LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL held on Monday 14 September 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
I.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	Ryan
Ibrahim	Jansali
Johnson	Kansagra
Kelcher	Knight
Lorber	Madabhushi
Malonga	Maurice
McLeish	Mishra
Mitchell	Mulaisho
A.Patel	J.Patel
N.Patel	Perrin
Rubin	Ryan
Shah	Thomas
Vakani	Want
Warsame	

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 P.Ahmed, Mahmood, HB Patel and Unger.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the of the Council meeting held on Monday 6 July 2026 be approved as a correct record.

4. Declarations of Interest

During the meeting Councillor Burn declared a personal interest in relation to the deputation presented by Action on the Climate & Ecological Emergency (ACE) Brent) under Agenda Item 7.2 given the involvement by the Chair of Brent Pure Energy which was an organisation in which he held shares.

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

5. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor made the following announcements:

(i) Response to recent tragic Incident at the Civic Centre

The Mayor began by advising it was with regret he had to open his announcements reflecting on the tragic incident that had recently taken place at the Civic Centre, in which a young man, David Wynter had sadly lost his life.

Speaking on behalf of the Council, he took the opportunity to pass on his heartfelt condolences to David's family, friends and loved ones for their devastating loss. At such a difficult time, he advised the Council's thoughts were with those colleagues, residents and first responders who had also witnessed or been affected by the deeply distressing nature of the event, with members reminded that as a community, the borough stood together in sympathy and support for everyone impacted by the tragedy.

(ii) Recent flooding in Nepal

The Mayor advised he was also deeply saddened to have witnessed the devastating floods in Nepal & Tibet, which had involved the loss of so many lives. On behalf of the people of Brent, he therefore extended the Council's condolences to the communities and all those affected reassuring everyone of the way in which the borough stood in solidarity with them during such a difficult time.

(iii) Brent Libraries Summer Fun Festival

Turning to other activities, the Mayor announced that he had been pleased to attend Brent Libraries Summer Fun Festival. In commending the wide range of activities on offer for children across the borough, thanks were extended to all staff

and volunteers involved for the time and energy they had dedicated in delivering the programme.

(iv) Emergency services flag raising

The Mayor advised he had also been pleased to join staff, councillors, and others in celebrating 999 Emergency Services Day at the annual Flag Raising ceremony earlier in September which had been held to recognise and celebrate the contributions of all those who worked and volunteered across the emergency services.

(v) Brent Students Results

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor then moved on to congratulate young people across the borough for the recent success achieved in their exam results.

In taking the opportunity to commend the results achieved, the Mayor felt it important to acknowledge that this reflected not only the hard work and determination displayed by young people but also the incredible support from their teachers, school staff, parents and carers with Brent's schools continuing to inspire excellence and the students recognised as a credit to their communities.

The results achieved were also felt to highlight not only the commitment of students across the borough but also the strength of Brent's education system, with pride expressed in all young people and the Mayor looking forward to seeing all that they would accomplish in future.

(vi) The Passing of Former Councillor John Lebor

The Mayor then advised it was with sadness he had to inform members about the passing of former Councillor John Lebor.

In recognising former Councillor Lebor as a prominent Brent politician and dedicated public servant, members were reminded that he had served as both Leader of the Council during the late 1970s and 1980s and later as Mayor. Remembering his years of distinguished service to the communities of Brent, the Mayor ended his tribute by offering this sympathy and condolences to John Lebor's family and friends for their loss.

(vii) Petitions and Decisions taken under the Council's Urgency Procedure

In ending his announcements, the Mayor drew members attention to the list of current petitions received and logged by the Governance & Scrutiny Team since the last update as well as decisions taken under the Council's urgency procedure, as circulated with the agenda, in accordance with Standing Orders.

6. **Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies and Appointment of Chairs/Vice Chairs**

As the next item, the Mayor then referred members to the list of changes circulated in relation to appointments to Council Committees and other bodies. In introducing the item, the Mayor advised that the list included nominations for the revised

membership allocation on both the Community & Wellbeing and Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committees as well as membership of the newly established Housing Scrutiny Committee along with its chair and the remaining scrutiny vice-chair positions.

Prior to dealing with the Scrutiny Chair and Vice-Chair appointments, the Mayor advised that he would be seeking to approve the membership changes notified in relation to each Scrutiny Committee and the other bodies, as set out in the paper circulated with the agenda.

Having considered the changes outlined it was therefore **RESOLVED** to approve the following changes in committee membership:

(1) Following the establishment of the Housing Scrutiny Committee and approval of the subsequent reduction in membership on both the Community & Wellbeing and Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee:

(a) To agree the change in membership on the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, as set out below:

COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (9 Full Members)	
Full Members	
Labour	Bajwa
Labour	De Souza
Labour	Ibrahim
Labour	McLeish
Conservative	Madabhushi (Chair)
Conservative	Chadha
Liberal Democrats	Clinton
Liberal Democrats	Unger
Greens	Alexandre
Education Statutory Co-optees (Voting-Education matters only)	Vacancy (x 2 Parent Governors) Alloysius Frederick (Roman Catholic Diocese)(May 2027) Venerable Archdeacon Catherine Pickford (CoE Diocese) (February 27)
Non-Voting Co-optees	Sayed Jaffar Milani (Muslim Faith Schools)(May 2027) Rachelle Goldberg (Jewish Faith Schools)(May 2027)
Substitute Members	
Labour	Anderson
Labour	Blackman
Labour	Burn

Labour	Thomas
Conservative	Chowdhury
Conservative	Do Rosario
Liberal Democrats	Georgio
Liberal Democrats	Lorber
Greens	Mitchell
Greens	Ryan

(b) To agree the change in membership on the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, as set out below:

RESOURCES AND PUBLIC REALM COMMITTEE (9 Full Members)	
Full Members	
Labour	I.Ahmed
Labour	Anderson
Labour	Blackman
Labour	Burn
Conservative	A.Patel (Chair)
Conservative	Chowdhury
Liberal Democrats	Chauhan
Liberal Democrats	Mulaisho
Greens	Mitchell
Substitute Members	
Labour	Bajwa
Labour	De Souza
Labour	Ibrahim
Labour	McLeish
Conservative	Kansagra
Conservative	Mishra
Liberal Democrats	Georgiou
Liberal Democrats	Lorber
Greens	Alexandre
Greens	Ryan

(c) To agree the membership of the Housing Scrutiny Committee, as set out below:

HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (9 Full Members)	
FULL Members	
Labour	I.Ahmed
Labour	Dar
Labour	Donnelly-Jackson
Labour	Ibrahim

Conservative	Madabhushi
Conservative	Mishra
Liberal Democrats	Georgiou
Liberal Democrats	Want
Greens	Malonga
Substitute Members	
Labour	Anderson
Labour	Blackman
Labour	Burn
Labour	Thomas
Conservative	Maurice
Conservative	H.Patel
Liberal Democrats	Lorber
Liberal Democrats	Unger
Greens	Alexandre
Greens	Ryan

(2) Councillor Unger to replace Councillor N.Patel as a full member on the Corporate Parenting Committee with Councillor N.Patel to replace Councillor Unger as a substitute member on the Corporate Parenting Committee.

(3) Radhika Balu to be appointed as a voting representative of the West and North London Integrated Care Board on the Health & Wellbeing Board.

The Mayor then advised he would move on to deal with the appointment of the Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee, prior to dealing with the appointment of the remaining Scrutiny Vice-Chair positions. Members were reminded, in terms of the appointment process, this would involve any nominations received being dealt with in the order submitted with any final appointment made being on the basis of a simple majority of votes from those members present. Should no majority be achieved the Mayor advised he would then move on to put the next nomination to the vote.

Starting with the position of Housing Scrutiny Chair, the Mayor confirmed that one nomination (Councillor Georgiou) had been submitted in advance of the meeting. Before moving on the vote, other nominations were invited with the following names put forward at the meeting, as follows:

- Councillor Donnelly-Jackson was nominated by Councillor Grahl on behalf of the Labour Group. In moving the nomination, Councillor Grahl welcomed the establishment of the Housing Scrutiny Committee as a means of providing increased scrutiny and focus in relation to housing management provision across the borough, with disappointment expressed at what was understood to be the withdrawal of an alternative Green Group nomination in advance of the meeting.

- In response, Councillor Mitchell clarified that the Green Group nomination had not been withdrawn with Councillor Ryan subsequently moved as a final nomination.

Given the nominations received, the Mayor advised each would need to be considered in the order submitted, with members being asked to vote on each nomination in turn pending an appointment being confirmed on the basis of a straightforward majority of votes being achieved.

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

On a recorded vote being taken the appointment of Councillor Georgiou as Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee was **NOT APPROVED,** on the basis of there being no overall majority of votes in favour.

The voting recorded on the appointment of Councillor Georgiou as Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee was as follows:

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

Against (23): Councillors Aden, I.Ahmed, Amadi, Anderson, Bajwa, Blackman, Burn, M.Butt, S.Butt, Choudry, Dar, De Souza, Dixon, Donnelly-Jackson, Grahl, Hack, Ibrahim, Johnson, Kelcher, Knight, McLeish, Rubin and Thomas.

Abstentions (10): Councillors Aden (Mayor) Mistry (Deputy Mayor), Chowdhury, Do Rosario, Kansagra, Madhabushi, Maurice, Mishra, A.Patel, J.Patel.

The Mayor then moved on to put the nomination of Councillor Donnelly-Jackson as Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee to the vote, with the appointment **APPROVED** on the basis of an overall majority of votes being achieved.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that Councillor Donnelly-Jackson be appointed as Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the 2026 - 2027 Municipal Year.

The voting recorded on the appointment of Councillor Donnelly-Jackson as Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee was as follows:

For (23): Councillors Aden, I.Ahmed, Amadi, Anderson, Bajwa, Blackman, Burn, M.Butt, S.Butt, Choudry, Dar, De Souza, Dixon, Donnelly-Jackson, Grahl, Hack, Ibrahim, Johnson, Kelcher, Knight, McLeish, Rubin and Thomas.

Against (19): Ahmadi-Moghaddam, Alexandre, Brown, Chauhan, Clinton, Gallagher, Georgiou, Jansali, Lorber, Malonga, Mitchell, Mulaisho, N.Patel, Perrin, Ryan, Shah, Vakani, Want and Warsame.

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

Given an appointment having been made, the Mayor advised that this completed the process with no further vote to be undertaken on the final nomination received.

The Mayor then moved on to deal with the appointment of the Vice-Chair positions on each Scrutiny Committee. Members were advised that each appointment would be taken in turn starting with nominations being sought for the Vice Chair position on the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

In response to a nomination suggested by Councillor Georgiou, clarification was provided that it would not be possible to nominate current members of Cabinet to serve on scrutiny. Following on, Councillor Kansagra then moved the nomination of Councillor Chadha as Vice-Chair on the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee. With no other valid nominations received the Mayor advised he would therefore move straight to the vote.

Prior to the vote, Councillor Georgiou (as Leader of the Liberal Democrats Group) again requested (under Standing Order 43 (c)) that it be undertaken on the basis of a roll call. Having confirmed the request, the Mayor then handed over to the Chief Executive for the nomination received for the position of Vice Chair on the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to be put to the vote.

On a recorded vote being taken the appointment of Councillor Chadha as Vice-Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee was **NOT APPROVED,** on the basis of their being no overall majority of votes in favour.

The voting recorded on the appointment of Councillor Chadha as Vice-Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee was as follows:

For (9): Councillors Chadha, Chowdhury, Do Rosario, Kansagra, Madhabushi, Maurice, Mishra, A.Patel, J.Patel.

Against (19): Councillors Ahmadi-Moghaddam, Alexandre, Brown, Chauhan, Clinton, Gallagher Georgiou, Jansali, Lorber, Malonga, Mitchell, Mulaisho, N.Patel, Perrin, Ryan, Shah, Vakani, Want and Warsame.

Abstentions Against (25): Councillors Agha (Mayor) Mistry (Deputy Mayor), Aden, I.Ahmed, Amadi, Anderson, Bajwa, Blackman, Burn, M.Butt, S.Butt, Choudry, Dar, De Souza, Dixon, Donnelly-Jackson, Grahl, Hack, Ibrahim, Johnson, Kelcher, Knight, McLeish, Rubin and Thomas.

As no other nominations had been received the Mayor advised that the position would therefore be left vacant enabling further discussion between the Group Leaders on the most appropriate way forward to fill the position.

