, Unger, Vakani, Want and Warsame.

Abstentions (1): Councillor Hack (Mayor).

Councillor Agha then proceeded to sign the statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Mayor.

4. To appoint a Councillor of the Borough to be Deputy Mayor

Councillor Agha, taking over as Chair of the meeting, thanked members for his nomination and appointment as Mayor. Prior to the Mayor announcing the appointment of his Deputy Mayor Councillor Georgiou, in raising a point of order, felt it important to recognise that whilst the Local Government Act 1972 enabled the Mayor of a London Borough to appoint a Deputy Mayor there was no obligation on the Mayor to make such an appointment. Councillor Georgiou therefore urged the Mayor to carefully consider the basis of any appointment, especially if that involved the position being offered to a member of the Conservative Group as part of any agreement between the Groups, which it was not felt reflected the outcome of the recent borough election.

In response, Councillor Kansagra (as a Point of Order) challenged the basis of the comments made by Councillor Georgiou, reminding members that these had preceded any announcement being made by the Mayor.

Having noted the comments made, the Mayor moved on (without further comment) to announce the appointment of Councillor Kanta Mistry to serve as Deputy Mayor for the 2026 - 2027 Municipal Year

At this stage in proceedings the Mayors Chain of Office and robes were exchanged between the outgoing and newly appointed Mayor and also Deputy Mayor.

Councillor Agha then formally returned thanks for his appointment. Starting by welcoming all guests, he highlighted his pride in being nominated as Mayor and thanked all members for their trust, confidence and faith in appointing him to take on the role as first citizen of the borough.

Highlighting the privilege he felt in being appointed as Mayor, Councillor Agha began by reflecting on his personal journey which had involved his family first arriving in the United Kingdom in 2004 from Saudi Arabia, with their roots in Pakistan, where they had initially faced uncertainty before thankfully being welcomed with friendship, opportunity and a sense of belonging by the local community in Brent.

In seeking to build a future for their children, Councillor Agha recalled a formative experience which had involved the provision of support, particularly from the late Councillor Harbhajan Singh and his wife Mrs Kamal Singh (fondly referred to as Kamal Ji) in enabling his children to secure local primary school places. Councillor Agha advised it was this act of kindness which had demonstrated the value and power of public service and community spirit which had taken forward as key principles in driving and inspiring his own involvement in local politics based on a

desire to give something back to the community that had given so much to both him and his family. Councillor Agha was also proud to highlight the achievements in relation to his professional and academic path, with these identified as key in driving his passion about the importance of education, which he also hoped to be able to share during his time as Mayor given the way the way this could also create opportunities and improve life chances.

Reflecting on his time serving as a Councillor since his election in 2014, Councillor Agha outlined the privilege he felt at being able to serve the residents of Brent acknowledging those who had initially encouraged him to stand for election, including Dawn Butler MP. Noting the importance of this support and belief shown in him, he felt it was this experience which had made a real difference in helping to shape his understanding of leadership, resilience and the importance of community relationships.

Highlighting his commitment and focus on the future, Councillor Agha advised of the intention to use his role as Mayor to celebrate Brent as a welcoming borough bursting with pride and diversity with every street having its own storeys, hopes and dreams involving people from different backgrounds, faiths and cultures living side by side with respect and understanding. As a result, he felt Brent's strength lay not only in its diverse and varied communities but also in the mutual respect, acceptance and compassion shown between residents, which he advised he was committed to champion during his time as Mayor. Illustrating the opportunities provided to support this approach through anecdotal experiences during his time campaigning as a councillor, he highlighted what in his view made local government so special in terms of the close connections and relationships it was possible to build and develop in seeking to bring communities closer together. The example of his appointment as Mayor, having arrived in the country as an outsider, was cited as evidence of what could be achieved when welcomed as a neighbour, friend and eventually representative of the community.

Looking ahead, Councillor Agha then outlined the aims for his mayoralty in seeking to bring people together, support the Council's overall vision and objectives and serve all residents with fairness, dignity and respect, recognising Brent as the place that had given him and his family its chance and which he was proud to call home. At the same time, the opportunity was also taken to recognise his fellow councillors and colleagues for the work they undertook to support local residents, with particularly reference made to Councillor Muhammed Butt and Councillor Ryan Hack (as former Mayor) along with his close friend and work colleague Sindhu Balakrishnan whose dedication and friendship, he advised, had inspired him throughout his journey.

Prior to concluding, Councillor Agha took the opportunity to pay specific tribute to his wife (Sunbal) for the strength, support and encouragement she had given him throughout his journey highlighting her patience and sacrifice during his time in public office and when navigating their journey during its more difficult times. Highlighting his gratitude for her love and support, the Mayor ended by reaffirming his pride in Brent as a diverse and welcoming borough and his commitment to its future, advising that he would be announcing the organisations he intended to support through the Mayor's Charity at a future meeting.

5. Vote of thanks to the outgoing Mayor

The Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Leader of the Council, to propose a vote of thanks to Councillor Hack as the outgoing Mayor along with all co-opted and other independent members serving on the Council's committees.

Councillor Muhammed Butt in once again congratulating Councillor Agha on his appointment as Mayor, began by recognising the honour in serving as First Citizen of the Borough and in being able to advocate and serve as a champion for Brent, which were roles he felt Councillor Hack had worked hard to fulfil during his time as Mayor. Recognising the energy, dignity, dedication and commitment demonstrated by Councillor Hack in serving the people of Brent during his time as Mayor, the Leader praised Councillor Hack for his warmth, good humour and the valued contribution made in representing the borough during his Mayoralty highlighting his efforts in seeking to bring all communities together as a visible and enthusiastic ambassador and in support of numerous community organisations and local causes with these efforts, he advised, being appreciated by all members. In ending therefore hoped Councillor Hack would take pride in all he achieved during his Mayoralty.

Moving on, Councillor Butt then took the opportunity to highlight the valued work of the Council's co-opted and independent committee members, given the core role they played as critical friends in the Council's democratic process and in terms of strengthening the quality, transparency and accountability of work being undertaken. In passing on his thanks, he advised how their independence and objectivity were highly valued and seen as integral to the role of the bodies on which they served including Scrutiny, Audit & Standards and the various health and education related bodies. Recognising the pressures and challenges which local government continued to face, he ended by thanking all of the co-opted and Independent members for the welcome contribution they continued to make to the good governance of Brent.

The Mayor then invited comments from other members in recognition of the role undertaken by Councillor Hack during his time as Mayor.

