



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

Minutes of the ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
held in the Grand Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Wednesday 22 May 2024 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Tariq Dar MBE

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Diana Collymore

COUNCILLORS:

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

1. **Welcoming Statement**

Prior to formally opening the meeting, the outgoing Mayor Councillor Hylton took the opportunity to welcome all councillors and guests to the Annual Council meeting. She then invited Kim Wright (as the Council's Chief Executive) to provide a brief outline of the arrangements for the conduct of the meeting and Mayor Making ceremony. Having noted the outline provided, the Mayor then moved on to formally open the meeting.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

The Mayor advised that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Crabb, Mistry, Smith and Tatler.

3. **To elect the Mayor of the Borough for the Municipal Year 2024 - 2025**

Prior to handing over to the Chief Executive for the conduct of the election process, Councillor Hylton began by asking members for nominations to the office of Mayor of the London of Borough of Brent for the 2024 - 2025 Municipal Year.

Councillor Muhammed Butt proceeded to nominate Councillor Tariq Dar MBE. In moving the nomination, he firstly took the opportunity to thank Councillor Hylton for her hard work and dedication whilst serving as Mayor and commitment in seeking to represent local community groups and organisations. The Leader then moved on to advise how pleased he was to be able to nominate Councillor Dar for the position, recognising the important role undertaken by the Mayor in representing and providing strong civic leadership across the borough.

Councillor Mili Patel then seconded the nomination of Councillor Dar for the office of Mayor of the London of Borough of Brent for the 2024 - 2025 Municipal Year.

There were no other nominations and it was therefore **RESOLVED** that Councillor Tariq Dar MBE be elected Mayor of the London Borough of Brent for the 2024 - 2025 Municipal Year.

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

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

Councillor Dar, as newly appointed Mayor, thanked members for his nomination and appointment as Mayor. He then announced the appointment of Councillor Diana Collymore to serve as Deputy Mayor for the 2024 - 2025 Municipal Year.

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

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

Highlighting the privilege he felt in being appointed as Mayor, Councillor Dar regarded this as the culmination of the work he had undertaken since arriving in the UK in 1965 in seeking to champion residents, for which he was also proud to have been recognised with the award of an MBE in 2019. Having been a local councillor since 2018, Councillor Dar advised he was honoured to currently serve as a representative of Mapesbury ward as well as to have served as Deputy Mayor during 2023-24 and paid specific tribute to his family and fellow councillors for their support during this time. He also took the opportunity to express gratitude to all the elders across the borough, with specific reference to his and other families proud legacy in their service to the UK (including its Armed forces) and in providing a platform for the establishment of various Welfare Associations, Mosques and Community Centres given the support being provided to communities across the borough, which he blessed and hoped would continue for many generations to come.

Having advised how delighted he was to have been joined by so many guests, Councillor Dar then moved on to express his thanks to Councillor Hylton and congratulated her for the success achieved as Mayor, recognising the hard work she had undertaken to support local community groups and events across the borough and to continue promoting Brent so diligently.

The Mayor then moved on to congratulate Councillor Collymore on her appointment as Deputy Mayor and advised how much he was looking forward to working with her over the coming year in order to continue delivering, positives outcomes for the borough.

Referring to teamwork, the Mayor outlined that he intended to continue working closely with fellow members, the Chief Executive, Council Management Team and other officers in order to capitalise on the strengths and experience available in continuing the hard work of the outgoing and previous Mayors in seeking to achieve the best results for the borough focussed around cohesion and trust.

Councillor Dar then outlined the aims for his Mayoralty in terms of continuing to support the Council's overall vision and objectives. In this role he advised that he also intended to support the Pakistan Community Centre as his chosen charitable organisation during his year in office. Referring to their role as a voluntary and charity organisation, the Mayor highlighted the valuable work undertaken by the Community Centre since its establishment in 1965. This had originally involved supporting newly arrived migrants from the subcontinent in addressing employment, housing and other social needs before evolving to their current status as a community based organisation providing support on a wide range of local issues, including participation in projects to assist the homeless and working with churches and other local organisations to provide shelter and food to those most disadvantaged in society. Highlighting the important work undertaken through the Pakistan Community Centre he hoped all members would support him with the fund raising efforts during his year in office.