Prior to moving on, Councillor Mitchell (with the approval of the Mayor as a Point of Clarification regarding comments made by the Deputy Leader in moving the nomination of Councillor Donnelly-Jackson as Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee) sought to clarify the position regarding the status of the nomination made by the Green Group. Members were advised that the intended nomination

had not been withdrawn in advance of the meeting and that contact had been made with the other Group Leaders to confirm that, whilst intending to nominate Councillor Ryan, the Green Group would initially be supporting Councillor Georgiou's nomination submitted in advance by the Liberal Democrats Group. This was on the basis of them forming the larger Opposition Group and that nomination having been received in advance. Councillor Mitchell felt the Green Group position had therefore remained clear, with the preference being for the Scrutiny Chair positions to be held across all three of the democratically elected Opposition Groups and their intended nomination not having been withdrawn in advance of the meeting.

Following on, the Mayor permitted Councillor Grahl to speak in clarifying her understanding of the position in terms of the nomination of Councillor Ryan by the Green Group, which (in response to a further point of clarification raised by Councillor Clinton) it was confirmed the Labour Group had indicated that were willing to support in advance of the meeting and prior to the subsequent contact by the Leader of the Green Group in advance of the meeting.

In noting the concerns highlighted by members of the Liberal Democrat Group at the position outlined, further clarification was provided by the Chief Executive, in response to a point of Order raised by Councillor Lorber regarding the order in which the nominations for position of Housing Scrutiny Chair had been dealt with and regarding the process undertaken. Members were advised this had been in accordance with the advice provided by the Mayor in advance of nominations being sought, with confirmation provided that the only formal nomination received in advance of the Council meeting had been Councillor Georgiou on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group. Having then sought other nominations at the meeting, the second nomination received had been from Councillor Grahl (on behalf of the Labour Group) who nominated Councillor Donnelly-Jackson. A third nomination was then received at the meeting from the Green Group, with Councillor Mitchell formally nominating Councillor Ryan and these were the order in which the nominations were considered. In response to further clarification being sought, the Chief Executive confirmed that the only nomination received in advance of the meeting had been from the Liberal Democrats Group with the subsequent nominations having been moved during the meeting and the order determined on that basis.

The Mayor then moved on to seek nominations for the remaining Vice-Chair positions on both the Resources & Public Realm and Housing Scrutiny Committees. As no nominations were received for either post, members were advised that (as with the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee) both Vice-Chair positions would need to be left vacant enabling further discussion between the Group Leaders on the most appropriate way forward to fill the posts.

7. **Deputations (if any)**

Moving on without further comment, the Mayor advised that he had accepted requests for the presentation of two deputations at the meeting, which had been received in accordance with Standing Order 32.

The deputations to be presented, were highlighted as follows, with the Mayor advising that unless otherwise indicated by members, he intended to allow up to

five minutes for the presentation of each deputation before then providing the relevant Cabinet Member up to three minutes to respond on each matter.

1st deputation – Progress towards divestment

2nd deputation – Engagement of Council members in monitoring progress on the delivery of the Council's climate and biodiversity commitments and in setting future priorities in relation to Brent's Climate & Ecological Strategy & Delivery Plan.

7.1 1st deputation – Progress towards Divestment

Having confirmed the process to be followed, the Mayor welcomed Sheila Guhadasan representing the Brent & Harrow Palestine Solidarity Campaign to the meeting to present the first deputation.

Before inviting presentation of the deputation, the Mayor took the opportunity to remind members, given the deputations focus on divestment and the ongoing situation in Palestine and Gazza, of his commitment in seeking to recognise not only the public sector equality duty placed on the Council but also to celebrate the diverse nature of the borough along with the peaceful relationships and level of community cohesion that existed between the many different communities across Brent. As such, he asked all present to remember the principles outlined during its consideration.

In introducing the deputation, Sheila Guhadasan (speaking as Chair of the Brent & Harrow Palestine Solidarity Campaign PSC) began by reminding members of the petition which had been presented to the Council two years previously (containing 2000 signatures) requesting that the Council support the campaign to divest its pension funds from companies complicit in what the PSC felt was Israels genocide, apartheid and human rights abuses against Palestinians.

Highlighting the ongoing nature of the campaign, members were also reminded of the commitment made by the previous Deputy Leader at the Council meeting in September 2025 to write to the London CIV (LCIV) calling for a more robust framework (as part of wider pension fund reforms) that would enable future exclusions of investments linked to conflict, military occupation or genocide as well as to continue working with fund managers to disclose pension fund investments in companies listed by the United Nations OHCHR, on which further progress updates were awaited. Reference was also made to commitments included within both the Brent Labour and Green Party 2026 local election manifestos to work with LCIV to encourage divestments, and to adopt ethical procurement and investment policies.

In recognising, the Fiduciary Duty upon the Pension Fund, members were also advised of the reference made at the October 2025 Brent Pension Fund Sub-Committee meeting to companies with high Environmental, Social & Governance scores performing well, with concern raised at recent government guidance on Preparing and Maintaining an Investment Strategy Statement being subsequently cited at the last Sub Committee as a further reason for delay based on the guidance stating that "The responsible investment approach should not set exclusions for investments in individual countries, investment styles or companies." Clarification was, however, provided that the campaign group were not asking Brent's Pension Fund to name an individual country or company in its Investment Strategy

Statement and were instead seeking a commitment to divest from companies with proven and sustained involvement in what they regarded as huma rights abuse and violations of international law. In this respect, Sheila Guhadasan also advised of further legal representations submitted on behalf of the PSC to the Minster for Local Government requesting withdrawal of comments made by her predecessor that Councils should not adopt investment policies that "go beyond or differ from UK government sanctions or foreign policy positions." The PSC were of the view this did not form part of the guidance issued by the government, with it felt Brent Council would therefore be operating within permitted rights to express a commitment to seek to divest from companies complicit in the stance taken by Israel. Looking beyond pension investments, the example was provided of loans and investments totalling over £8billion provided by Barclays to companies supplying Israel with weapons and military technology and as a primary dealer in Israel government bonds, which was currently a focus of the campaign in the same way as during apartheid in South Africa. It was therefore with concern that the PSC had noted the Council approving a new 18 month Merchant Acquiring contract with Barclays worth £1.08m in August, having waived its usual procurement processes, at a time when many other authorities were seeking to end contracts with Barclays. Support was also expressed for the government's recent announcement on the banning of imports from illegal Israeli settlements along with the suspension of additional arms export licences to Israel alongside a range of other measures, with the government's acceptance of the International Court of Justice's 2024 ruling that Israel's occupation as a whole was illegal also welcomed.

In highlighting this position, Sheila Guhadasan outlined the obligation the Brent & Harrow PSC felt had also been placed on Brent Council to follow the ruling, which it was stated had confirmed Israel's occupation of Palestinian land and treatment of Palestinians as illegal and as amounting to systematic discrimination on racial and ethnic grounds which countries and bodies should not be assisting Israel to maintain. In terms of wider progress, members were advised that 34 Councils in England and Wales have currently committed to divest from companies complicit in Israel's stance, with the Council therefore urged to provide a similar ethical commitment to divest as it did when challenging apartheid in South Africa.

In thanking members for the opportunity to present the deputation, Sheila Guhadasan ended by seeking a commitment to the following specific actions, with the Council asked to confirm:

(1) That they would urgently begin divestment of Brent pension funds via instruction to LCIV.

(2) That they would disclose complicit pension fund investments, in line with previous commitments made.

(3) Timescales and a roadmap for disclosure and divestment.

(4) They would provide further information around the procurement process and contract award to Barclays referred, including any break clause.

(5) The adoption of strongly ethical investment and procurement policies; and

(6) They would be willing to report back on progress to the next full Council meeting and regularly thereafter along with Brent and Harrow PSC.

The Mayor thanked Sheila Guhadasan for presenting the deputation and then invited Councillor Grahl (as Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources) to respond.

In responding, Councillor Grahl began by thanking Sheila Guhadasan and the representatives of the Brent & Harrow Palestine Solidarity Campaign for attending to outline their ongoing concerns relating to the widespread and continued suffering being created by the humanitarian situation in Gaza and the West Bank and strength of feeling generated as a result. Highlighting her personal support for the campaign, Councillor Grahl referred to being one of a number of Brent Councillors having signed the PSC Councillor Pledge as well as to her pride in being able to help organise a visit by Palestinian schoolchildren to the borough in 2023. In outlining her commitment to ensure the Council acted responsibly in seeking to uphold international law and human rights the need to ensure that investment decisions reflected the same principles was also acknowledged with the Labour Group long standing position being clear as set out in the manifesto commitment towards:

- Increasing transparency around pension fund investments.

- Considering how the UN Genocide Convention can be reflected in the Council's investment framework.

- Working with London CIV towards divestment from companies operating in occupied territories or involved in human rights abuses.

This position was also felt to build on action already taken in consistently supporting calls for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, the delivery of humanitarian aid, and opposition to the occupation of the West Bank and the expansion of illegal settlements on the basis of international law being equally applied for all. It was felt the recent statement made by the Foreign Secretary in that respect had also refocussed the importance of this position, recognising the need to reflect this in the economic relationship with the occupied territories and commitment to action against those financing or facilitating illegal settlement expansion, which had been a move supported and influenced by campaigning from local activists.

Councillor Grahl felt this was also consistent with the approach adopted by the Labour Administration in not simply calling out injustice and suffering but also seeking to act within the powers available. Whilst acknowledging the legal and fiduciary constraints on the Council's pension fund investments, with most assets now being managed through pooled investment vehicles, Councillor Grahl advised she remained keen to ensure those limitations were not used as a reason to prevent action. In ending her response Councillor Grahl, therefore highlighted a commitment to engage further with campaigners to explore what additional measures could be taken to apply pressure on the London CIV and other organisations in developing the approach towards responsible investment and also in seeking to examine other investment options that avoided exposure to Gaza or the Occupied Palestinian Territories in and effort to deliver meaningful progress

towards divestment whilst also recognising the need for the Council to continue acting responsibly, lawfully and through the proper pension government's arrangements

Having thanked Councillor Grahl for her response, the Mayor advised that concluded consideration of the first deputation and then moved on to invite Elaine Sheppard and Ian Saville (representing Action on the Climate & Ecological Emergency (ACE) Brent) to present the second deputation.

7.2 2nd deputation – Engagement of Council members in monitoring progress on the delivery of the Council's climate and biodiversity commitments and in setting future priorities in relation to Brent's Climate & Ecological Strategy & Delivery Plan.

The Mayor then welcomed Elaine Sheppard (representing Action on the Climate & Ecological Emergency (ACE) Brent), along with Ian Saville (Chair of Brent Pure Energy) and Suzanne Morpurgo (representing Brent Parks Forum – present as an online participant) to the meeting and invited them to present the second deputation concerning the monitoring of progress on the delivery of the Council's climate and biodiversity commitments and setting of future priorities in relation to Brent's Climate & Ecological Strategy & Delivery Plan

In thanking the Mayor for the opportunity to address the meeting, Elaine Sheppard (speaking on behalf of Action on the Climate and Ecological Emergency (ACE) Brent and as a member of Brent Friends of the Earth) advised that ACE Brent was a coalition of fifteen environmental and community organisations working to secure a stronger response from Brent Council to the climate and ecological emergency. Supported by Ian Saville (Chair of Brent Pure Energy) and Suzanne Morpurgo (representing Brent Parks Forum) she advised members the deputation was seeking to highlight concerns at what they felt to be the insufficient urgency being attached to the climate emergency along with the need for greater public and member engagement in monitoring progress and shaping future action.

In terms of specific requests, members were advised the deputation was seeking the introduction of quarterly reporting on climate action; a review of the 2019 Climate Emergency Strategy with all planned climate and biodiversity actions to be combined to support that process; the establishment of more meaningful resident participation through the proposed Residents Climate Forum as well as the appointment of a new Climate Champion to complement the responsibilities currently held by Cabinet Members.

Members were advised that since ACE Brent's previous deputation to the Council in 2023 improved dialogue with officers and members had been welcomed alongside the Council's response to certain issues, including work to improve monitoring of the emissions impacts arising from climate actions. The contribution made by ACE Brent's volunteer organisations was also highlighted, with members advised of the proactive work being undertaken to engage residents in climate-related activities and participate in consultations. It was pointed out this had included significant engagement in the Tree Strategy consultation during 2025, although concerns were expressed that this still did not appear to have been implemented.