In response, Councillors Kansagra, Grahl, Kelcher, H.Patel, Clinton, Georgiou, Dar, P.Ahmed, Johnson, Maurice , Mahmood, Thomas and finally Councillor De Souza all spoke to congratulate the new Mayor and Deputy Mayor on their appointment and thank Councillor Hack as outgoing Mayor, recognising the commitment, leadership, service and compassion demonstrated in undertaking his civic role. Reflecting on his appointment as the youngest Mayor of Brent, members were keen to commend Councillor Hack on his enthusiasm, professionalism and dedication in seeking to represents Brent's communities and also for the fair, effective and impartial way in which he had presided over Full Council meetings with such confidence.

Reference was also made to the extensive programme of civic engagements attended by Councillor Hack during his term as Mayor across the borough, with members keen to acknowledge his visibility within local communities, willingness to engage with residents from all backgrounds and his commitment to promoting Brent both within and beyond the borough. His strong connection with the Irish community and support of the Brent Irish Advisory Service were also highlighted, with members commending the extensive efforts made in relation to his charitable

fundraising activity in support of the Brent Irish Advisory Service as his nominated charity and significant contribution this would make to the organisation and the local communities it served.

Members were also keen, in reflecting on his achievements during his year in office, to acknowledge Councillor Hack's accessibility and responsiveness to local residents and continuing commitment to local issues despite the demands of his mayoral duties, with reference made to his popularity within Brondesbury Park and surrounding wards and the high regard in which he was held by residents across the borough. Tributes were also paid to Councillor Hack's support for a wide range of community groups and organisations, which members noted had included him attending a large number of events celebrating Brent's diverse communities, including Irish, Caribbean and other cultural groups, as well as his engagement with schools, voluntary organisations and disability groups, with the approach felt to have reflected Brent's diversity and strong relationships between communities across the borough.

Reflecting on his year in officer, members were also keen to recognise Councillor Hack's positive impact as a role model for young people noting that as Brent's youngest Mayor, he had demonstrated what could be achieved through hard work, dedication and public service. The commitment demonstrated to causes including food poverty and justice, community support and youth engagement were also praised, with members welcoming his continued contribution on these issues as he returned to his role as a ward councillor.

In concluding their remarks, Members once again thanked Councillor Hack for his service as Brent's First Citizen and wished him well for the future. Appreciation was expressed for his friendship, commitment and contribution to the borough during his mayoral year with members also looking forward to his return to active participation in Council business as a ward councillor.

As part of the above contributions Councillor Clinton took the opportunity, whilst expressing his appreciation to the outgoing Mayor, to also reflect on concerns relating to public confidence in politics following the outcome of the recent local election with reference made to increasing levels of voter dissatisfaction, disengagement and a perceived loss of faith in democratic institutions which he felt also need to be considered in celebrating and welcoming the new Mayor. Citing recent local election results from a number of local authorities, these concerns were focused around the ability of the current electoral system to produce outcomes where the proportion of seats won accurately reflected the proportion of votes received, including within Brent, with this he felt highlighting questions about democratic legitimacy and representation. Whilst advocating for reform of the national electoral system, Councillor Clinton also hoped members would reflect on the level of electoral support received by individual parties now represented on the Council prior to any decision being made later in the meeting regarding council leadership and committee appointments for the forthcoming four-year term of the Administration with it hoped, given the composition of the Council, that all of the represented political groups would seek to work collaboratively on a cross party basis rather than through a minority administration relying on the support of other groups in exchange for specific concessions.

The Mayor then invited Councillor Hack to return thanks and review his time in office.

Councillor Hack, in returning thanks, began by expressing his pride at having been elected as Mayor and being able to serve the people of Brent during the previous year. Reflecting on the privilege and honour in being able to serve the borough, the opportunity was taken to thank his friend and former colleague Orleen Hylton as well as the residents of Brent for the trust placed in him during his mayoral year with the opportunities to engage with residents, communities and local organisations across Brent particularly valued.

Highlighting a number of memorable engagements during the year, Councillor Hack made specific reference to receiving warm wishes from former Irish President Michael D. Higgins as well as meeting current President Catherine Connolly and being able to welcome Their Majesties The King and Queen to Brent on a visit to Neasden Temple in addition to attending more than 400 events across the borough. These experiences were ones Councillor Hack stated he would also cherish and would remain among the most memorable aspects of his mayoralty.

Expressing his appreciation for the support and hospitality extended to both himself and his consort throughout the year, Councillor Hack was also keen to commend the warmth, compassion, kindness and generosity shown by residents, other members, community groups and volunteers and to acknowledge the significant contribution made by so many individuals and local organisations to community life in Brent.

Reflecting on the diversity of Brent and the opportunities he had been given to engage with communities from a wide range of backgrounds and faiths, Councillor Hack also highlighted his participation in various cultural and religious celebrations across the borough as well as community gatherings, which he stated had reinforced his sense of belonging within Brent and had highlighted the borough's strength as a diverse and inclusive community.

The Mayor also took the opportunity to pay specific tribute to his consort, Fernando Teles, describing his journey to the United Kingdom from Brazil and his strong affinity with Brent advising members that the warmth and hospitality received as part of their shared experience throughout his mayoral year had further strengthened their appreciation of the borough and its residents.

Turning to his fundraising activity, Councillor Hack advised he was proud to be able to confirm that the Mayoral Appeal had raised in excess of £92,000 in support of his nominated charity, the Brent Irish Advisory Service. He noted that this represented the highest amount ever raised through a Mayoral Appeal in Brent's history and was delighted at the impact this would have in supporting the continuation of welfare and advice services for members of the Irish community and other residents across north-west London, with all members thanked for their support over his mayoral year.

In concluding his remarks, Councillor Hack ended by reflecting on the challenges facing the borough but expressed confidence in the strength, resilience and community spirit of Brent's residents and the character of the borough in terms of the level of mutual support, inclusion and respect for others. In thanking Councillor

Butt for his support during his time in office, as Leader of the Council, he hoped all residents would continue working together with openness, compassion and shared purpose, emphasising that Brent's greatest strength remained its people and the collective spirit of its communities. As a final comment, he also took the opportunity to wish Councillor Agha all the best for his coming year as Mayor, which he was sure he would serve with distinction.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Hack for his comments and ended by wishing him well for the future and then advised that as this now concluded the ceremonial part of the meeting, he would move on to deal with the remainder of the agenda.

6. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests declared by Members at the meeting.

7. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 23 February 2026 be approved as a correct record.

8. **Appointment of the Leader of the Council**

As this was the first meeting of the new Administration following the local borough elections in May 2026 the Mayor invited nominations for the office of Leader of the Council, which members were advised would be for a term of office to expire at the Annual Council meeting following the next borough election in May 2030.