Reflecting on the level of diversity within communities across Brent, the Mayor ended by taking the opportunity to thank his family, friends and wider community for their support over the coming year and by once again highlighting how proud he was to have been elected as Brent's First Citizen along with his intention to continue using the role to support the work being undertaken to unite communities

and address the uncertain times and challenges being experienced by so many across the borough.

5. **Vote of thanks to the outgoing Mayor**

The Mayor then invited Councillor Mili Patel, as Deputy Leader, to propose a vote of thanks to all co-opted and other members serving on the Council's committees.

Councillor Mili Patel began by congratulating Councillor Dar on his appointment as Mayor before moving on to highlight the valued work of the Council's co-opted and independent committee members, given the core role they played as critical friends in the Council's democratic process. In passing on her thanks, she advised how their independence and objectivity were seen as integral to the role of the bodies on which they served including Scrutiny, Audit & Standards and the various health and education bodies. Recognising the challenges which local government continued to face, she ended by thanking all of the co-opted and Independent Members for their work in supporting the Council's democratic processes and drive towards continuous improvement.

The Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) to formally propose a vote of thanks for the outgoing Mayor, Councillor Hylton. In doing so, the Leader began by congratulating the new Mayor and Deputy Mayor on their appointment and by highlighting the honour in serving as First Citizen of the Borough and in being able to advocate and serve as a champion for Brent. These were roles he felt Councillor Hylton had worked hard to fulfil during her time as Mayor. Recognising her passion and commitment to the people of Brent and the range of local community organisations and events she had supported, the Leader praised Councillor Hylton for her efforts and for the valued contribution made in representing the borough during her Mayoralty, which he advised had been appreciated by all members.

The Mayor then invited comments from other members in recognition of the role undertaken by the outgoing Mayor.

Councillor Kansagra, as Leader of the Conservative Group, in opening the tributes began by taking the opportunity to congratulate the new Mayor and Deputy Mayor on their appointment, which he hoped they would take full advantage of in seeking to work with the varied communities across the borough. He then moved on to thank Councillor Hylton, as the outgoing Mayor, for the way she had conducted herself in her civic role as well as for the way she had chaired the Council meetings and wished her well on her return to ordinary ward councillor duties.

Following on, Councillor Kabir also took the opportunity to welcome and congratulate the new Mayor and Deputy Mayor on their appointment before moving on to commend Councillor Hylton for the dignity, friendliness dedication and passion she had demonstrated in supporting so many local community events during her time as Mayor, which she felt sure had left a lasting impression on all those involved.

Councillor Mahmood also took the opportunity to thank and commend Councillor Hylton for a successful year in office, recognising the extent of work undertaken to engage with local community organisations across the borough and authority

displayed in fulfilling her role. Recognising the honour in being elected to serve as Mayor, he also congratulated Councillor Dar on his appointment referring to his experience in community engagement and support, which he was confident would continue to be utilised to support residents across the borough and in raising the profile of Brent whilst also respecting the legacy of those elders within the community who had led the way in terms of mentoring and supporting the development of so much community engagement.

Councillor Kennelly in congratulating the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on their appointment also spoke to praise and recognise the valuable work undertaken by Councillor Hylton during her time as Mayor not only in representing the borough as a whole but also specifically in support of Preston Community Library and the wider local community and to welcome her back in her role as ward councillor.

Councillor Moeen then spoke and having congratulated and welcomed the newly appointed Mayor & Deputy Mayor, also paid tribute to Councillor Hylton for the work undertaken to support local community groups highlighting the privilege in being able to work so closely with her during her year in office.

Councillor Gbajumo also took the opportunity, having congratulated the new Mayor and Deputy Mayor on their appointment, to pay tribute to Councillor Hylton for the passion, strength and compassion demonstrated in the tireless work undertaken to support events (particularly across her ward) aimed at uniting and supporting local communities.

The comments made in tribute to Councillor Hylton were also echoed by Councillor Hack who took the opportunity (speaking as a friend and close associate) to highlight her strength of character and commitment in seeking to promote the core values of community and society in her role as Mayor and support as many local events and organisations as possible.