Highlighting the growing impacts of climate change on local communities, reference was made to the extreme heat and drought experienced during the summer with ACE Brent supporting what they felt was an urgent need to ensure climate considerations informed and were embedded across all areas of Council activity. Concern was, however, expressed that the climate emergency still did not appear to be sufficiently reflected in decisions being taken across the Council despite the increasingly visible impacts being experienced locally, with members advised that ACE Brent considered climate resilience and environmental sustainability to be issues which should inform all Council decision-making rather than being treated as isolated policy areas.

Turning to governance and scrutiny arrangements, members were advised that ACE Brent understood no climate action report had been presented to any Council Committee since October 2024, with the last scrutiny report on climate matters having been considered in February 2024. Whilst welcoming the inclusion of a climate resilience and flood risk item on the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee agenda scheduled for the upcoming meeting in October 2026, concern was expressed that this appeared to represent the only climate-related item currently programmed within the scrutiny work programme up to April 2027. In recognising flooding as an existing and growing risk within Brent, disappointment was expressed that a meeting previously promised on the issue had subsequently been cancelled with queries also raised regarding when members would have an opportunity to review progress against the climate delivery plan and participate in planning for the 2026-28 period.

In continuing, Ian Saville (Chair of Brent Pure Energy) sought to reiterate the importance placed on effective scrutiny and public accountability by ACE Brent, which it was felt included the need for regular progress monitoring updates and engagement by elected members. without which visibility regarding the Council's response remained limited. In highlighting the broad remit of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, which alongside climate related matters included budget issues, public realm, crime and anti-social behaviour and limited number of meetings each year to focus on these, concerns were raised that these competing priorities restricted the Committee's ability to provide effective oversight of climate action and that consideration should therefore be given to establishing a dedicated Climate Emergency Scrutiny Committee.

In terms of strategic leadership, whilst recognising and welcoming the commitment shown by Councillor Rubin as current Lead Member it was noted that responsibility for climate issues sat alongside his additional remits including children's services and employment, with concern that the previous Climate Champion role also appeared to have been discontinued. Members were advised that neighbouring local authorities maintained dedicated climate leadership arrangements with the deputation suggesting that Brent should also consider strengthening its governance model accordingly.

In relation to strategic planning and transparency, whilst welcoming inclusion on the Council's website of an outline on those actions delivered since 2022, it was also felt important for residents to be able to understand how priorities were established, what challenges and trade-offs existed in delivering climate action with limited resources and how decisions were being made. Concern was also expressed regarding the number of separate climate-related strategy documents currently in

place, with the Council urged to undertake a comprehensive review of the 2019 Climate Emergency Strategy in order to consolidate climate and biodiversity actions into a single overarching framework incorporating clear priorities, milestones and delivery timescales as a means of enabling councillors, residents and stakeholders to more effectively monitor and assess progress.

In concluding the deputation, Ian Saville advised that ACE Brent had welcomed the Council's commitment to establish a Residents Climate Forum and recognised the potential for the forum to support collaborative working between members, officers and residents. It was, however, felt that the success of the forum would depend upon meaningful engagement and genuine co-design with residents from the outset. The Council was therefore urged to begin the process by involving residents directly in determining the forum's objectives, governance arrangements and structure in order to maximise participation and ensure that the forum became an effective mechanism for influencing and shaping future climate policy.

The Mayor thanked Elaine Sheppard and Ian Saville for presenting the deputation and then invited Councillor Rubin, as Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Employment and Climate Action to respond.

In response, Councillor Rubin began by taking the opportunity to thank those representatives from ACE Brent for their attendance and in taking the time to present the deputation along with their continued commitment to climate action and for supporting resident engagement in the Council's work towards achieving net zero. In reaffirming his personal commitment and dedication as Lead Member towards addressing climate action, he felt it important to outline the engagement already undertaken with a number of key stakeholders by the Council and response, following calls for greater resident participation in the development of climate-related plans, in delivering on the commitment to establish a new Climate Action Forum, which was due to come into effect in October 2026. Members were advised that the inaugural meeting would be focussed on the future structure and operation of the forum with a workshop also being arranged to help shape the Council's Climate Strategy through to 2030.

In support of this approach Councillor Rubin also outlined a wider range of additional consultation and engagement activities being undertaken to support development of the Climate Strategy, including:

- A dedicated engagement session for all councillors.
- Consideration of the strategy by Scrutiny in October.
- An online public consultation inviting feedback from residents.
- A climate roadshow across the five Brent Connect areas.
- A Schools Climate Summit on 7 October to gather views from young people alongside a dedicated youth engagement session.
- Engagement with trade union representatives, Council staff and faith groups.

In concluding his response, Councillor Rubin once again took the opportunity to highlight his commitment to tackling the climate related challenges identified and to encourage the necessary participation in this process, highlighting the need for effective climate action plans to be developed collaboratively and informed by local communities. It was hoped that residents and stakeholder groups, supported by ACE Brent, would therefore be encouraged to participate in the forthcoming engagement activities and contribute to shaping the Council's approach to achieving net zero emissions by 2030.

Having thanked Councillor Rubin for his response, the Mayor advised that concluded consideration of the deputations listed on the agenda and, in once again thanking all those who had participated for their contribution, then moved on to deal with the next item of the agenda.

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

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

Question 1 from Stephen Thomas to Councillor Dixon (Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Health) regarding action being taken to tackle dangerous and illegal use of e-bikes and scooters

Question 2 from Sushil Rapatwar to Councillor Grahl (as Deputy Leadr and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources) regarding the action being taken to tackle to address Council Tax arrears.

The Mayor advised that those members of the public who had submitted questions had been given the opportunity to the attend the meeting to ask a supplementary question. Whilst he was pleased to welcome Sushil Rapatwar to the meeting, members were advised that Stephen Thomas had not been able to attend with the written response provided in relation to that question therefore noted.

Following the Mayors introduction, the following supplementary question was then raised:

Question 2 Supplementary question from Sushil Rapatwar to Councillor Grahl (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources)

Having acknowledged the written response provided to the question, Sushil Rapatwar, noted that Brent's Council Tax arrears appeared to have increased from £84.3m to £92.9m (reflecting an increase of £8.6m despite the Council Taxpayer funded improvement programme) and asked the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to confirm whether Brent still had the highest level of council tax arrears of any London borough and also if she would be willing to commit to a specific target and deadline for reducing this debt.

Having thanked Sushil Rapatwar for the question, the Mayor then invited Councillor Grahl to respond who began by advising that whilst Brent's total Council Tax debt stood at £92.9m in April 2026 it was important to note this figure combined both historic debt as well as unpaid liabilities from 2025-26. In terms of historic debt, it was clarified that during 2025-26 this had been reduced by £13.1m from £84.3m to

£71.2m however £21.7m of unpaid Council Tax had been carried forward from 2025-26, which had resulted in the overall debt figure of £92.9m. Reference to the collection rate of 16.8% cited within the original written question was also challenged, with Councillor Grahl advising that Brent's enforcement providers achieved an average collection rate of 22.3%, which remained above the sector average of 20%. As a result, she ended by advising it was not felt Brent should be regarded as the worst-performing borough for council tax collection.

Having thanked Councillor Grahl for her response the Mayor advised that with no further questions that concluded the public question time session.

9. Petitions

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

10. Motions

Before moving on to consider the motions listed on the summons, the Mayor advised members that under the new arrangements agreed as part of the changes to Council Procedure Rules agreed earlier in the meeting a total of 60 minutes had now been set aside for consideration of motions submitted for debate. Members were reminded that provision had now been made for the consideration of three Group motions at each Council meeting, based on an allocation across each meeting agreed between the respective Groups. Under the allocation agreed, this had involved motions being submitted for debate at the meeting by the Labour, Conservative and Green Groups, with a total of 20 minutes now provided for the debate on each one.

On the basis of the changes agreed, the Mayor then moved on to consider each motion in turn.

10.1 1st Motion (Labour Group) – All Aboard the West London Orbital

The Mayor invited Councillor Burn to move the first motion which had been submitted on behalf of the Labour Group who began by outlining the significance of the proposed West London Orbital Railway, describing it as one of the most important transport investments that Brent could secure in a generation. Members were advised that the proposal involved an 18.5km rail route largely using existing underutilised infrastructure, with new stations at Harlesden and Neasden and up to six trains per hour operating along the line. The scheme was highlighted as providing improved connectivity to the Elizabeth Line and, in future, HS2, with substantial reductions in journey times across West London.

In support of the motion, Councillor Burn also took the opportunity to highlight the wider economic, social and environmental benefits which it was felt delivery of the scheme would provide. These were recognised as including improved access to employment, education and opportunities for Brent residents, support for new housing and job creation, stronger connections to key employment centres and enhanced access to growing creative and technology sectors across the West London region. In addition, members were also advised of the significant potential

environmental benefits through reduced car dependency, lower congestion and improved air quality.

The strategic importance of the scheme was also highlighted in terms of addressing long-standing transport inequalities affecting communities along the proposed route, alongside the support that would be provided for wider national economic objectives such as the protection of jobs within the rail manufacturing sector and associated supply chains. In commending the motion to members, Councillor Burn ended by hoping members would support the commitment being sought to work alongside neighbouring boroughs and the Government to secure the funding required to deliver the scheme.

Having thanked Councillor Burn for moving the motion, the Mayor then drew members attention to an amendment submitted in relation to the motion from Councillor Gallagher on behalf of the Green Group, which he then invited Councillor Gallagher to move.

In moving the amendment, on behalf of the Green Group Councillor Gallagher, whilst acknowledging the desire to improve transport connections across Brent, began by outlining concerns relating to the ability of the outcomes being sought within the motion to deliver the West London Orbital project given the need to recognise that responsibility for progressing major rail infrastructure sat with organisations including the Department for Transport, Transport for London and the Mayor of London. As a result, she advised the amendment was focused on the need for no further Council spending to be committed on the project given the scale, affordability and uncertainty around its delivery before the 2030s and lack of secured capital funding. In support of this approach, members were advised that the outcome of a £6.6m feasibility study, had yet to be received with it felt insufficient evidence therefore existed to justify further Council investment at this stage and the need identified for the main source of funding investment to be generated through Transport for London, central Government and other relevant partners.

Members were advised that despite lobbying undertaken by the Mayor for London in 2024, no progress appeared to have been made in discussions with the Government regarding the scheme, with concerns therefore highlighted regarding any further allocation of Council resources towards a project over which the Council had limited control. Highlighting a number of alternative options, other investment priorities identified included the potential use of unspent Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 funding to improve active travel infrastructure across the borough with reference made to the need for greater investment in cycling and walking infrastructure, safer crossings and measures to improve air quality and local economic resilience. On the basis outlined, the amendment moved by Councillor Gallagher was therefore as follows:

To add the wording underlined and delete the wording indicated:

All Aboard the West London Orbital

This Council notes:

- The West London Orbital (WLO) would bring under-used freight railway into passenger use as part of the London Overground, with an 18.5km route spanning Hounslow, Ealing, Brent and Barnet.

- New stations at Harlesden and Neasden, with up to six trains per hour, would give Brent residents direct connections to Old Oak Common, Brent Cross and West London's Golden Mile Tech District. ~~Journey times would be transformed, with Harlesden to Brent Cross West falling from 39 to 13 minutes and Neasden to Old Oak Common from 44 to 11 minutes.~~

- The WLO is projected to support more than 15,000 new homes, 11,500 new jobs and nearly £500 million in wider economic benefits. In Brent alone, it could support around 4,100 homes and widen access to jobs.

- More than 1.3 million car kilometres a year could be removed from Brent's roads through a shift to WLO services.

- Brent Council has already committed £616,655 towards a feasibility study for the West London Orbital project in conjunction with other boroughs.

This Council believes:

- The new Government's focus on transport, housing and growth provides an opportunity for Brent to renew its efforts to secure support for the WLO.

- London must remain central to the national conversation on transport and growth. West London alone is a nearly £70 billion economy, while Brent residents paid £1.58 billion in income tax in 2023/24 – as much as Glasgow and more than Manchester. Investment in London also supports skilled jobs and supply chains across the UK~~, including rail manufacturing at Alstom's factory in Derby.~~ Investment that unlocks further growth in London is of benefit to the whole country.