Prior to nominations being made, Councillor Georgiou advised of an amendment he was seeking to move under Standing Order 42 (a) relating to the process for appointment of the Leader and the subsequent appointments made to Cabinet positions. Referring to discussions between members and the comments made by Councillor Clinton earlier during the meeting, Councillor Georgiou reiterated what he felt to be the importance of developing a more collaborative approach towards the way in which all groups now represented on the Council sought to work with an emphasis on cooperation and partnership as the basis for the Council's future governance arrangements.

Referencing the outcome of the recent borough elections. Councillor Georgiou pointed out that this had not given any single political party a mandate to govern independently and was felt to represent a clear message from the electorate that a more collaborative and inclusive approach was required in terms of the borough's leadership. Having been requested by the Mayor to focus on the substance of amendment being proposed, Councillor Georgiou advised that he would therefore be seeking to propose the adoption of a cross party alliance as the basis for the Council's future governance arrangements involving a Cabinet comprising of nine members allocated on the basis of four Labour Group members, 2 members from the Liberal Democrats and Conservative Groups and one from the Green Group, which it was felt would better reflect the wishes expressed by the electorate at the last borough election and provide a new and more dynamic leadership and governance model for the borough.

Following the outline of the proposed amendment from Councillor Georgiou the Mayor then moved on to seek formal nominations for the position of Leader of the Council. At this stage, Councillor Grahl proceeded to move the nomination of Councillor Muhammed Butt to the office of Leader of the Council.

As a result of clarification provided at the meeting by the Chief Executive regarding the order in which any nominations received and subsequent amendments moved in relation to that process would need to be considered and voted upon, Councillor Georgiou advised that he would no longer be seeking to formally move the proposed amendment he had initially outlined.

This was instead followed by Councillor Lorber formally moving the nomination of Councillor Georgiou to the office of Leader of the Council along with an amendment to the term of office for the position, on the basis that any appointment be for a one rather than four year term of office.

As no further nominations were received the Mayor advised he would now need to move to the vote on the two nominations followed by the amendment on the term of office for Leader.

Reminding members that the appointment of the Leader would be on the basis of a vote requiring a straightforward majority to be achieved, the Mayor advised that once that process had been completed he would then put the amendment moved by Councillor Lorber (on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group) in relation to the term of office for appointment of the Leader to the vote.

Prior to the vote being taken, Councillor Georgiou (as Leader of the Liberal Democrats Group) requested (under Standing Order 43 (c)) that these be undertaken on the basis of a roll call. Having confirmed the request, the Mayor then moved to put the appointment of the Mayor to the vote, which was conducted by the Chief Executive.

On a recorded vote being taken and a straightforward majority being achieved the appointment of Councillor Muhammed Butt was declared **CARRIED** with it therefore **RESOLVED** that Councillor Muhammed Butt be elected Leader of the Council.

Given the outcome, the Mayor confirmed a vote on the nomination of Councillor Georgiou as Leader of the Council would not be required.

The voting recorded on the appointment of Councillor Muhammed Butt as Leader of the Council was as follows:

For (24): Councillors Aden, P.Ahmed, Amadi, Anderson, Bajwa, Blackman, Burn, M.Butt, S.Butt, Choudry, Dar, De Souza, Dixon, Donnelly-Jackson, Grahl, Hack, Ibrahim, Johnson, Kelcher, Knight, Mahmood, McLeish, Rubin and Thomas.

Against: (20): Councillors Ahmadi-Moghaddam, Alexandre, Brown, Chauhan, Clinton, Gallagher, Georgiou, Jansali, Lorber, Malonga, Mitchell, Mulaisho, N.Patel, Perrin, Ryan, Shah, Unger, Vakani, Want and Warsame.

Abstentions (11): Councillors Agha (Mayor), Mistry (Deputy Mayor) Chadha, Chowdhury, Do Rosario, Kansagra, Madhabushi, Maurice, Mishra, A.Patel, H.Patel

Having confirmed the appointment of the Leader of the Council, the Mayor then moved on to put the amendment moved by Councillor Lorber (on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group) in relation to the term of office for appointment of the Leader to the vote.

On a recorded vote being taken the amendment was declared **LOST** and it was therefore **RESOLVED** that Councillor Muhammed Butt's appointment as Leader of the Council be for a term of office to expire at the Annual Council meeting in May 2030.

The voting recorded on the amendment moved to change the term of appointment for the Leader of the Council was as follows:

For: (20): Councillors Ahmadi-Moghaddam, Alexandre, Brown, Chauhan, Clinton, Gallagher, Georgiou, Jansali, Lorber, Malonga, Mitchell, Mulaisho, N.Patel, Perrin, Ryan, Shah, Unger, Vakani, Want and Warsame.

Against (33): Councillors Aden, P.Ahmed, Amadi, Anderson, Bajwa, Blackman, Burn, M.Butt, S.Butt, Chadha, Choudry, Chowdhury, Dar, De Souza, Dixon, Donnelly-Jackson, Do Rosario, Grahl, Hack, Ibrahim, Johnson, Kansagra, Kelcher, Knight, Madhabushi, Mahmood, Maurice, McLeish, Mishra, A.Patel, H.Patel, Rubin and Thomas.

Abstentions (2): Councillors Agha (Mayor) and Mistry (Deputy Mayor).

9. **Annual Review of Constitution**

The Mayor moved on to invite Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) to introduce the report from the Corporate Director of Finance & Resources detailing a number of proposed changes to the Constitution. In moving the changes outlined within the report, Councillor Muhammed Butt advised that they incorporated a necessary and targeted review of the Constitution prompted by the new political make-up of the Council following the May borough elections. Referring to the existing Standing Orders relating to the submission of advance notice written questions and Group motions at Council meetings, members were advised these had needed to be updated to reflect the new political composition of the Council with the aim to ensure the arrangements remained fair, workable and fit for purpose ahead of the first ordinary Full Council meeting in July.

Confirmation was provided that the report had not been intended to present a wider annual review of the Constitution, with the outcome of that process scheduled to be reported back to Council in July, and instead reflected a narrower and more urgent need to ensure the basic operating rules for questions and motions recognised the new political balance on the Council. Referring to the proposals relating to the allocation of motions and advance notice written questions, Councillor Muhammed Butt advised that the arrangements proposed had followed initial consultation with Group Leaders and involved an allocation reflecting the political balance between Groups on the Council. It was felt the approach outlined would not only provide a clear and fair route allowing Groups to continue to bring matters forward for debate, but would also ensure Council meetings remain manageable and focused whilst allowing members across the Council to hold the administration to account in a way

that remained proportionate, practical and reflective of the new circumstances in which the Council was operating.