In thanking Councillor Hylton for the effort she had made to support so many local community events during her time in office and supporting the comments previously made, Councillor Miller also took the opportunity to welcome and congratulate Councillor Dar on his appointment highlighting the role he had played as an initial mentor to him in seeking to become a local councillor and community representative.

Councillor S. Butt in thanking and commending Councillor Hylton for the way she had conducted herself as Mayor during her time in office also spoke to congratulate Councillor Dar on his appointment, recognising the close link between previous generations of his and the new Mayor's family along with his dedication and commitment to public and community service, which he wished him all the best in continuing during his time in office.

As a further contribution and in reflecting on previous comments made Councillor Nerva, in recognising the commitment displayed to local communities and residents across the borough as a whole, thanked Councillor Hylton for the inclusive nature of the approach she had adopted which he felt had been particularly important during such a challenging time internationally and represented the hallmark of a strong Mayoralty.

Councillor Johnson also took the opportunity to congratulate the new Mayor & Deputy Mayor on their appointment before congratulating Councillor Hylton on her year in office. In commending Councillor Hylton for the wide range of work and engagements undertaken over the course of the year he also felt it was important to recognise how proud her late mother and brother would have been of her achievements, which he had no doubt she would continue to deliver as she stepped back into her role as ward councillor.

Continuing the tributes to Councillor Hylton on her achievements as Mayor, Councillor Choudry also took the opportunity to congratulate Councillor Dar on his appointment recognising his commitment to Brent and also the support provided to him personally as a new councillor.

In concluding the tributes, Councillor Dixon also took the opportunity to thank Councillor Hylton for her hard work as Mayor recognising and supporting the comments already made and in ending also took the opportunity to congratulate Councillor Dar as a colleague and friend on his appointment. Referring to his kindness, knowledge and commitment (particularly in his efforts to support work with young offenders) she was sure these would continue to be demonstrated during his year in office and in seeking to represent local communities across the borough which she advised she looked forward to supporting him on.

The Mayor then invited Councillor Hylton to return thanks and review her time in office.

Councillor Hylton, in returning thanks, began by taking a moment to remember a well known local resident Mr Norman Mitchell, who she advised had sadly passed away recently at the age of 103. In reflecting on his life and contribution to the borough, Councillor Hylton advised that she had personally known Mr Mitchell for many years, recalling the voluntary work he had undertaken supported by other residents, including her late mother, for which he had also been recognised with the award of an MBE. Referring to his continual smile and the legacy he had created, Councillor Hylton took the opportunity, on behalf of the Council, to offer her sincere condolences to Mr Mitchell's family and friends and invited all members to join her in observing a period of silence in memory and honour of Mr Norman Mitchell.

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

Moving on to review her time in office, Councillor Hylton began by expressing her pride at having been elected as Mayor and being able to serve the people of Brent during the previous year. Reflecting on the honour in being able to serve the borough, particular thanks were extended to all members for their support along with Kim Wright, as Chief Executive, the Leader of the Council, Fatema Limbada within Democratic Services and Kim Gordan & Brian Kennedy in the Mayor's Office, which had been much valued. The opportunity was also taken to thank Councillor Kennelly for his specific support as fellow Preston ward councillor whilst her attention had been focussed on Mayoral duties over the past year.

Reflecting on her time in office, Councillor Hylton highlighted the vast range of events she had been fortunate to attend (totalling 351) which had involved her

being able to meet so many inspiring, talented and generous local individuals, all of whom, she advised, had made her proud to represent and live in Brent with a specific highlight having been the first joint St Patrick's Day celebration arranged between the Irish and Nigerian communities across the borough. Thanking everyone for the warmth in which she had been welcomed and received, Councillor Hylton then moved on to review her fundraising activities over the year, reminding members of the two charities she had pledged to support and raise the profile of during her time in office. These had been PILAS and Preston Community Library, for which she had been pleased to highlight the important work and support each organisation provided to some of the most vulnerable people in the borough as part of her fundraising activities. Whilst the final sum was still to be confirmed, Councillor Hylton advised she was delighted to be able to inform members that as a result of the support received in her various fundraising activities over £22,000 had been raised during her time as Mayor to support the ongoing work of both charities. All members then joined Councillor Hylton in a round of applause to recognise the work undertaken by each organisation and all those who had supported the fundraising activities.