- Brent is not immune from the challenges facing communities elsewhere in the country. Brent contains some of the most deprived communities nationally, including along the proposed WLO route. ~~37% of the travel-time savings for journeys originating in Brent would accrue in areas among the 20% most deprived nationally~~.

- By connecting with the Elizabeth line and HS2 at Old Oak Common, the WLO would help maximise the benefits of national rail investment while improving access to employment, education and opportunity across London.

This Council therefore resolves:

(1) To reaffirm its strong support for the West London Orbital and renew its engagement with the Government to ensure Brent's ~~and London's~~ voice is heard in decisions on future transport investment, including advocating for a firm investment commitment from DfT and other relevant partners before more local authority finance is committed.

(2) To write to the Secretary of State for Transport and the Chancellor of the Exchequer~~, setting out the economic, social and national case for the WLO and~~ calling on Government to work with the Mayor of London, TfL and West London boroughs towards a credible funding pathway for delivery that recognises the financial position of local authorities like Brent.

(3) To continue working with the Mayor of London, TfL, the West London Alliance and neighbouring boroughs to progress the WLO and maximise its benefits for Brent residents.

(4) To work with TfL and other partners to safeguard land and protect future options for additional WLO stations in Brent, particularly where public transport accessibility is currently limited.

(5) To support and promote the forthcoming public consultation, encouraging residents, businesses and community organisations to help shape the proposals.

Having thanked Councillor Gallagher for moving the amendment, the Mayor then invited other members to speak, with the following contributions received.

In opening the debate, Councillor Brown spoke to highlight concern that the motion, in effect replicated a similar one the Labour Group had presented the previous year. Concern was also expressed in relation to the approach taken towards public transport matters by the current Administration given the apparent lack of any meetings of the Public Transport Liaison Group following the pandemic and what he viewed as the resulting lack of engagement on public transport issues, which were felt to demonstrate a lack of genuine commitment to improving local transport services.

Speaking next, Councillor Clinton acknowledged the potential benefits of the proposed West London Orbital scheme. Whilst supportive of the motion, he also noted the motion was substantially similar to one debated the previous year. Whilst supportive of improved public transport infrastructure Councillor Clinton felt there was a need to consider whether this represented the most appropriate use of the Group motion process, which he was keen to ensure remained focussed on issues of immediate priority and action.

Councillor Maurice then spoke, welcoming the project as one that had been under consideration for a number of years. In supporting the principle of the scheme, he highlighted the importance of improved east-west transport connectivity across London and Brent along with the significant reductions in journey times that would result. Reference was also made to the wider economic benefits associated with the scheme, including support for new housing and employment growth with the need identified, at the same time, to ensure the necessary external funding contributions required to deliver the scheme were secured before additional funding commitments were sought from partner Councils.

Speaking in support of the original motion. Councillor Knight felt it important to focus on the benefits that the scheme would deliver for communities such as the area she represented in Stonebridge, with improved orbital connectivity identified as key in supporting residents being able to access employment, education and a

range of other services and opportunities across West London. In addition, emphasis was placed on the benefits for more deprived communities and the environmental advantages arising from reduced car usage, lower congestion and improved air quality.

Following on Councillor Anderson, also speaking in support of the original motion, highlighted the importance of the investment in the future of the borough as a means of delivering the opportunities for improvement the enhanced transport links could create for Brent's residents given the impact of poor connectivity in limiting access to employment, social and educational opportunities. In her view, the project therefore represented an opportunity to bring investment, jobs and create wider opportunities for local communities.

Speaking in support of the amendment to the motion Councillor Alexandre, whilst welcoming the principle of making use of existing rail infrastructure and acknowledging the benefits that enhanced public transport connectivity could provide, felt the Council (at this stage) would be better focussing more immediately on improving existing bus services and active travel infrastructure. Concerns were raised regarding the affordability of public transport and the need to deliver practical improvements for residents in the short term rather than concentrating on a longer-term infrastructure project whose delivery remained uncertain.

As a final contribution, Councillor Kelcher (also speaking in support of the motion as Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning) highlighted what he felt to be the significance of the proposed scheme as a transformational opportunity for Brent. Outlining the significant improvement in public transport journey times that would be delivered alongside improved access to employment opportunities, benefits for residents living in more deprived areas and the potential to support housing growth and economic development, he hoped members would support the motion given the specific benefits for Brent (compared to other boroughs) arising from delivery of the scheme as well as improved public transport connectivity across West London and members therefore encouraged to focus on the long-term vision and opportunities presented.

In drawing the debate to a close, the Mayor then invited Councillor Burn (as mover of the original motion) followed by Councillor Alexandre (as mover of the subsequent amendment) to exercise their right of reply.

In closing and exercising his right of reply, Councillor Burn welcome the support expressed for the motion as opposed to focus on procedural matters, once again highlighting the wider benefits associated with transport infrastructure investment. Whilst expressing disappointment at the focus of the Green Group in their response to the debate he advised members that the Labour Group were willing to accept the amendment as moved in the interests of securing a joint approach towards progressing support for the scheme.

In exercising her right of reply on the amendment, Councillor Gallagher clarified that her earlier contribution had focused on concerns regarding the £6.6m already invested in the project, including the Council's contribution towards feasibility work. Whilst expressing support for improved rail connections across the borough, she also highlighted the need for investment in cycling infrastructure, walking routes and wider public realm improvements designed to encourage active travel. Reiterating

the purpose of her amendment, she argued that no further funding should be committed towards the proposed scheme until greater certainty existed regarding its viability and delivery.

Having thanked councillors for their contributions, the Mayor then moved to the vote on the motion. In noting that the amendment moved by the Green Group had been accepted, the Mayor advised this would not require a specific vote and would proceed on the basis it now formed the substantive motion for consideration.

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

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

All Aboard the West London Orbital

This Council notes:

- The West London Orbital (WLO) would bring under-used freight railway into passenger use as part of the London Overground, with an 18.5km route spanning Hounslow, Ealing, Brent and Barnet.

- New stations at Harlesden and Neasden, with up to six trains per hour, would give Brent residents direct connections to Old Oak Common, Brent Cross and West London's Golden Mile Tech District.

- The WLO is projected to support more than 15,000 new homes, 11,500 new jobs and nearly £500 million in wider economic benefits. In Brent alone, it could support around 4,100 homes and widen access to jobs.

- More than 1.3 million car kilometres a year could be removed from Brent's roads through a shift to WLO services.

- Brent Council has already committed £616,655 towards a feasibility study for the West London Orbital project in conjunction with other boroughs.

This Council believes:

- The new Government's focus on transport, housing and growth provides an opportunity for Brent to renew its efforts to secure support for the WLO.

- London must remain central to the national conversation on transport and growth. West London alone is a nearly £70 billion economy, while Brent residents paid £1.58 billion in income tax in 2023/24 – as much as Glasgow and more than Manchester. Investment in London also supports skilled jobs and supply chains across the UK. Investment that unlocks further growth in London is of benefit to the whole country.

- Brent is not immune from the challenges facing communities elsewhere in the country. Brent contains some of the most deprived communities nationally, including along the proposed WLO route.

- By connecting with the Elizabeth line and HS2 at Old Oak Common, the WLO would help maximise the benefits of national rail investment while improving access to employment, education and opportunity across London.

This Council therefore resolves:

(1) To reaffirm its strong support for the West London Orbital and renew its engagement with the Government to ensure Brent's voice is heard in decisions on future transport investment, including advocating for a firm investment commitment from DfT and other relevant partners before more local authority finance is committed.

(2) To write to the Secretary of State for Transport and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, calling on Government to work with the Mayor of London, TfL and West London boroughs towards a credible funding pathway for delivery that recognises the financial position of local authorities like Brent.

(3) To continue working with the Mayor of London, TfL, the West London Alliance and neighbouring boroughs to progress the WLO and maximise its benefits for Brent residents.

(4) To work with TfL and other partners to safeguard land and protect future options for additional WLO stations in Brent, particularly where public transport accessibility is currently limited.

(5) To support and promote the forthcoming public consultation, encouraging residents, businesses and community organisations to help shape the proposals."

10.2 2nd Motion (Conservative Group) – Temporary Accommodation: Better Value and Greater Accountability

The Mayor then invited Councillor Anup Patel to move the second motion, which had been submitted on behalf of the Conservative Group who began by outlining concerns regarding the increasing financial pressures associated with temporary accommodation provision in Brent. Whilst emphasising that the motion was not intended to challenge the Council's responsibility to support homeless households, Councillor Anup highlighted what he felt was the importance in ensuring public funds were being managed effectively whilst providing safe and stable accommodation for families. Members were advised that approximately 2,500 households were currently being accommodated in temporary housing, with around 60% placed in more expensive nightly paid accommodation and expenditure on this type of accommodation forecast to reach £38m during the year.

Referring to discussions at the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Anup Patel highlighted concerns regarding the continued growth in expenditure relating to Housing Needs, noting that a budget increase of £8m had already been agreed whilst a further £9.5m overspend was being forecast at Quarter 1. As a result, he outlined the focus of the motion in seeking to address the underlying drivers of the cost pressures identified rather than continuing to increase budgets to meet demand.

In commending the motion to members, attention was also drawn to the challenges associated with securing accommodation in the private sector, including the impact of competition for accommodation during major events in Wembley and the high nightly rates being paid in some cases which he felt reinforced the need for improved performance monitoring and oversight. In concluding Councillor Anup Patel ended by outlining what were felt to be the benefits associated with the actions being sought in relation to introduction of a monthly temporary accommodation performance dashboard containing clear and measurable indicators including the number of households in temporary and nightly paid accommodation; associated costs; the number of families moved into settled housing and progress against targets designed to reduce reliance on expensive emergency accommodation. As a result, he hoped all members would support the motion as a means of improving value for money whilst helping secure more stable housing outcomes for Brent residents.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Anup Patel for moving the motion and then invited other members to speak, with the following contributions received.

In opening the debate Councillor Donnelly-Jackson began by welcoming the motion. Drawing on both her personal and professional experience in terms of homelessness and prevention support, she highlighted her support for the need identified to address the underlying cost pressures associated with temporary accommodation. Whilst supporting the proposals within the motion she also felt it important to highlight the impact of the national temporary accommodation subsidy gap, explaining that councils were only able to recover Housing Benefit costs based on outdated subsidy rates with the funding shortfall generated as a result representing a significant factor behind the financial pressures facing local authorities and requiring (in her view) further detailed review and scrutiny.

Speaking next, Councillor Georgiou also confirmed the Liberal Democrats Group support for the motion although feeling it could have gone further. Recognising the importance of homelessness prevention work, he was keen to commend the efforts of homelessness prevention officers in supporting residents at risk of losing their homes and reducing demand for temporary accommodation but also raised concerns regarding Council-owned properties remaining vacant for extended periods, with the need to bring empty homes back into use also highlighted as a key part of any approach to reducing the reliance on costly temporary accommodation.

Responding as Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters, Councillor Johnson also welcomed the motion acknowledging the significant challenges created by rising homelessness, increasing private sector rents and the growing cost of temporary accommodation. Pointing out that many of the measures outlined within the motion reflected work already underway within Brent, he advised this included programmes designed to reduce temporary accommodation use, increase move-on opportunities into settled housing and prevent homelessness. Members were also advised of the improvements being made to the Housing management system which had been designed to strengthen property management, financial oversight and performance monitoring. In noting the alignment between the motion and existing activity, he therefore welcomed the cross-party support for this work and also confirmed his support for the motion, as moved.

As a final contribution, Councillor Malonga also spoke in support of the motion taking the opportunity to focus on the wider structural causes of housing pressures. Highlighting the impact of historic restrictions on housing subsidy arrangements he felt there was a need to recognise how temporary accommodation pressures were not only being driven by local factors but also by a chronic shortage of affordable and social housing. Referring to the disparity between the number of social homes becoming available and the scale of housing need within Brent, he identified this imbalance as a key cause of the housing crisis and whilst supporting measures that would improve transparency and accountability also reminded members of the significant human impact of temporary accommodation on families and children experiencing housing insecurity.