In commending the recommended changes to Council, Councillor Muhammed Butt ended by assuring members that the proposals reflected a desire to ensure the Council could continue to conduct its business effectively and fairly and would not prejudge the broader review to come in July.

The Mayor then opened the debate inviting other members to speak on the report, with the following contributions made.

In opening the debate Councillor Mitchell advised of an amendment she was seeking to move at this stage of the meeting under Standing Order 42 (a) in relation to the Council's scrutiny arrangements proposing the establishment of a third Scrutiny Committee, with responsibility for housing-related matters. In moving the amendment, Councillor Mitchell began by highlighting concern at developments during the meeting relating to the appointment of the Leader and Minority Administration, facilitated through the support of the Conservative Group rather than any genuine collaboration of cross party partnership. These were, she felt indicative of wider shortcomings in the current political arrangements in failing to reflect the percentage of the popular vote achieved by each of the respective political groups and the wishes of the electorate.

In light of these concerns, Councillor Mitchell felt it important to recognise the importance of robust checks and balances within the Council's governance arrangements with particular emphasis placed on the role of scrutiny in holding executive members and council officers to account, improving transparency, and helping to secure effective outcomes for residents. As a result, she advised that the Green Group were formally moving an amendment to the report, seeking to explore the establishment (as an additional change to the Constitution) of an additional scrutiny committee with a specific focus on housing in order to strengthen accountability, improve oversight of housing services, and enhance political representation within scrutiny arrangements. In support of the amendment, Councillor Mitchell highlighted that the Council currently operated with fewer scrutiny committees than many other London boroughs, with the existing scrutiny arrangements not felt to provide sufficient capacity to examine all council functions effectively in terms of managing the volume and complexity of work and time available for detailed scrutiny. The focus on housing was highlighted as a specific area of concern in this respect, given the substantial expenditure on temporary accommodation and the calls for improved oversight made by external organisations and stakeholders.

In addition, it was felt the proposed additional scrutiny committee would also provide an opportunity for a broader political representation within the Council's governance arrangements enabling greater opportunities for representation across political groups and in relation to the chairing arrangements which would better reflect the outcome of the recent local election. Referencing comments made earlier in the meeting to collaboration and cross-party working, Councillor Mitchell hoped that all members would support the amendment given the focus on multi-party politics as an increasingly significant feature of both local and national politics and need for all political groups represented on the Council to work collaboratively,

seek compromise, and build consensus in order to achieve the best outcomes for residents.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Mitchell for moving the amendment with the Chief Executive confirming that should the establishment of an additional scrutiny committee be approved this would involve a further report being provided for the July Council meeting setting out detailed proposals in terms of remit, membership and operational arrangements.

Having noted the advice, the Mayor then opened the debate inviting other members to speak, with the following contributions received.

As an in initial contribution, Councillor Georgiou felt further clarification was required on the future arrangements proposed for motions at Full Council meetings based on the consultation undertaken with Group Leaders prior to the meeting with opposition expressed to the provision of five motions per Council meeting, which he felt to be excessive and would restrict the time available to allow sufficient debate on other important issues. Concerns were also expressed at the justification for the proposed allocation of motions between Groups, based on the Council now operating under a minority Administration, and as a result it was felt the arrangements required further reflection and consideration, including the alternative suggestions submitted by the Liberal Democrats Group prior to the meeting.

Speaking next, Councillor Lorber advised of an additional amendment he was also seeking to move at this stage of the meeting under Standing Order 42 (a) proposing a further change to the Constitution with the Council moving from an Executive style of governance and returning to a Committee system style of decision making.

In support of the amendment, members were advised of the limited timescale remaining to enable consideration of the option to return to a committee style system of governance and highlighted his experience of operating under previous committee arrangements, which he felt provided a more democratic decision-making model allowing matters to be fully debated, scrutinised, and considered before decisions were made. As examples of decisions he felt may have benefitted from these type of arrangements, reference was to the change in recycling arrangements, introduction and operation of dockless e-bikes and management of Council owned void properties provided. Referring to comments made during the meeting, Councillor Lorber felt the move to a committee style system would also allow political groups to be represented more effectively in decision-making and would be particularly appropriate in a council where no single party held overall control, enabling the views of all councillors to be heard and better reflecting democratic representation and on this basis he commended the additional amendment to members.

Speaking next, Councillor Kansagra whilst acknowledging that the outcome of the election had returned a Council with no overall control felt there was now a responsibility on all councillors to work collectively in establishing a way forward that would enable the Council to continue functioning effectively and avoid the potential for disruption at future meetings through the provision of a clear structure and process for governance. In welcoming the assurance provided that a more detailed review of constitutional changes would follow he advised the Conservative Group considered this a fair and constructive approach and way forward

highlighting the responsibility on all political groups to work together in the interests of residents. Whilst recognising the importance in ensuring that council decisions remained subject to appropriate scrutiny, it was felt the approach outlined within the proposals moved by the Leader of the Council and assurance regarding an ongoing review of the Constitution would enable an appropriate and constructive way forward which he advised the Conservative Group would support.

As a final contribution to the debate, Councillor Clinton felt it important to highlight the ability for councillors from all Groups to be able to exercise independent judgement and to disagree, where they felt it appropriate with their group leadership. On this basis it was hoped members would consider supporting the amendments outlined as a means of strengthening democratic scrutiny and accountability within the borough. Councillor Clinton advised that he also supported the concerns previously outlined in terms of the existing capacity for effective scrutiny and ended by encouraging any members who disagreed with their group position to voice those concerns in support of improved scrutiny and accountability.

As there were no further members who had indicated they wished to speak, the Mayor having thanked members for their contribution then drew the debate to a close by firstly inviting Councillor Muhammed Butt (as mover of the original report) followed by Councillor Mitchell (as mover of the first amendment) and then Councillor Lorber (as mover of the second amendment) to exercise their rights of reply.

Speaking first, Councillor Muhammed Butt once again outlined what he felt to be the balanced and proportionate basis on which the proposals presented in the report for the provision of motions and advance notice written questions had been developed. Whilst advising that the Labour Group would be willing to consider and support the amendment moved by Councillor Mitchell on the proposed establishment of an additional scrutiny committee focussed around housing, it was pointed out this would be on the basis of any final proposal being developed as part of the wider review of the constitution following the meeting with the opportunity taken, in concluding, to reiterate the commitment made to continue working with all political groups.

Following on Councillor Mitchell, in exercising her right of reply took the opportunity to thank members for the support expressed in terms of developing more effective cross partnership working and collaboration and hoped all members would be willing to support the amendment she had moved in seeking to enhance democratic scrutiny and accountability.