Highlighting how much she had enjoyed her time as Mayor, Councillor Hylton ended by taking the opportunity to thank all members, council staff, local community groups and residents for their support and to thank Councillor Dar for his support as Deputy Mayor and to wish him and his family, along with Councillor Collymore as his deputy, all the best for the coming year as Mayor.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Hylton for her comments and highlighted how much he had enjoyed working with her during her time as Mayor. He ended by wishing her well for the future and then advised that as this now concluded the ceremonial part of the meeting, he would move on to deal with the remainder of the agenda.

6. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests declared by Members at the meeting.

7. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 29 February 2024 be approved as a correct record.

8. **Annual Review of Constitution**

The Mayor invited Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) to introduce the report from the Corporate Director of Law & Governance. In presenting the report, Councillor Muhammed Butt advised this detailed a number of proposed changes to the Constitution as a result of its annual review including changes to reflect the recent realignment of senior management functions and changes to Cabinet portfolios. The other changes outlined included amendments to the procedure for dealing with motions to Full Council (Standing Order 41 Part 2 of Constitution) along with changes to the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee Terms of Reference, Local Code of Corporate Governance (Part 5 of Constitution) and Members Allowance Scheme in relation to the Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Sickness Pay Policy (Part 6 of Constitution)

Having introduced the report, the Mayor then invited Councillor Georgiou (as leader of the Liberal Democrats Group) to move an amendment to the report submitted prior to the meeting in relation to the charring arrangements for the Council's scrutiny function.

Councillor Georgiou began by congratulating the Mayor on his appointment and in moving the amendment started by making reference to the importance of scrutiny as a key element in a healthy functioning democracy which, to ensure maximum effectiveness, he felt should be as independent of the Executive as possible. Highlighting the efforts made to support the role of effective scrutiny within the Council reference was made to the use of call-in and scrutiny as a means of seeking to hold the Executive to account but with concerns expressed at the changes introduced to the charring arrangements for each Committee, which he felt had effectively prevented the Opposition Groups from having any meaningful say in the way scrutiny was led. In order to safeguard the effectiveness, democratic accountability and independence of Brent's scrutiny function, Councillor Georgiou advised the Liberal Democrats had therefore proposed an amendment to Standing Order 49(ii) within Part 2 (Procedural Rules) of the Constitution requiring that the Chairs of the existing Scrutiny Committees should be Opposition Group appointments with an alternative also moved, should the initial amendment not be agreed, to require that the Vice-Chairs of the existing Scrutiny Committee become Opposition Group appointments.

The Mayor then opened the debate inviting other members to speak on the report and amendment(s) moved by Councillor Georgiou, with the following contributions made.

As an initial contribution, Councillor Kelcher felt it important to clarify the position regarding the appointment process for members of each scrutiny committee and the Chairs, which he reminded members reflected the overall proportion of seats each political group held on the Council and democratic mandate the current Administration had been provided with following the local election. These were, he pointed out, well-established principles and had not been designed to undermine the independence or important role of the scrutiny function as a critical friend. On this basis he advised he would not be supporting either of the amendments moved.

Councillor Kansagra speaking in support of the proposed changes within the amendment, as Leader of the Conservative Group, highlighted the concerns his Group had also previously raised in relation to impact which removal of the vice-chair roles on scrutiny from the Opposition Groups had had in undermining the independence and democratic accountability of the scrutiny function. As a result, he felt the amendment(s) moved were reasonable, proportionate and would deliver improved scrutiny along with better outcomes for all. He therefore advised the Conservative Group would be supporting the amendment(s).

Councillor Afzal, speaking against the amendment also felt there was a need to recognise the democratic mandate provided to the Administration by residents following the last local election, which he felt also reflected a core principle of an effective and healthy democratic and, in expressing concern at any attempts being made to politicise the scrutiny function, felt this also needed to be taken into account when considering the amendment.