In drawing the debate to a close, the Mayor invited Councillor Anup Patel (as mover of the original motion) to exercise their right of reply. In welcoming the broad support for the motion and focus on the need for effective monitoring of temporary accommodation, strengthened homelessness prevention activity, reform of national funding arrangements and increased provision of affordable and social housing the opportunity was once again taken to outline the benefits associated with the suggested adoption of clear performance targets and transparent reporting arrangements in relation to temporary accommodation supported by regular performance information in order to provide residents with greater visibility over whether reliance on costly nightly paid accommodation was reducing, whether empty properties were being returned to use promptly and whether anticipated savings were being achieved. Concern was also expressed that, unless these issues were addressed proactively, the financial and operational challenges associated with temporary accommodation would become increasingly difficult to manage in future with Councillor Anup Patel ending by highlighting the need for action to prevent the pressures escalating further.

The Mayor then moved to put the motion to a vote which was unanimously declared **CARRIED**.

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

Temporary Accommodation: Better Value and Greater Accountability

This Council notes:

- Brent faces severe pressure from rising homelessness, constrained housing supply and the increasing cost of temporary accommodation. In April 2026, the Council reported approximately 2,450 households in temporary accommodation, with around 60% in nightly paid arrangements.

- Brent's Housing Needs service was forecast to overspend by £4.5 million in 2025/26, while expenditure on nightly paid temporary accommodation was expected to reach approximately £38 million. The Council has allocated a further £8 million of budget growth to Housing Needs to address existing and anticipated demand pressures.

- The Council has acknowledged that reliance on nightly paid accommodation creates financial volatility, increasing caseloads, limited affordable options and variable accommodation quality. It has also identified longer-term leasing to

provide greater stability and better value, with around 367 units anticipated to deliver approximately £4.8 million a year in savings or cost avoidance compared with equivalent nightly paid accommodation.

This Council believes:

- Families who become homeless deserve safe, suitable and stable accommodation, while Brent taxpayers are entitled to expect that scarce resources are managed effectively.

- Nightly paid accommodation will sometimes be unavoidable, but it should not become a long-term substitute for developing more stable and better value housing supply.

- The success of Brent's temporary accommodation strategy should therefore be judged by whether reliance on costly nightly accommodation is falling, properties are being brought into use quickly, families move into more stable homes and forecast savings are achieved.

This Council therefore calls on Cabinet to:

(1) Set and publish measurable targets for reducing Brent's reliance on nightly paid and other high-cost temporary accommodation, together with a clear trajectory for achieving those reductions.

(2) Review the process for bringing newly acquired and leased properties into occupation, identifying avoidable delays and establishing clear performance targets for the time between a property becoming available to the Council and a household moving in.

(3) Continue to pursue longer-term leasing, acquisition and other supply options where these provide demonstrably better value and greater stability, while regularly assessing whether the savings and cost avoidance anticipated in business cases are being achieved.

(4) Introduce and publish a monthly Temporary Accommodation Performance Dashboard, reporting where possible:

    - The total number of households in temporary accommodation;

    - The number in nightly paid accommodation and B&Bs;

    - Expenditure on temporary accommodation and the cost of nightly paid provision;

    - The number of households moved into more stable accommodation;

    - The number of acquired or leased properties awaiting occupation and the average time taken to bring them into use;

    - The number of households placed outside Brent;

- Progress against the Council's published reduction and savings targets.

(5) Use the Council's new Temporary Accommodation and Private Sector Leasing Digital Management Platform to improve management information, performance monitoring and scrutiny.

(6) Report progress to the relevant scrutiny committee, including actual savings achieved, progress in reducing nightly paid accommodation and any barriers preventing the Council from moving families into more stable housing more quickly.

10.3 3rd Motion (Green Group) – Addressing Urban Heat and Climate Inequality in Brent

The Mayor then invited Councillor Mitchell to move the final motion submitted on behalf of the Green Group. In moving the motion, Councillor Mitchell highlighted the growing impact of climate change warning that in her view the current climate represented the most stable conditions residents were likely to experience in their lifetime. Reference was made to recent UN projections that global temperatures would exceed 1.5 degrees of warming for the first time, with concerns expressed regarding the increasing frequency and severity of extreme heat events. Drawing on experience from recent summers, Councillor Mitchell highlighted temperatures reaching 36 degrees in Brent, the disruption caused to schools and public services, and evidence showing London had experienced the highest heat-related mortality rates in England and Wales during recent heatwaves, with particular concern expressed at the disproportionate impact of extreme heat on vulnerable residents, including those on low incomes, elderly residents and individuals with existing health conditions.

As a result, Councillor Mitchell advised the motion sought to present what she regarded as a practical programme of local action focused on improving resilience across public spaces, schools, workplaces and housing, increasing greening and shade provision, improving understanding of overheating risks associated with development and supporting stronger community and public partnerships in delivering climate adaptation measures. These had been designed to avoid the need to rely purely on government action who, it was felt, had not been open about the extent of the challenges faced and, on this basis, the motion was commended to members.

Having thanked Councillor Mitchell for moving the motion, the Mayor then drew members attention to two amendments submitted in relation to the motion. Members were advised the first of these was from Councillor Chadha on behalf of the Conservative Group and the second from Councillor Chauhan on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group, with both having been circulated in advance of the meeting. He then invited each amendment to be moved in the order received.

In moving the first amendment on behalf of the Conservative Group, Councillor Chadha advised that whilst there was broad support for the objectives of the original motion and recognition that extreme heat posed growing challenges for residents, schools and public buildings, the Conservative Group amendment sought to ensure that any response remained practical, proportionate and deliverable.

Reference was made to the impact high temperatures had already had on local infrastructure, including parks, roads and public buildings with Councillor Chadha keen to ensure that the measures being developed were undertaken in consultation with schools and other relevant partners who understood the practical implications of implementation. Concerns were also highlighted regarding the temporary closure of Kilburn Library due to overheating issues, following its recent refurbishment, which was provided as an example of the need to ensure climate resilience was also considered from the outset in capital projects and support expressed for undertaking proportionate assessments of heat risks within public buildings, prioritising expenditure according to risk and ensuring resulting actions were appropriately costed.

Whilst highlighting her support for the community greening initiatives within the original motion, Councillor Chadha also felt there was a need to consider maintenance responsibilities, measurable outcomes and value for money, alongside opportunities for community and business sponsorship, with support also expressed for clear and robust assessment and guidance on the cumulative environmental and local heat impacts arising from the development of data centres including any economically viable opportunities to utilise excessive heat through local heat networks. In concluding, and commending the Conservative Group amendment to members, Councillor Chadha highlighted the way it had been designed to strengthen the original motion by ensuring actions were targeted, affordable and capable of being sustained over the longer term with the amendment moved as follows:

To add the wording underlined and delete the wording indicated:

Addressing Urban Heat and Climate Inequality in Brent

This Council Notes:

- Extreme heat is an increasing public health risk, with an estimated 2,877 heat-associated deaths in England during the May and June 2026 heatwaves.

- ~~The risk of extreme heat in Brent is acute.~~ Brent and London Risk Registers identify heatwaves as a major risk requiring local adaptation.

- ~~That social and environmental justice go hand in hand.~~ Extreme heat disproportionately affects communities already experiencing social, economic and health inequalities.

- Brent's Heat Vulnerability Index identifies Park Royal as a hotspot alongside other areas ~~where existing and pipeline data centres are located~~ <u>with existing or proposed data centres.</u>

- Tree equity mapping demonstrates a need for increased tree canopy and urban greening across central and southern Brent.

- ~~In June and July following investment of~~ <u>Following</u> £1.14m <u>investment</u>**,** the newly refurbished Kilburn Library ~~had to~~ close<u>d</u> ~~due to inadequate heat mitigation measure~~ <u>during June and July due to inadequate heat mitigation.</u>

- Brent published a Climate Adaptation and Resilience Framework in December 2025 ~~and is strengthening climate adaptation measures across the borough~~.

This Council Believes:

- ~~Whilst Brent has taken important steps towards climate adaptation the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme heat requires further action.~~

- Natural green spaces ~~act as heat sinks and~~ should be protected and developed to reduce urban ~~surface~~ temperatures~~, including partnership with residents~~.

    - ~~The Council has a responsibility to ensure that~~ Public spaces are accessible and safe during periods of extreme heat and council housing tenants are protected from heat impacts.

    - ~~Existing~~ Clear guidance is needed on ~~does not provide sufficiently specific or consistent guidance for assessing the~~ cumulative local heat impacts ~~of~~ from data centres~~, particularly where multiple facilities are concentrated within a small area~~.

This Council therefore:

(1) Requests the necessary action be taken to:

(a) Expand ~~the network of Cool Spaces across~~ Brent's network of Cool Spaces, update the GLA water refill map ~~to reflect all the stations in Brent~~ and explore ~~all options for~~ increasing the number of refill stations across the borough.

(b) Integrate natural materials, shading and strategic planting in new playground designs to reduce heat exposure.

(c) Engage maintained schools, relevant trade unions and education partners on practical measures to mitigate ~~Begin a dialogue with the NEU about mitigation for~~ overheating in local authority schools, including consideration of likely costs and options for implementation, and review protections for council workers and contractors during periods of extreme heat.

(d) Conduct a proportionate review of heat risk in public buildings, ~~mapping~~ identifying those at highest ~~buildings at high~~ risk and developing ~~an~~ a prioritised and costed action plan, with the scope and cost of the review itself kept proportionate and any subsequent measures assessed according to risk, value for money and deliverability.

(e) Commission a feasibility study into community-public partnerships for the greening and maintenance of spaces such as pocket parks, derelict land and larger areas of hard surfacing to reduce heat and increase access to shade, with any proposals demonstrating value for money, clear long-term maintenance responsibilities and measurable community benefit, including opportunities for community or business sponsorship where appropriate.

(f) Ensure that the Local Plan is informed by future climate risks and that future developments assess urban heat and incorporate heat resilience measures.

(2) Request the Leader of the Council write to the Mayor of London seeking clearer guidance on how local authorities should assess and mitigate overheating risks and the cumulative environmental ~~cumulative~~ impacts arising from ~~clusters~~ concentrations of data centres, while recognising their economic importance and maximising opportunities to capture and reuse waste heat through local heat networks where technically and economically viable**.**

(3) Invites the relevant Cabinet Member to set out the Council's approach to managing overheating risks in council housing including responsibilities under Awaab's Law.

In moving the second amendment on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group, Councillor Chauhan, whilst welcoming the principles contained within the original motion, advised that the Liberal Democrats Group felt greater attention was also required in relation to the role of domestic gardens as a key component of Brent's green infrastructure. Highlighting that gardens accounted for approximately 30% of land area within the borough, he expressed concern regarding the increasing loss of green space through paving and artificial surfaces referring to the significant cooling effect provided through shade by trees, vegetation and soil when compared with hard surfaces exposed to direct sunlight with excessive paving also felt to have contributed to higher temperatures, reduced biodiversity, increased surface water runoff as well as intensifying the urban heat island effect.

In order to address the issues and concerns highlighted, Councillor Chauhan advised that the amendment being moved by the Liberal Democrats sought to add to the original motion by proposing the introduction of a greener gardens campaign based on the National Park City Front Gardens Framework, encouraging residents to create greener front and rear gardens and discouraging unnecessary hard surfacing. Additional proposals included incentives to support sustainable driveway construction through measures such as discounted dropped kerb fees, accelerated delivery of actions contained within the Council's existing climate adaptation framework and further expansion of the Trees for Brent programme to improve tree coverage in neighbourhoods with low canopy cover. He also highlighted work being undertaken by Newham Council to reduce overheating in social housing and suggested Brent should explore similar retrofit measures for its most vulnerable housing stock learning from best practice elsewhere and ensuring that climate adaptation formed an integral part of future planning, infrastructure and regeneration activity across the borough. On this basis the amendment moved by Councillor Chauhan on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group was as follows:

To add the wording underlined and delete the wording indicated:

Addressing Urban Heat and Climate Inequality in Brent

This Council Notes:

- Extreme heat is an increasing public health risk, with an estimated 2,877 heat-associated deaths in England during the ~~May and June~~ 2026 heatwaves.

- ~~The risk of extreme heat in Brent is acute.~~ Brent and London Risk Registers identify heatwaves as a major risk ~~requiring local adaptation~~, disproportionately affecting communities facing social, economic and health inequalities.

- ~~That social and environmental justice go hand in hand. Extreme heat disproportionately affects communities already experiencing social, economic and health inequalities.~~

- Brent's Heat Vulnerability Index identifies Park Royal as a hotspot alongside other areas where existing and pipeline data centres are located.

- Tree equity mapping demonstrates a need for increased tree canopy and urban greening across central and southern Brent.