Councillor Lorber was then invited to speak, and in exercising his right of reply once again highlighted the importance of the timescale in support of the consideration of his amendment in advance of forthcoming legislative changes being introduced by the Government relating to local government governance arrangements, which were expected to come into force in June 2026. Referring to the ability introduced under the original localism arrangements, empowering local authorities to determine their own decision-making structures (including the option to not only adopt an Executive style system of governance but also to operate under a committee system) he felt the current Government had moved away from the principle of localism in now removing the ability for Council's to decide for themselves how decision-making should be conducted. Given the anticipated

timescale in which these changes were expected to come into effect, Councillor Lorber advised he had considered it necessary to move the amendment seeking a return to a committee style system of governance enabling its consideration in advance of the option being removed. Members were therefore urged to consider and support the amendment, as a means of promoting the wider engagement of all members in decision-making across the Council and as a means of better serving residents and leading to improved outcomes through a more inclusive decision-making structure.

Having thanked councillors for their contributions, the Mayor then moved to the vote on the proposed changes to the Constitution, which he advised would start with the amendments moved by Councillor Mitchell and then Councillor Lorber, prior a vote on the final substantive recommendations.

Prior to the vote being taken, Councillor Georgiou (as Leader of the Liberal Democrats Group) requested (under Standing Order 43 (c)) that the vote on the amendments moved by Councillor Mitchell and Councillor Lorber be undertaken on the basis of a roll call. Having confirmed the request, the Mayor then moved to put the amendments to the vote, in the order they were moved which was conducted by the Chief Executive.

On a recorded vote being taken the amendment moved by Councillor Mitchell relating to the proposed establishment of a third Scrutiny Committee, with responsibility for housing-related matters was declared **CARRIED** with it therefore **RESOLVED** that the Council (as a further change to the Constitution) explore the establishment of a third scrutiny committee, with a focus on housing related matters. Members were reminded this would be on the basis of the detailed arrangements being subject to further development following the meeting and a final proposal being presented back to the next Council meeting in July 2026.

The voting recorded on the amendment moved by Councillor Mitchell on exploring the establishment of a third scrutiny committee with a focus on housing was as follows:

For (53): Councillors Aden, Ahmadi-Moghaddam, P.Ahmed, Alexandre, Amadi, Anderson, Bajwa, Blackman, Brown, Burn, M.Butt, S.Butt, Chadha, Chauhan, Choudry, Chowdhury, Clinton, Dar, De Souza, Dixon, Donnelly-Jackson, Do Rosario, Gallagher, Georgiou, Grahl, Hack, Ibrahim, Jansali, Johnson, Kansagra, Kelcher, Knight, Lorber, Madhabushi, Mahmood, Malonga, Maurice, McLeish, Mishra, Mitchell, Mulaisho, A.Patel, H.Patel, N.Patel, Perrin, Ryan, Rubin, Shah, Thomas, Unger, Vakani, Want and Warsame.

Abstentions (2): Councillors Agha (Mayor) and Mistry (Deputy Mayor).

The Mayor then moved on to put the amendment moved by Councillor Lorber in relation to adoption of a committee style system of governance and decision making to the vote.

On a recorded vote being taken the amendment was declared **LOST**.

The voting recorded on the amendment moved by Councillor Lorber to adopt a committee style system of governance was as follows:

For: (20): Councillors Ahmadi-Moghaddam, Alexandre, Brown, Chauhan, Clinton, Gallagher, Georgiou, Jansali, Lorber, Malonga, Mitchell, Mulaisho, N.Patel, Perrin, Ryan, Shah, Unger, Vakani, Want and Warsame.

Against (33): Councillors Aden, P.Ahmed, Amadi, Anderson, Bajwa, Blackman, Burn, M.Butt, S.Butt, Chadha, Choudry, Chowdhury, Dar, De Souza, Dixon, Donnelly-Jackson, Do Rosario, Grahl, Hack, Ibrahim, Johnson, Kansagra, Kelcher, Knight, Madhabushi, Mahmood, Maurice, McLeish, Mishra, A.Patel, H.Patel, Rubin and Thomas.

Abstentions (2): Councillors Agha (Mayor) and Mistry (Deputy Mayor).

The Mayor then moved on to put the substantive recommendations relating to the constitutional changes detailed within the report (as moved by the Leader of the Council and amended to include exploring the establishment of a third scrutiny committee with a focus on housing) to a vote which was undertaken by a show of hands and unanimously declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to approve:

- (1) The amendments to Standing Orders 35 and 41 in Part 2 of the Constitution as detailed in paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 of the report.
- (2) To include, as part of the ongoing review of the Constitution, the establishment of a third scrutiny committee with a focus on housing on which a further report would be provided for the Council meeting in July 2026 setting out detailed proposals.
- (3) To authorise the Director of Law to amend the Constitution, accordingly, including making any necessary incidental or consequential changes.

10. **Representation of Political Groups on Committees**

The Mayor then moved on to invite Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) to introduce the report from the Corporate Director of Finance & Resources, which the Leader advised fulfilled the Council's duty to review and determine the representation of different political groups on certain Committees at its annual meeting and as soon as practicable following on from the local borough election held on the 7 May 2026. Members were advised the report also detailed the position regarding the appointment of Political Assistants following the outcome of the local election and designation of the Principal Opposition Group.

In moving the report, Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) outlined the importance of the review in supporting establishment of the Council's new governance arrangements. Whilst acknowledging that that election result had created a more plural Council (in terms of political representation) he felt it was also important to recognise that the Labour Group still remained the largest Group on the Council. As a result, it was pointed out, the review had been designed to ensure the allocation of seats on the committees to which the political balance rules applied were applied lawfully and fairly. Members were reminded that application of the statutory requirements in this respect was not optional and designed to ensure

the allocation on seats on those committees to which they applied were, as far as reasonably practicable, designed to reflect the political composition of the Council whilst also ensuring that the Council's decision-making, scrutiny and regulatory functions were able to operate effectively.

In terms of the allocation of seats on specific committees, Councillor Muhammed Butt confirmed that he was moving the proposals as set out in Table 1 and 2 in section 3 of the report, subject to the final available ordinary seat (which be on the Audit & Standards Committee) being allocated to the Labour Group. Taken overall, it was felt that the approach outlined in the report reflected a balanced and workable arrangement which recognised the overall political composition of the Council and would enable the committees listed to be established without further uncertainty. Turning then to the designation of the Principal Opposition Group, Councillor Muhammed Butt advised that on the basis both the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups had the same number of members he would be moving designation of the Conservative Group as the Principal Opposition Group, highlighting the importance in providing clarity around the arrangements for opposition representation and accountability and with the designation designed to reflect the need for a clear, effective opposition role within the Council's governance framework.