As a final contribution, Councillor Lorber also speaking in support of the proposed amendment advised that whilst not seeking to politicise the scrutiny function the proposal moved by Councillor Georgiou on behalf of the Liberal Democrats had been designed to reflect the original objectives of the Labour Government when establishing the current scrutiny arrangements in local government as part of the introduction of wider Executive decision-making powers. In order to maintain a strong, credible and effective scrutiny function Councillor Lorber felt it was important to ensure that the function was as independent as possible from the Executive, with the amendment he pointed out reflecting this objective and previous practice within the Authority.

As no further members indicated they wished to speak the Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt to exercise his right of reply in relation to the report and amendment moved at the meeting.

In summing up, Councillor Muhammed Butt began by highlighting what he felt was a need to recognise the clear mandate provided for the current Labour Administration following the most recent local election, which he felt also covered member's participation in scrutiny and the wider democratic process. In commending the work of the existing Scrutiny Chairs and Committees, and opportunities that already existed for the Opposition Groups to fully participate and engage in the way scrutiny was being delivered Councillor Muhammed Butt advised that the Labour Group did not feel any further changes were required and were not therefore minded to support the amendment(s) moved by Councillor Georgiou at the meeting.

As a final contribution, the Mayor then invited Councillor Georgiou to exercise his right of reply in relation to the discussion on the amendment moved at the meeting. In responding Councillor Georgiou expressed concern at the stance taken by the Labour Administration in terms of the appointment of the scrutiny chairs and vice-chairs and impact on the overall independence of the scrutiny function, which he felt undermined its overall effectiveness and democratic accountability. Whilst recognising the work being undertaken by the existing scrutiny chair's the amendments were commended to members as a means of further strengthening the effectiveness of the overall scrutiny process and ability for meaningful engagement by the Opposition Groups.

Having thanked members for their contributions the Mayor then moved on to put the amendment and recommendations within the report to the vote.

On putting the initial amendment relating to the chairing arrangements for scrutiny moved by Councillor Georgiou to the vote this was declared **LOST**.

As a result, the alternative amendment moved by Councillor Georgiou relating to the vice-chair arrangements for scrutiny was then put to the vote, which was also declared **LOST**.

The substantive recommendations, as detailed within the report, were then put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To agree the amendments to the Constitution as set out in Appendix 1 of the report reflecting the corporate realignment of senior managers and directorates and updating the responsibility for functions, Terms of Reference for the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee and Local Code of Corporate Governance as well as the arrangements for Group Motions at Full Council meetings (under Standing Order 41).
- (2) To note that the list of Cabinet Members and Portfolio Holders in Part 1 of the Constitution would be updated to reflect the appointments made and allocation of functions by the Leader.
- (3) To authorise the Corporate Director of Governance to amend the Constitution accordingly, including making any necessary incidental or consequential changes.
- (4) To note that, to the extent the changes agreed under (1) above related to executive functions of the Council, they had been approved by the Leader.

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

The Mayor then moved on to invite Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) to introduce the report from the Corporate Director of Law and Governance. In introducing the item, Councillor Muhammed Butt advised the report fulfilled the Council's duty to review and determine the representation of different political groups on certain Committees at its annual meeting. It was noted that no changes to the existing allocation of seats had been proposed reflecting the fact that there had been no change in the overall composition of political groups since the previous review.

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

It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To agree the size of each Committee, as detailed within the report.
- (2) To approve the allocation of seats on Committees to each of the Council's political groups (where the rules of political balance applied) as set out within the report and to make appointments to those committees (under agenda item 9 on the agenda) giving effect to the wishes of the political group allocated the seats.
- (3) To note that the political balance on Council Sub-Committees would be reviewed at the first meeting of the General Purposes Committee and Licensing Committee to be held following the Annual Council Meeting.

10. **Appointment to Committees and Outside Bodies including the appointment of Chairs & Vice-Chairs**

The Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) to introduce the report from the Corporate Director of Governance. In introducing the item, the Leader advised that the report set out the nominations for appointments to

Committees and Outside Bodies and nomination for Chairs and Vice Chairs as well as co-opted members, where necessary, for the 2024 - 25 Municipal Year, with the nominations having been made (where required) in accordance with the political balance of the Council and requirements in relation to political proportionality.