- ~~In June and July~~ Following investment of £1.14m, the newly refurbished Kilburn Library had to close this summer due to inadequate heat mitigation measures.

- Brent published a Climate Adaptation and Resilience Framework (CARF) in December 2025 and is strengthening climate adaptation measures across the borough.

- Domestic gardens cover around 30% of Brent's land, whilst approx. 42% of UK garden space is paved, increasing heat absorption in neighbourhoods.

This Council Believes:

- ~~Whilst Brent has taken important steps towards climate adaptation the increasing frequency and intensity of~~ Increasingly frequent and extreme heat requires further ~~action~~ adaptation.

- Natural green spaces ~~act as heat sinks and~~ should be protected and ~~developed~~ expanded to reduce urban surface temperatures, including through resident partnerships ~~partnership with residents~~.

- ~~The Council has a responsibility to ensure that public spaces are accessible and safe during periods of extreme heat and council housing tenants are protected from heat impacts.~~ The Council should ensure public spaces remain safe during extreme heat and protect council tenants from overheating.

- Existing guidance on cumulative local heat impacts from clustered data centres is insufficient. ~~does not provide sufficiently specific or consistent guidance for assessing the cumulative local heat impacts of data centres, particularly where multiple facilities are concentrated within a small area.~~

- Private gardens collectively provide vital green infrastructure and should form part of Brent's response to heat, biodiversity loss and flooding.

This Council therefore:

(1) Requests the necessary action ~~be taken~~ to:

(a) ~~Expand the network of Cool Spaces across Brent, update the GLA water refill map to reflect all the stations in Brent and explore all options for increasing the number of refill stations across the borough.~~ Expand Brent's Cool Spaces and water refill network and ensure all stations appear on the GLA map.

(b) Integrate natural materials, shading and strategic planting in new playground designs to reduce heat exposure.

(c) Begin a dialogue with the NEU about mitigation for over-heating in local authority schools, and review protections for council workers and contractors during periods of extreme heat.

(d) Bring forward CARF's ~~conduct a~~ review of heat risk in public buildings, mapping buildings at high-risk and developing an prioritised action plan.

(e) ~~Commission a feasibility study into~~ Explore community-public partnerships to ~~for the~~ green~~ing~~ and maintain ~~maintenance of spaces such as~~ pocket parks, derelict land and larger areas of hard surfacing to reduce heat and increase access to shade.

(f) Ensure ~~that~~ the Local Plan ~~is informed by~~ reflects future climate risks ~~and that future~~ developments assess urban heat and incorporate heat resilience measures, bringing forward CARF climate-resilience standards in planning and building control.

(g) Explore a borough-wide campaign, drawing on National Park City Front Gardens, to discourage unnecessary paving and artificial grass, promote living garden space and engage landlords against hard-surfacing gardens.

(h) Explore incentives for depaving and greener driveways, including reduced vehicle crossover charges for designs retaining more planting.

(i) Expand Trees for Brent, prioritising LSOAs with the lowest tree equity scores (0-79)

(2) Request the Leader of the Council write to the Mayor of London seeking clearer guidance on how local authorities should assess overheating risks and cumulative impacts arising from clusters of data centres.

(3) Invites the ~~relevant~~ Cabinet Member to set out the Council's approach to ~~identifying, preventing and managing overheating risks in council housing, including responsibilities~~ overheating in council housing under Awaab's Law; work with the GLA and Newham on its retrofit pilot; and use the evidence to bring forward Brent's climate-resilient retrofit programme for high-risk council homes and vulnerable assets.

Having thanked Councillors Chadha and Chauhan for moving their respective amendments, the Mayor then invited other members to speak, with the following contributions received.

In opening the debate, Councillor Gallager (speaking in support of the original motion) began by highlighting the way extreme heat was already affecting Brent residents with particular concerns raised in relation to the cumulative impact of data centres, especially within the Park Royal area. In support of the concerns identified, reference was made to emerging research from the University of Cambridge linking data centres with localised temperature increases and the potential consequences for public infrastructure, including hospitals, public transport (with Park Royal identified as a key bus corridor) and community facilities. As a result, Councillor Gallagher advised she was keen to ensure climate resilience measures kept pace with technological and industrial development, which it was felt the motion moved on behalf of the Green Group provided an important framework to address

Speaking next in support of the amendment moved on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group, Councillor Clinton also felt it important to recognise how the increasing impacts of climate change demonstrated the need for urgent action with failures to act decisively at national and international level having (in his view) contributed to worsening climate risks. Highlighting the economic, social and public health consequences associated with recent periods of extreme heat Councillor Clinton hoped members would therefore recognise the aim of the Liberal Democrat amendment in seeking to strengthen rather than dilute the response being sought to the climate emergency and, on this basis, advised the Liberal Democrats Group would not be supporting the amendment moved on behalf of the Conservative Group.

Councillor Ryan, speaking in support of the motion moved on behalf of the Green Group, began by expressing pride at the first motion they had moved at Full Council, describing extreme heat as one of the most pressing challenges facing the borough. Highlighting forecasts of higher future temperatures and recent heat-related disruptions affecting public facilities, such as Kilburn Library, he felt more work was required to ensure Brent was adequately prepared for future heatwaves. In urging members to support the motion, Councillor Ryan felt it important to highlight the need for heat resilience to be treated as a priority, with greater provision of cool spaces, protection and expansion of green infrastructure and a more strategic approach to mitigating the impacts of extreme weather on residents.

As a final contribution responding as Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Employment and Climate Action, Councillor Rubin then spoke to thank the Green Group for moving the motion. Whilst recognising climate change as a significant and ongoing challenge and need for local authorities to both reduce emissions and adapt to changing climate conditions, he also felt it important to outline the range of measures already being undertaken by the Council. These included tree planting, housing retrofit programmes, investment in the South Kilburn Heat Network and the adoption of a Climate Adaptation Resilience Plan with further work underway to improve heat resilience across the borough through initiatives such as heat risk mapping, expanding cool spaces and supporting schools with shading and cooling measures and on this basis confirmed the Labour Groups support for the motion.

In drawing the debate to a close, the Mayor invited Councillor Mitchell (as mover of the original motion) followed by Councillors Chadha and Chauhan (as movers of the two subsequent amendments) to exercise their right of reply.

In closing and exercising her right of reply, Councillor Mitchell thanked members for their support welcoming the broad consensus regarding the seriousness of the threat posed by extreme heat and the need for further action. Whilst confirming her willingness to accept the amendment moved on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group, she advised that the Green Group would not be able to support the Conservative Group amendment on the basis it was felt financial considerations should not be allowed to act as a barrier to action given the potential environmental and public health consequences associated with climate change. In highlighting the importance in ensuring the Council continued to take responsibility and develop its approach for delivering climate resilience and adaptation measures, she ended by once again thanking members for their support and encouraging the continued pursuit of these measures at pace and scale.

Speaking next, Councillor Chadha in exercising her right of reply on behalf of the Conservative Group acknowledged the importance of achieving climate and net-zero objectives but also felt there was a need to ensure any measures introduced represented an efficient and proportionate use of public resources. As such, she advised the Conservative Group amendment had been designed to ensure climate resilience measures were fully costed and considered alongside wider investment priorities when planning new developments and facilities, reflecting concerns regarding value for money and affordability.

As the final right of reply, Councillor Chauhan took the opportunity to welcome and thank the Green Group for their support of the amendment moved on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group.

Having thanked councillors for their contributions, the Mayor advised that before moving to the vote there would be a need to clarify the process for dealing with the amendments given the overlap and difference in the changes being sought. In outlining this advice, members were reminded that amendments to a political group motion would need to be taken as a whole, meaning it would not be possible to agree both the Conservative and Liberal Democrats Group amendments together. As a result, members were advised of the following options available:

- To reject both amendments;

- To agree one of the two amendments submitted; or

- For the members who had moved the amendments to propose, under Standing Order 42(l), an alteration to the wording of their amendments, which (subject to the consent of the meeting) could then be taken forward as the basis of a single final amendment. If this was the preferred option the Mayor advised this would, however, likely require a deferral of the final decision on the motion to the next meeting to allow the necessary discussions to take place.

Having outlined the available options, Councillor Georgiou in seeking to clarify the position, reminded the Mayor that the Green Group had already confirmed their

acceptance of the Liberal Democrats amendment as the basis of the substantive motion to be considered.

In response, Kim Wright (as Chief Executive) confirmed this as the basis on which the Liberal Democrats amendment would be taken forward but advised members a vote would still be required on the Conservative Group amendment.

On this basis, the Mayor then moved straight to the vote on the amendment moved by Councillor Chadha on behalf of the Conservative Group. The amendment from the Conservative Group, as set out above, was then put to the vote and declared **LOST**.

The Mayor then moved on to put the substantive motion, as amended to include the Liberal Democrats amendment set out above, to a vote which was declared **CARRIED**.

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

Addressing Urban Heat and Climate Inequality in Brent

This Council Notes:

- Extreme heat is an increasing public health risk, with an estimated 2,877 heat-associated deaths in England during the 2026 heatwaves.

- Brent and London Risk Registers identify heatwaves as a major risk, disproportionately affecting communities facing social, economic and health inequalities.

- Brent's Heat Vulnerability Index identifies Park Royal as a hotspot alongside other areas where existing and pipeline data centres are located.

- Tree equity mapping demonstrates a need for increased tree canopy and urban greening across central and southern Brent.

- Following investment of £1.14m, the newly refurbished Kilburn Library had to close this summer due to inadequate heat mitigation measures.

- Brent published a Climate Adaptation and Resilience Framework (CARF) in December 2025 and is strengthening climate adaptation measures across the borough.

- Domestic gardens cover around 30% of Brent's land, whilst approx. 42% of UK garden space is paved, increasing heat absorption in neighbourhoods.

This Council Believes:

- Increasingly frequent and extreme heat requires further adaptation.

- Natural green spaces should be protected and expanded to reduce urban surface temperatures, including through resident partnerships.

- The Council should ensure public spaces remain safe during extreme heat and protect council tenants from overheating.

- Existing guidance on cumulative local heat impacts from clustered data centres is insufficient.

- Private gardens collectively provide vital green infrastructure and should form part of Brent's response to heat, biodiversity loss and flooding.

This Council therefore:

(1) Requests the necessary action to:

(a) Expand Brent's Cool Spaces and water refill network and ensure all stations appear on the GLA map.

(b) Integrate natural materials, shading and strategic planting in new playground designs to reduce heat exposure.

(c) Begin a dialogue with the NEU about mitigation for over-heating in local authority schools, and review protections for council workers and contractors during periods of extreme heat.

(d) Bring forward CARF's review of heat risk in public buildings, mapping buildings at high-risk and developing a prioritised action plan.

(e) Explore community-public partnerships to green and maintain pocket parks, derelict land and larger areas of hard surfacing to reduce heat and increase access to shade.

(f) Ensure the Local Plan reflects future climate risks and developments assess urban heat and incorporate heat resilience measures, bringing forward CARF climate-resilience standards in planning and building control.

(g) Explore a borough-wide campaign, drawing on National Park City Front Gardens, to discourage unnecessary paving and artificial grass, promote living garden space and engage landlords against hard-surfacing gardens.

(h) Explore incentives for depaving and greener driveways, including reduced vehicle crossover charges for designs retaining more planting.

(i) Expand Trees for Brent, prioritising LSOAs with the lowest tree equity scores (0-79)

(2) Request the Leader of the Council write to the Mayor of London seeking clearer guidance on how local authorities should assess overheating risks and cumulative impacts arising from clusters of data centres.

(3) Invites the Cabinet Member to set out the Council's approach to overheating in council housing under Awaab's Law; work with the GLA and Newham on its

retrofit pilot; and use the evidence to bring forward Brent's climate-resilient retrofit programme for high-risk council homes and vulnerable assets.

11. 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 provided:

11.1 Councillor Donnelly-Jackson thanked Councillor Dixon for the comprehensive written response provided to her question on the feasibility of creating a public lido and confirmed she had no supplementary question.

11.2 In thanking Councillor Rubin (as Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Employment and Climate Action) for the written response provided seeking an update on delivery of the Government's Youth Guarantee. In welcoming the update Councillor Blackman, as a supplementary question, asked whether the Council would also consider developing a local Brent Youth Guarantee by bringing together employers, schools, colleges, community organisations and young people and provide a clear timetable for delivery, including consideration of targeted financial support.