As a final issue to be addressed, the Leader also advised that he was proposing that the current allocation of seats on the Health and Wellbeing Board be carried forward (as set out in section 3,12 of the report) until the broader review of the Constitution was completed. This again was felt to represent a sensible and proportionate approach, allowing the Board to continue operating effectively while the Council completed its review of wider constitutional matters. In moving the recommendations and proposals outlined, the Councillor Muhammed Butt ended by outlining the way in which they had been designed to comply with the statutory requirements in relation to the political balance rules whilst also reflecting the recent outcome of the election and need to allow the Council's continued effective governance.

Having thanked Councillor Muhammed Butt for moving the report, the Mayor then drew members attention to an amendment to the recommended allocation of seats submitted on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

In moving the amendment, Councillor Lorber (speaking on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group) began by expressing concern at the basis on which the proposed allocation of seats set out within section 3 of the report (as moved by the Leader of the Council) had been calculated and presented, which he felt did not reconcile and were inconsistent with the total number of 38 seats available. As an alternative, the Liberal Democrats had therefore submitted an amended proposal relating to the allocation of seat between committees, which he felt not only reconciled with the overall number of seats available but would more accurately reflect the political balance of the Council. Using the proposed allocation of seats on the Planning Committee as an example, Councillor Lorber highlighted the way in which the proposed allocation within Table 1 of the report created the potential for contested decisions to be confirmed on the basis of a casting vote effectively giving a group that did not hold an overall majority on the Council control of committee decisions. Under the Liberal Democrats amendment he advised the overall

allocation would be based on a reduced total of 35 committee seats across the ordinary committees to which the political balance rules applied, which it was felt would provide a fairer and more balanced distribution as well as more closely reflecting the overall political balance of the authority, whilst ensuring that the views of all councillors could be adequately represented through committee membership and voting arrangements. In summing up, Councillor Lorber hoped all members would recognise what he felt to be the numerical inconsistency within the original allocation of seats proposed and support the Liberal Democrats amendment on the basis that it would address this position as well as providing an allocation of seats that was more reflective of political balance on the Council and avoid one political group from being able to retain control of committees despite not holding an overall majority on the authority.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Lorber for moving the amendment on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group before inviting other members to speak, with the following contributions received.

In opening the debate, Councillor Georgiou spoke in support of the amendment moved by the Liberal Democrats Group highlighting the need to ensure, that whilst reflecting the rules, the allocation of seats also reflected the outcome and wishes expressed by residents at the recent borough election. Highlighting the basis of the amendment in support of what he felt was a fairer distribution of seats, it was pointed out that approval of the proposed allocation moved by the Leader would enable the Labour Group to retain significant control over those bodies on which the seats were required to be allocated. The opportunity was also taken to challenge the proposed designation of the Conservatives as Principal Opposition Group, with reference made to the way in which the Conservative Group (despite previous criticism of the Labour Group) had acted relating to the appointment of the Leader of the Council, with their subsequent designation as Principal Opposition Group therefore felt to undermine effective opposition and scrutiny. On this basis he advised the Liberal Democrats would be supporting the amendment as moved and against the proposed allocation of seats as detailed within the report as moved by the Leader of the Council.

Speaking next, Councillor Kansagra (responding on behalf of the Conservative Group) advised of the way in which his Group based their approach towards decision making, which he pointed out had always been focussed in seeking to achieve the best outcomes for Brent residents. Examples were provided of the group previously having supported proposals from both the Labour and Liberal Democrat groups where they were considered to reflect this approach, which it was felt contrasted with the approach adopted in the past by members from other opposition groups. Councillor Kansagra also took the opportunity to reject allegations that the Conservative Group had received any form of incentive in relation to the arrangements under discussion, describing such claims as inappropriate with the basis of the approach adopted by his Group being to ensure the Council could move forward (in terms of its governance arrangements) in a way that best served residents and would enable the effective governance of the Council. In advising the Conservative Group would not therefore be supporting the amendment moved by the Liberal Democrats he assured members of his Groups intention in opposition, to continue scrutinising and holding the administration to account.

As a final contribution, Councillor Clinton felt there was a need to challenge the assertion made by Councillor Kansagra regarding the role of Liberal Democrat members in supporting proposals from other parties, with specific reference made to the support provided on the tourist levy and regulation of digital devices in schools as examples. Highlighting that a number of the committee positions under discussion, including the Leader of the Principal Opposition Group, attracted additional allowances Councillor Clinton felt it was fair to question the basis on which any potential arrangement had been reached which enabled the Labour administration to continue governing while securing specific positions for the Conservative Group on other bodies. In summing up he ended by advising that the Liberal Democrats would continue to highlight these type of issues in order to ensure that genuine independent opposition was being provided on behalf of local residents.

As no further members had indicated they wished to speak, the Mayor advised he would not invite members to exercise their right of reply before moving the vote on the amendment and recommendations which had been moved. Prior to inviting members to exercise their right of reply, Councillor Georgiou raised a Point of Order relating to the status of any agreement which may have been reached between the Conservative and Labour Groups, facilitating the continuation of the Labour Group as a minority administration and whether, if such an agreement was in place, that would prevent them being nominated and designated as the Principal Opposition Group.

In response, the Chief Executive clarified the basis on which members of the Executive were appointed and advised that provided members of the opposition group did not form part of the Executive there was nothing to prevent that group being nominated as Principal Opposition Group.

Having received this clarification and advice, the Mayor then moved on to invite Councillor Muhammed Butt (as mover of the original report) and then Councillor Lorber (as mover of the amendment) to exercise their right of reply on the debate.

Speaking first, Councillor Muhammed Butt advised that the Labour Group would not be supporting the amendment moved by the Liberal Democrats and would instead be supporting the proposed allocation of seats as moved and set out in the report, based on these representing a fair and lawful allocation designed to reflect, as far as reasonably practicable, the political composition of the Council whilst ensuring the business of the Council was able to continue being undertaken effectively moving forward.

Moving on to exercise his right of reply, Councillor Lorber once again outlined concerns relating to the basis of the calculations within the proposed allocation of seats set out in the report moved by the Leader of the Council and in ending sought clarification from the Chief Executive that the proposed allocation had been assessed as numerically correct.