In response, Councillor Rubin welcomed the proposal and commended Councillor Blackman for his commitment in seeking to support young people across the borough. Referring to the Government's recently announced Youth Guarantee, he confirmed he would be happy to work with members, officers and local partners on development of a local youth offer for Brent. The opportunity was also taken to highlight the Council's commitment to explore the introduction of an Educational Maintenance Allowance for Brent's young people, particularly those at risk of becoming Not In Employment, Education or Training (NEET), alongside support for vocational skills and training opportunities.

11.3 In noting the written response provided to his question regarding the action being taken to address defective highway works Councillor Jayanti Patel, as a supplementary question referred Councillor Knight (as Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm) to the Council's inspection arrangements for utility reinstatement and highway repair works, noting that only a sample of completed works appeared to have been subject to inspection. Assurance was therefore sought regarding the quality of works which had not been inspected, with details requested on the proportion of utility reinstatements inspected and measures in place to ensure standards were maintained.

In response, Councillor Knight took the opportunity to outline how the Council held highways and utility contractors to account through established inspection and quality assurance processes. Members were informed that, over the previous three financial years, 147 completed highway works had required remedial action, with contractors returning in every case to undertake the necessary repairs at their own expense. She confirmed that similar arrangements applied to utility companies, with inspections, audits, completion records and photographic evidence reviewed by officers, alongside further inspections where concerns had been identified. In acknowledging there would always be scope for improvement she advised the ongoing scrutiny of contractor performance and standards would therefore continue to be developed and welcomed.

11.4 Expressing disappointment at the response provided to her question regarding the action being taken to address concerns relating to air quality and wider public health impacts during the proposed development of the former Kensal Gas Work site at Ladbroke Grove, Councillor Want, felt it important to again highlight the significant concerns identified by local residents regarding the management of air quality, dust and contamination risks associated with a proposed construction works and challenged Councillor Kelcher (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Planning) on whether it was felt the monitoring arrangements outlined would be able to provide sufficient reassurance to residents.

In responding, Councillor Kelcher acknowledged that residents were right to expect concerns regarding dust, contamination and air quality to be appropriately managed and monitored. Members were, however, reminded that the application site fell within the jurisdiction of the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and had been approved following detailed consideration by its Planning Committee, supported by expert evidence and advice on the concerns raised in relation to contamination and air quality issues. Members were advised that planning conditions, monitoring requirements and construction controls had been imposed in a manner consistent with other major developments across London, supported by a number of other formal routes through which concerns could be raised and investigated, with the importance in reflecting on the expert evidence provided and established planning controls considered key when assessing the impact of any development.

11.5 In thanking Councillor Rubin (as Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Employment & Climate Action) and Councillor Dixon (as Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Health) for the written response provided on the Youth Justice Strategy and measures being taken to address youth violence Councillor Warsame, highlighting ongoing concerns in relation to youth safety, also took the opportunity to outline associated concerns about the impact arising from the loss of accessible open space for young people and the increasing density of development across parts of the borough. As a supplementary question, he therefore asked what action the Council was taking through its wider property strategy to ensure the continued provision of youth facilities and accessible community space for young people.

As part of a joint response, Councillor Rubin began by taking the opportunity to express his condolences to the family friends and all those affected by the tragic death of David Wynter at the Civic Centre and pay tribute to those Council staff and emergency responders who had acted so courageously and compassionately in attempting to save his life, as well as to the leadership shown in bringing the community together during such a difficult period following on from those events.

Addressing the wider question, Councillor Rubin felt it important to recognise the significant financial pressures experienced by the Council following reductions in local government funding since 2010, explaining how these had affected the Council's ability to directly provide youth services. Despite these pressures, however, he felt it important to recognise the recent investment it had been possible to provide in facilities and organisations such as the OK Club, Cricklewood Boxing Club, the Jason Roberts Foundation and the Church End Youth Anchor alongside the work being undertaken with partners to bid for funding linked to the Mayor of London's initiative to provide late-night youth centres. As such he ended his response by highlighting the Council's continued commitment to developing youth provision through a range of collaborative approaches.

In support of the initial response provided, Councillor Dixon also highlighted the focus (alongside the investment being provided) on the need to better connect young people with existing support and opportunities including community-based intervention, youth engagement programmes as well as investment in physical facilities. Reference was made to the range of campaign and partnership activity being undertaken with organisations including I Am Brent, Young Brent Foundation and Raheem Sterling Foundation alongside collaborative work with the police and local communities supported by a wider programme of community engagement activity designed to tackle the issue of youth violence and divert those at risk from offending as well as to support those affected by serious youth violence. In ending her response Councillor Dixon hoped all members would support these efforts recognising that tackling youth violence and supporting young people required a coordinated effort involving the Council, partners and wider community.

Having thanked members for their written questions and Cabinet Members for the responses provided to the supplementary questions, the Mayor advised that he intended to move on with the remainder of time available being 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 Clinton to Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council) seeking an update on representations made to TfL and the Deputy Mayor for Transport regarding the extension of operating hours on the Piccadilly Line Uxbridge branch, including the potential introduction of a Night Tube service. In noting that the Deputy Mayor had indicated service improvements would need to be considered as part of wider network planning and investment decisions, further details were requested on any subsequent engagement and whether the Council intended to continue lobbying for improved transport connectivity for residents in the north-west of the borough.

In response, Councillor Muhammed Butt advised that whilst no further direct representations had been made since the Deputy Mayor's earlier response, he was aware that TfL continued to review future service enhancements linked to rolling stock replacement and wider investment programmes. Attention was also drawn to planned accessibility improvements, including step-free access works, as enhancements designed to benefit local residents. While acknowledging the constraints currently facing TfL, the opportunity was also taken to reiterate the Council's support for improving public transport connectivity, with the Leader providing an assurance that opportunities for further engagement with the Deputy Mayor and TfL would be explored once the introduction of new trains and future service patterns became clearer.

(ii) Councillor Anderson who, having highlighted ongoing concerns regarding the impact of knife crime and serious youth violence on local communities following the tragic death of David Wynter and strength of feeling amongst residents, sought further assurance from Councillor Dixon (as Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Health) in relation to the activity being focussed on the prevention of violence and providing positive opportunities for young people, with support also sought for a visible demonstration of community solidarity as a means of helping to bring families, schools, voluntary organisations, faith groups and young people together based around the proposed organisation of a peace march and wider community-led initiatives.

In response Councillor Dixon, having recognised the importance of community action in addressing the causes and consequences of serious violence, felt it important to highlight the range of work already being undertaken with local partners, including schools, youth services, community groups and the police, to support vulnerable young people and promote prevention activity. The suggestion of a peace march was also welcomed which would be taken back for further consideration in order to assess how such an initiative could contribute to existing programmes recognising the need also identified to ensure a coordinated approach that addressed education, employment, mentoring and early intervention whilst ensuring that the voices of young people and affected families remained central to future work.

(iii) In highlighting concern regarding the increasing levels of council tax debt within the borough and financial pressures being faced by many residents amidst the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, Councillor Alexandre sought further details from Councillor Grahl (as Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources) on the approach towards the use of enforcement action, including liability orders and bailiff action along with assurance that vulnerable residents would be supported appropriately before recovery measures were pursued. Details were also sought on what additional measures were being taken to improve resident engagement and prevent households from falling into unmanageable debt.

In response, Councillor Grahl acknowledged the financial challenges facing many households and outlined the Council's approach to balancing income collection with resident support, highlighting the work of the dedicated Council Tax Engagement and Recovery Team in seeking to engage residents at as early a stage as possible in order to identify support options before

enforcement activity became necessary. Members were also reminded of the significant financial assistance available through the Council Tax Support Scheme and the Council Tax Hardship Fund, noting that more than 13,000 hardship awards with a value of approximately £1.5m had been provided during the previous year. In ending, members were advised that the Administration remained committed to supporting residents experiencing financial difficulty whilst ensuring that council tax revenues necessary for the delivery of local services continued to be collected.

(iv) Councillor Maurice seeking details from Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) on action the Council would be prepared take in seeking to address concerns regarding the persistent pigeon nuisance beneath the railway bridge in Windermere Avenue. Referring to complaints received from local residents regarding bird fouling, public health concerns and the deterioration of existing bird deterrent measures, clarification was sought as to who was responsible for maintaining the structure and what progress had been made in securing a permanent solution.

In response, Councillor Muhammed Butt confirmed that responsibility for the bridge and associated infrastructure rested with Network Rail, with the concerns identified having been raised with Network Rail and the Council continuing to seek the necessary remedial action. Whilst recognising the frustration experienced by local residents, he felt it important to clarify that the Council's ability to intervene directly was limited due to ownership responsibilities with an undertaking provided to continue engaging with Network Rail to explore whether further mitigation measures could be identified.

(v) Councillor Jayanti Patel, highlighting concerns and seeking an update from Councillor Knight (as Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm) regarding the increasing number of abandoned supermarket trolleys across Queensbury which he described as a source of environmental blight and felt represented a visible indication of neglect. Despite the frequency with which residents reported dumped trolleys through the Council's reporting portal and the Trolleywise application, he pointed out many remained unattended for extended periods. Concerns were also expressed regarding the financial burden placed on local taxpayers, noting that some local authorities operated recovery charge schemes requiring supermarkets to contribute towards removal costs. He therefore asked what oversight arrangements existed and whether the Council would be prepared to support a charging scheme for supermarkets where repeated collection activity was required as a means of encouraging more proactive retrieval arrangements.

In response, Councillor Knight acknowledged the concerns being raised by local residents along with the negative impact abandoned trolleys could have on local neighbourhoods. Whilst advising that Council enforcement teams already worked in partnership with supermarkets to tackle trolley abandonment and associated littering issues, Councillor Knight advised she would be willing to follow up on the specific issues highlighted outside of the meeting in order to review what additional measures could be introduced to address the problem more effectively, including potential charging mechanisms.

(vi) In highlighting the importance in ensuring that the Council's response to serious youth violence was able to reach those young people who were most vulnerable to exploitation and criminal involvement, Councillor Blackman made reference to examples from other London boroughs where peer mentoring, youth ambassadors and lived-experience programmes had played an effective role in engagement and asked Councillor Dixon (as Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Health) what consideration could be given to the way these type of approaches could also be incorporated into local violence reduction strategies in Brent.

In response, Councillor Dixon welcomed the comments and example provided supporting the value that trusted peer networks could play alongside traditional support services. Having outlined ongoing work involving community organisations, youth projects and externally funded initiatives designed to engage vulnerable young people confirmation was provided that the Council would continue to examine best practice from elsewhere in London and nationally (including lessons learnt from Glasgow's public health approach to knife crime) with a view to adopting successful interventions where appropriate whilst also highlighting the importance of learning from local families and communities affected by violence in order to ensure that future programmes continued to remain informed by lived experience and community need.

(vii) As a final question, Councillor Brown highlighted concerns about excessive vegetation growth around a number of street trees within Wembley Central Ward, noting that overgrown areas were affecting the appearance of the local environment and giving rise to complaints from residents. Given these concerns he sought a commitment from Councillor Knight (as Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport and Public Realm) that the locations would be inspected and action taken where maintenance was required.

In response, Councillor Knight reminded members of the need to ensure the specific issues and locations identified were reported to enable targeted review, monitoring and action by officers utilising the FixMyStreet app. Confirmation was provided that once details were provided these could be assessed with arrangements made for any necessary maintenance works to be undertaken.

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

12. Report from Chairs of Scrutiny Committees

The Mayor then moved on to deal with the updates from each Scrutiny Committee Chair. Reminding members of the changes to the Council Procured Rules agreed at the start of the meeting he advised members that the written reports submitted by the Chairs of both Committees were for reference purposes only and would no longer require presentation on an individual basis or include the opportunity for questions to be raised on matters relating to the work of each Committee.

On the basis of the reports submitted, Council therefore **RESOLVED** to note the updates on work being undertaken by the Resources & Public Realm and Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committees.

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

The Mayor invited Councillor Choudry, 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 Choudry once again 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.

The importance of the Committee's role was also highlighted in terms of the wider financial challenges, risks and pressures being faced by the Council with a focus provided in relation to delivery of the Internal Audit Plan and Council's risk management structure and strategic risk management process including not only the effectiveness of governance processes but also Council's financial resilience. In outlining the wide range of work being undertaken as part of the Committee's governance and assurance responsibilities, members were advised this had included a focus on areas including Treasury Management, the Strategic Risk Register, member gifts and hospitality, counter-fraud activity and the progress in response to the Councils Self-Referral to the Social Housing Regulator as well as in relation to the Council's Draft Statement of Accounts.