Having been invited to provide clarification by the Mayor, the Chief Executive drew members attention to the note which had been included within section 3.8 and Table 1 of the report, which had made clear that based on the rounding up of seats to be allocated between the respective groups there was one final available seat from the 38 available to which all groups could lay claim to. In order to reflect the

existing membership size of the Committees to which the political balance rules applied, this would be on Audit & Standards Committee. The report had therefore been clear that it would be for Council to decide which Group received that final seat, with the Leader having moved, in introducing the report, that this be allocated to the Labour Group.

Having noted the clarification provided, the Mayor then moved on the vote on the report, which he advised would start with the amendment moved by the Councillor Lorber (on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group), prior a vote on the final substantive recommendations.

On being put to the vote (by a show of hands) the amendment moved by Councillor Lorber (on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group) in relation to the alternative allocation of seats on the ordinary committees to which the political balance rules apply was declared **LOST**.

The Mayor then moved on to put the substantive recommendations as detailed within the report moved by the Leader of the Council to a vote.

Prior to the vote being taken, Councillor Georgiou (as Leader of the Liberal Democrats Group) requested (under Standing Order 43 (c)) that the vote on the substantive recommendations in the report be undertaken on the basis of a roll call.

Having confirmed the request, the Mayor then moved to put the substantive recommendations to the vote, which was conducted by the Chief Executive.

On a recorded vote being taken the substantive recommendations as detailed within the report moved by the Leader of the Council were declared **CARRIED**.

The voting recorded on the substantive recommendations was as follows:

For (31): Councillors Aden, P.Ahmed, Amadi, Anderson, Bajwa, Blackman, Burn, M.Butt, S.Butt, Chadha, Choudry, Chowdhury, Dar, De Souza, Dixon, Donnelly-Jackson, Do Rosario, Grahl, Hack, Ibrahim, Johnson, Kansagra, Kelcher, Knight, Madhabushi, Maurice, Mishra, A.Patel, H.Patel, Rubin and Thomas.

Against (22): Councillors Ahmadi-Moghaddam, Alexandre, Brown, Chauhan, Clinton, Gallagher, Georgiou, Jansali, Lorber, Mahmood, Malonga, McLeish, Mitchell, Mulaisho, N.Patel, Perrin, Ryan, Shah, Unger, Vakani, Want and Warsame.

Abstentions (2): Councillors Agha (Mayor) and Mistry (Deputy Mayor).

It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To agree the size of each Committee, as detailed within the report.
- (2) To approve the allocation of seats on Committees to each of the Council's political groups (where the rules of political balance apply) as set out within the report, including the final available seat on the Audit & Standards Committee being allocated to the Labour Group, and to make appointments to

those committees (under agenda item 10 on the agenda) giving effect to the wishes of the political group allocated the seats.

- (3) To note that the political balance on Council Sub-Committees would be reviewed at the first meeting of the General Purposes Committee and Licensing Committee to be held following the Annual Council Meeting.
- (4) To approve the designation of the Conservative Group as the Principal Opposition Group
- (5) To agree provision for the allocation of a political assistant to eligible Groups, on the basis detailed within section 3.15 – 3.19 of the report.

11. **Appointment to Committees and Other Bodies including the appointment of Chairs & Vice-Chairs**

The Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) to introduce the report from the Corporate Director of Finance & Resources.

In introducing the item, the Leader advised that the report set out the nominations for appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies and nomination for Chairs and Vice Chairs as well as co-opted members, where necessary, for the 2026 - 27 Municipal Year, with the nominations having been made (where required) in accordance with the political balance of the Council and requirements in relation to political proportionality. Members were advised that the appointments to be made formed an essential part in establishing the Council's governance arrangements for the year ahead. Referring to the alternative nominations included within Appendix 1(b) of the report submitted by the Liberal Democrats Group, Councillor Muhammed Butt advised that he would be moving the proposed appointments to committees, other bodies, Chairs and Vice-Chairs as set out in Appendix 1(a) of the report, with the chairs nominated by the Labour Group highlighted in bold.

Members were also reminded that the proposed appointments reflected the political balance arrangements agreed under the preceding item, whilst (it was felt) also recognising the need for strong and effective scrutiny in a more plural Council. As part of the approach outlined, attention was drawn to the proposed appointment of members from the Principal Opposition Group to chair each of the Council's scrutiny committees, with it pointed out that opportunities had also been made available for the other opposition groups to take up vice-chairing roles should they wish. In addition, members were advised that the Chair and Vice Chair appointments on the Kingsbury and Kenton, Wembley and Kilburn Brent Connect Forums had been offered to the respective opposition groups with the Conservative and Liberal Democrats having made nominations to those posts. Taken together it was felt this provided clear recognition of the need for good governance to involve proper challenge, rigorous scrutiny and effective accountability.

In addition, it was pointed out the report sought to provide continuity in a number of other important areas, including the ongoing appointment of the Council's Independent Persons, the independent co-opted members of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee, and the existing co-opted members of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee. In moving the proposals as outlined, the Leader ended by once again highlighting the importance in being able

to reach agreement on the appointments to be made in order to ensure the Council was able to continue functioning effectively in terms of its governance arrangements and to deliver for residents.

The Mayor then opened the debate inviting other members to speak on the report, with the following contributions made.

In opening the debate, Councillor Georgiou began by highlighting concerns about the basis on which the proposed appointment of Conservative Group members to chair both scrutiny committees had put forward given the close links demonstrated with the Labour administration during the meeting and impact this may have on the ability of scrutiny to continue holding the administration to account. Referring to the previous appointment of more experienced members as scrutiny chairs, whom he felt had been effective in carrying out their responsibilities, concerns were also expressed about the need to ensure the appointments made were also sufficiently independent and experienced rather than based on what he felt constituted a political agreement between the Labour and Conservative Groups enabling the Labour Group to retain control of the administration, despite not having an overall majority of seats. In concluding, Councillor Georgiou also referred to the offer of the Vice-Chair positions to the remaining opposition groups, which he reminded members was in direct contrast with the decision taken following the previous local election in May 2022 to remove the vice chair position as opposition appointments and advised of his intention to ensure residents were reminded of the arrangement reached between the Labour and Conservative Groups relating to formation of the Administration.

Speaking in response, Councillor Kansgara rejected the suggestion that the appointments outlined within Appendix 1(a) of the report represented any form of coalition arrangement and reminded members that opposition groups had sought positions as chairs and vice-chairs of scrutiny committees over a number of years, with the outcome of the recent borough elections having now provided the opportunity for such appointments to be made. In his view the proposals outlined in the report would also provide stability for the Council and enable it to move forward, in terms of the governance arrangements, with appropriate checks and balances. This approach was contrasted with the alternative proposals submitted by the Liberal Democrats, which Councillor Kansagra felt would only have led to further instability in the Council's governance arrangements. In concluding his comments, confirmation was provided that the selection of the nominated scrutiny chairs had been a matter for the Conservative Group to decide, with the assertion that newly elected councillors would not have the necessary experience to chair committees rejected and Councillor Kansagra noting that individuals with limited previous experience had also successfully occupied these type of roles. On this basis, he advised the Conservative Group would be supporting the proposed nominations as moved by the Leader of the Council.

As a further contribution, Councillor Mitchell then spoke to clarify the offer made in relation to the appointment of vice-chair positions on the scrutiny committees, which it was confirmed had been extended to but not accepted by the Green Group. Emphasising the importance of scrutiny in ensuring accountability and effective governance, Councillor Mitchell felt that all members who valued these principles needed to take a close interest in the scrutiny arrangements, with the example provided of the approach taken by the previous Chair of the Resources & Public

Realm Scrutiny Committee in her commitment towards championing robust scrutiny and holding members and officers to account and which it was hoped would also be principles adopted by the new Conservative members nominated to assume the scrutiny chair positions. Referring to her previous experience as a scrutiny member, it was also hoped that members would fully engage in the process, including the need for sufficient preparation and participation during meetings with it also hoped that all members would be able to move forward constructively given the importance in being able to maintain effective scrutiny and accountability within the Council's decision-making framework under the new Administration and to ensure the best outcome for residents.

Supporting the comments made by Councillor Georgiou and Mitchell, Councillor Lorber spoke next to once again highlight the increased importance of effective scrutiny within the Council's new governance arrangements, although once again highlighting his preference for a committee system style of decision making. As a result, he also supported the view that the scrutiny committees needed to be chaired by individuals possessing the necessary experience to ensure scrutiny was conducted effectively and independently and on that basis he advised he would also be nominating (as an alternative to the nominations moved by the Leader of the Council) Councillor Clinton to be appointed as Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Georgiou be appointed as Chair of the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee.

As a final contribution to the debate, Councillor Chadha spoke in order to respond to concerns raised regarding the experience of newly elected councillors, with assurance provided regarding the commitment of those members nominated within the Conservative Group towards working hard to deliver a robust, effective and independent scrutiny process.

As there were no further members who had indicated they wished to speak, the Mayor thanks members for their contribution and then drew the debate to a close by inviting Councillor Muhammed Butt (as mover of the original report) to exercise his right of reply.

In responding to the debate and alternative nominations moved on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group in relation to the appointment of scrutiny chair positions, Councillor Muhammed Butt confirmed that the Labour Group would be supporting the proposed nominations as moved and set out in Appendix 1(a) of the report.

Prior to moving to the vote, the Chief Executive in response to clarification sought by Councillor Lorber on the process, confirmed that the alternative nominations moved by the Liberal Democrats in relation to the appointment of scrutiny chair positions would need to be treated as an amendment to the report. At the same time members were also advised of a change in the substitute members nominated by the Leader of the Council on the Barham Park Trust Cabinet Sub Committee. It was noted these appointments should only consist of Cabinet Members, with the change made to therefore be confirmed when the Sub Committee was formally appointed by Cabinet.

Having noted the advice provided, the Mayor then moved to the vote, which he advised would start with the amendment moved by the Councillor Lorber (on behalf

of the Liberal Democrats Group) regarding the nominations for scrutiny chair positions, prior a vote on the final substantive recommendations in the report.

Prior to the vote being taken on the amendment, Councillor Georgiou (as Leader of the Liberal Democrats Group) requested (under Standing Order 43 (c)) that the vote be undertaken on the basis of a roll call.

Having confirmed the request, the Mayor handed over to the Chief Executive and on a recorded vote being taken the amendment relating to the appointment of Councillor Clinton as Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Georgio as Chair of the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee was declared **LOST**.

The voting recorded on the substantive recommendations was as follows:

For (12): Councillors Alexandre, Brown, Chauhan, Clinton, Georgiou, Jansali, Lorber, Mulaisho, N.Patel, Shah, Unger and Want.

Against (39): Councillors Aden, P.Ahmed, Amadi, Anderson, Bajwa, Blackman, Burn, M.Butt, S.Butt, Chadha, Choudry, Chowdhury, Dar, De Souza, Dixon, Donnelly-Jackson, Do Rosario, Gallagher, Grahl, Hack, Ibrahim, Johnson, Kansagra, Kelcher, Knight, Madhabushi, Mahmood, Malonga, Maurice, McLeish, Mishra, Mitchell, A.Patel, H.Patel, Perrin, Rubin, Ryan, Thomas and Vakani.

Abstentions: Councillor Agha (Mayor) and Mistry (Deputy Mayor).

The Mayor then moved on to put the substantive recommendations relating to the appointments detailed within Appendix 1(a) of the report, as moved by the Leader of the Council, to a vote (by show of hands) which was declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to:

- (1) To approve the appointments of Members, Co-Opted Members and substitutes to Council Committees and Outside Bodies as set out in Appendix 1(a) and section 3.2.4 of the report.
- (2) To approve the appointment of Chairs/Vice Chairs to Council Committees as set out in Appendix 1(a) for the 2026-2027 Municipal Year.
- (3) To note the appointments:
 - (a) To the Cabinet, Cabinet Committees and Joint Executive Committees and their respective Chairs and Vice Chairs for the 2026-2027 Municipal Year, as detailed in Appendix 1(a) of the report.
 - (b) to be confirmed by the General Purposes Committee for the 2026-2027 Municipal Year, as detailed in Appendix 1(a) of the report.
 - (c) to be confirmed by Licensing Committee for the 2026-2027 Municipal Year, as detailed in Appendix 1(a) of the report.

(The full list of appointments can be found as part of the appendices to the main report republished prior to the meeting)

12. **Calendar of Council Meetings for the 2026 -2027 Municipal Year**

The Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) to introduce the report from the Corporate Director of Finance & Resources which the Leader advised detailed the calendar of meeting dates for Full Council and other meetings during the 2026 - 27 Municipal Year.

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

It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To approve the dates for Full Council and other meetings to take place during the 2026-27 Municipal Year, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.
- (2) That the Deputy Director Democratic & Corporate Governance be authorised to make any alterations deemed necessary to the Municipal Calendar during the course of the year having consulted with the Leader of the Council, Leaders of the Opposition Group(s) and Chair of the affected meeting.

13. **Urgent Business**

As there was no urgent business to be transacted the Mayor declared the Annual Meeting closed and advised that he looked forward to seeing all members at the next Council meeting on Monday 6 July 2026.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm

COUNCILLOR AMER AGHA MB BS, MSC, PHCM
Mayor