In concluding his update, Councillor Choudry took the opportunity to assure members of the Committee's continued 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 as well as member standards. As a final comment, the opportunity was also taken to place on record the committee's thanks to David Ewart for his service and contribution as Independent Chair in advance of his term of office coming to an end.

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

14. **Treasury Management Outturn Report 2025-26**

The Mayor then invited Councillor Grahl, as Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources, to introduce a report from the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources updating members on the Council's Treasury Management Activity during 2025 - 26.

In introducing the report, Councillor Grahl began by highlighted the importance of Treasury Management in supporting the Council's strategic priorities and ensuring the continued delivery of investment across the borough. Members were advised that, whilst the previous year had presented significant financial challenges, including the continued impact of higher interest rates and increased borrowing

requirements, the Council had remained within its approved borrowing limits and continued to operate in accordance with its Treasury Management Strategy.

Members were advised that this prudent approach to borrowing had enabled continued investment in key priorities across the borough, including the delivery of new homes, infrastructure improvements and wider community assets such as schools, libraries and leisure facilities. In outlining the scale of the investment programme, members were informed that capital expenditure of approximately £209.9m had been delivered during 2025-26, with investment viewed as essential in addressing long-term financial pressures and reducing future demand on Council services particularly in relation to housing and key infrastructure. Reference was also made to the wider national policy context, including the Government's commitment to increased public investment focussed on initiatives such as the Social and Affordable Homes Programme; additional support being provided for local authority housebuilding and to end rough sleeping alongside investment to address pressures in SEND provision, which it was felt would also provide further opportunities to support residents and complement the Council's own investment ambitions.

In recognising the scale of Brent's capital ambitions, members were advised that these continued to be balanced against the need to maintain financial sustainability and affordability, with the Deputy Leader outlining the Council's "little and often" borrowing approach, which allowed borrowing decisions to be phased and reviewed in response to changing interest rates, helping to manage costs and reduce financial risk in an effort to support the investment required whilst seeking to minimise future costs and improve outcomes for residents.

In concluding, Councillor Grahl reaffirmed that the Council's investment programme remained underpinned by a responsible Treasury Management Strategy, affordable borrowing arrangements and careful consideration of the long-term costs and benefits associated with investment decisions. The opportunity was also taken to thank officers within the Finance service for their expertise and support in enabling the Council to navigate a challenging financial environment whilst continuing to invest in services and facilities for residents.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Grahl for introducing the report and as no other members indicated they wished to speak and no need was indicated to exercise a right of reply, then moved to put the recommendations in the report to the vote which were declared **CARRIED**.

Council therefore **RESOLVED** to note and approve, following its consideration by Audit & Standards Advisory Committee on 27 July 2026 and Cabinet on 7 September 2026, the 2025 - 26 Treasury Management outturn report in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice.

Prior to considering the final items on the agenda the Mayor advised that as the remaining time available was shortly due to expire he intended to move the suspension of Standing Order 44 (Council Guillotine Procedure) in order to extend the time of the meeting by a period of 15 minutes, to enable completion of the agenda. In accordance with Standing Order 42 (d) the procedural motion was put to the vote without further discussion and declared **CARRIED**.

15. **Changes to the Constitution**

The Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Leader of the Council, to introduce a report from the Corporate Director Finance and Resources detailing a number of proposed amendments to the Constitution in relation to the Terms of Reference for the Planning Committee (Part 4 of the Constitution) following national changes in regulations being introduced to the planning system; Full Council meeting standing orders (Part 2 of the Constitution) and the Members' Allowance Scheme (Part 6 of the Constitution).

In introducing the report, the Leader advised that the changes set out for consideration had been developed following consideration by the Constitutional Oversight Group and had involved cross-party discussions. Members were advised that the principal amendments related to new national planning regulations governing the delegation of planning decisions between officers and Planning Committees, changes to Standing Orders relating to committee appointments and nominations, and a proposal to increase the allowance payable to the Independent Chair of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee. Confirmation was provided that the proposed planning related amendments had been required to ensure the Council's Constitution remained compliant with the new national framework whilst also retaining routes through which significant planning applications could be considered by elected members with the increase in the allowance for the Independent Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee intended to attract suitably qualified applicants and provide remuneration that more appropriately reflected the responsibilities associated with the role in advance of recruitment for the new chair commencing. In commending the proposed changes to members, Councillor Muhammed Butt ended by highlighting the living nature of the Constitution which he pointed out would remain subject to ongoing review and refinement and with the current amendments felt to represent a practical and proportionate approach to the changes required.

Having thanked Councillor Muhammed Butt for moving the report, the Mayor then opened the debate inviting other members to speak on the report, with the following contributions made.

In opening the debate, Councillor Maurice began by highlighting his concerns regarding the proposed planning delegation arrangements which he felt would significantly reduce opportunities for applications to be referred to Planning Committee and scrutinised in public, with the removal of existing referral mechanisms seen as limiting transparency and reducing democratic oversight of planning decisions. Referring to planning applications within his ward, he maintained that residents expected applications of significant interest to be debated publicly and as such felt that the proposed constitutional changes would reduce opportunities for such scrutiny and on that basis indicated he was unable to support the proposed amendments.

Speaking next Councillor Lorber, whilst acknowledging that the changes in relation to the planning arrangements were being driven by government legislation, also expressed concern regarding the impact of the changes and how they had been communicated to councillors and residents. Given the high level of public interest in planning matters he felt many residents would struggle to understand the basis of

the changes being made and restrictions on their elected ward councillors no longer being able to request the consideration of certain applications. Drawing on a recent example in his ward, he criticised the operation of delegated powers, expressing concern regarding applications being determined without sufficient public engagement or awareness supported by concern also raised in relation to the effectiveness of the Council's planning portal given the difficulties faced in engaging with consultation processes online. As a result of the concerns raised, Councillor Lorber ended by proposing an amendment on the constitutional changes relating to the planning arrangements, which he felt should be deferred to enable further scrutiny through either the Planning Committee or an alternative forum in order to establish appropriate safeguards, communication arrangements and procedural protocols.

Following on, Councillor Georgiou also spoke to support the concerns expressed regarding the changes proposed to the planning arrangements also highlighting concerns around wider constitutional governance issues. In referring to comments made by the Leader regarding collaborative working through the Constitutional Oversight Group, he sought to challenge that mechanism as providing an opportunity for meaningful engagement, with the example provided of the process surrounding the appointment of the Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee undertaken at the start of the meeting which was not felt to have reflected the independent status of the scrutiny function or importance of democratic accountability given the final appointment made not having been an Opposition member and role of the Labour administration in the process.

Responding to Councillor Georgiou's comments, Councillor Blackman sought to challenge the view that the concerns relating to the appointment of the scrutiny chair had involved constitutional arrangements and were (based on his understanding of the earlier discussion) instead linked to issues around the nomination process. Returning to focus on the proposals within the report, he highlighted his support for the proposed increase in remuneration for the position of Independent Chair in the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee, noting the importance in encouraging independent participation in civic and democratic processes and recognising the value of independent members serving on council committees, with the increase felt to be appropriate given the responsibilities of the role.

Also referring to previous comments made during the debate, Councillor Kansagra challenged the views expressed regarding operation of the Constitutional Oversight Group, rejecting suggestions that discussions within the group had been misrepresented with issues relating to the appointment process involving the Housing Scrutiny Chair position falling outside the constitutional review process. Once again, returning to the proposals within the report concerns were shared regarding the practical implications and impact of the planning changes which had been proposed, with it felt that issues relating to committee appointments should be considered separately from the constitutional amendments under consideration.

Responding to the concerns raised around the appointment process for the Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Mitchell once again sought to clarify the position from the Green Groups perspective outlining the discussions that had taken place regarding the nomination process and outlining the subsequent communication with the Group Leaders in advance of the meeting. Confirmation

was again provided that the Green Group had not indicated they intended to withdraw their Group nomination in advance of the meeting with, it felt, their position having remained clear and consistent throughout the process.

Asa final contribution to the debate and in returning, once again, to focus on the proposed changes within the report as they related to the planning arrangements Councillor Kelcher (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Planning) felt it important to remind members that the planning reforms outlined had been required as a result of the changes being introduced nationally by Government rather than as proposals initiated by the Council. In support of the wider changes to the planning system being introduced by the Government, Councillor Kelcher highlighted how he felt they had been designed to modernise a planning system which had become increasingly restrictive, especially when compared with those operating elsewhere in Europe. In his view, reform was therefore necessary to support housing delivery and address the wider housing crisis. Whilst recognising concerns regarding the implementation of the changes locally, he reminded members that the cross-party Local Plan Working Group continued to provide an appropriate forum through which detailed consideration of the impact could take place and ended, in referring to previous comments made during the debate, by also seeking to challenge the assertion that members of the Labour Administration could not chair scrutiny committees independently, defending the integrity and experience of the newly appointed Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee.

During his contribution to the debate, Councillor Kelcher responded to a point of clarification raised by Councillor Lorber on a potential interest, with confirmation provided that all relevant interests had been disclosed within his online register of interests.

As there were no further members who had indicated they wished to speak and in view of the remaining time available the Mayor, having thanked members for their contribution, then drew the debate to a close inviting Councillor Muhammed Butt (as mover of the original report) to exercise any right of reply.

In exercising his right of reply, Councillor Muhammed Butt thanked members for their contributions. Whilst acknowledging the concerns highlighted in relation to the impact of the change in the planning arrangements, he felt it important to remind members these had been required to ensure the Council was legally able to comply with the national Regulations being introduced by the Government. Assurance was provided that the changes being sought would not remove the requirement for planning applications to continue being assessed against adopted planning policies and in accordance with professional standards, and confidence expressed in the role undertaken by planning officers to ensure decisions would continue to receive appropriate consideration under the revised arrangements. Turning to the remaining constitutional amendments, he noted that discussions had already taken place regarding committee appointment procedures and reiterated that the proposed increase in the allowance for the independent Chair of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee was intended to bring Brent’s arrangements into line with those operating elsewhere and ensure that independent office holders were appropriately remunerated. On the basis outlined he therefore commended the change to members for approval.

The Mayor then moved to the vote on the recommendations within the report, having confirmed that he was not willing to accept the amendment moved by Councillor Lorber during his contribution to the debate given it had not been submitted in accordance with the required deadline.

Having put the recommendations to a vote they were declared **LOST** with it **RESOLVED** not to approve the changes to the Constitution as set out in the main body and within Appendix 1 of the report.

In response to the proposed amendments not being approved, the Mayor advised members there would be a requirement for the proposed changes in relation to the planning arrangements to be bought back (following review) for reconsideration at a subsequent Full Council meeting. Given the deadline for implementation of the planning regulations nationally by the end of October 2026, confirmation was provided this would require the convening of an Extraordinary Council Meeting for which a date would be confirmed following the meeting.

16. **s85 Resolution to approve reason for councillor non-attendance at meetings**

The Mayor then moved on to the final item of business on the agenda and invited Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) to introduce a report from the Corporate Director Finance and Resources seeking approval, pursuant to Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, to the reason for the non-attendance of a councillor at meetings.

In introducing the report, the Leader reminded members there would be occasions when personal circumstances and caring responsibilities made it difficult for members to be able attend meetings on a regular basis. As a result, he advised the report was seeking a dispensation in relation to Councillor Mahmood's personal circumstances and caring responsibilities, given the health and wellbeing support he was currently providing for a close family member with the request designed to recognise the exceptional circumstances outlined and ensure he was able to continue fulfilling his responsibilities while providing the necessary care and support to his family.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Muhammed Butt for introducing the report and as no other members indicated they wished to speak and no need was indicated to exercise a right of reply, then moved to put the recommendations in the report to the vote which were declared unanimously **CARRIED**.

Council therefore **RESOLVED** to approve, in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, the reason set out at paragraph 3.3 of the report in respect of Councillor Mahmood's non-attendance at meetings until the Council's Annual Meeting in May 2027.

17. **Exclusion of the Press & Public**

There were no items that required the exclusion of the press and public from the meeting.

18. **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 he looked forward to seeing everyone again in person at the next Full Council which would be taking place on Monday 16 November 2026.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm

COUNCILLOR AMER AGHA MB BS, MSC, PHCM
Mayor