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

It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To approve the appointments of members and substitutes as well as the continuing appointment of co-opted members to Council Committees and Outside Bodies for the 2024-2025 Municipal Year, as detailed within section 3.2.4 and Appendix 1 of the report.
- (2) To approve the appointments of Chairs and Vice Chairs to Council Committees for the 2024-2025 Municipal Year, as detailed within Appendix 1 of the report.
- (3) To note the appointments:
 - (a) of the Cabinet, Cabinet Committees and Joint Executive Committees and their respective Chairs and Vice Chairs for the 2024-2025 Municipal Year, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report.
 - (b) to be confirmed by the General Purposes Committee for the 2024-2025 Municipal Year, as detailed in Appendix 3 of the report.
 - (c) to be confirmed by Licensing Committee for the 2024-2025 Municipal Year, as detailed in Appendix 4 of the report.

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

11. **Calendar of Council Meetings for the 2024 -2025 Municipal Year**

The Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) to introduce the report from the Corporate Director of Law and Governance which the Leader advised detailed the calendar of meeting dates for Full Council and other meetings during the 2024 - 25 Municipal Year.

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

It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To approve the dates for Full Council and other meetings to take place during the 2024-25 Municipal Year, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.
- (2) That the Deputy Director Democratic Services be authorised to make any alterations deemed necessary to the Municipal Calendar during the course of

the year having consulted with the Leader of the Council, Leaders of the Opposition Group(s) and Chair of the affected meeting.

12. **Review of Arrangements for "Call In" of Executive decisions to Scrutiny Committees**

The Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) to introduce the final report on the agenda from the Corporate Director of Law and Governance. In introducing the item, Councillor Muhammed Butt advised that the report presented the outcome of a review undertaken on the current "call-in" arrangements for Executive decisions with members being asked to consider a proposal (developed as an outcome of the review) that would require the submission of any future "call in", whilst still only requiring five individual signatories, to also be supported by members of more than one political group.

Having introduced the report, the Mayor then invited Councillor Lorber (on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group) to move an amendment to the report submitted prior to the meeting seeking approval to alternative arrangements for the number of members required to submit a valid call-in in response to the review of current arrangements.

In moving the amendment, Councillor Lorber began by highlighting what he felt had been the lack of justification for the change proposed within the report presented by the Leader of the Council on the basis of the review which had been undertaken and expressed concern at the impact this would have at further reducing the ability of non-executive members to hold the Executive to account as part of an effective and democratic scrutiny process. Highlighting the need to maintain a strong and effective scrutiny function along with the need to maintain a meaningful ability for any member or political group to be able to call-in decisions for review as part of the balance provided in the current governance arrangements, Councillor Lorber felt it important to outline the value of recent call-in and scrutiny activity, including a focus on the Altamira Morland Gardens development and changes to the Council's street cleansing and recycling arrangements, as a means of ensuring the decisions made had been based on sound information and advice. Having taken account of the current review on the arrangements for call-in he advised that the amendment being moved on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group was therefore seeking the following alternative changes to the call-in provisions:

- (1) That any Cabinet decision which had implications for the whole or a large part of the borough could be called in by any three Councillors from one or more political groups.
- (2) That any Cabinet decision which had implications for just one ward within the borough could be called in by any one councillor.

In order to safeguard the objectives of effective democratic scrutiny he therefore urged all members to reject the proposals within the report and support the amendment as moved.

Having moved the amendment, the Mayor then opened the debate inviting other members to speak on the report and amendment, with the following contributions made.

Speaking in support of the amendment, Councillor Kansagra, also felt it was important to recognise the impact which the proposal moved by the Leader would have in restricting the ability of members (including those within the Labour Group) to effectively hold the Executive to account. In support of a need to maintain the objectives of effective democratic scrutiny he therefore advised his Group would be voting against the proposals within the report and in support of the amendment.

Councillor Georgiou, also speaking in opposition to the proposal moved by the Leader and support of the amendment, felt it important to highlight what he felt to be the effective way in which call-in arrangements were currently operating in Brent and expressed concern at the potential impact the requirement for members of more than one political group to support a call-in would have in disenfranchising individual members by restricting their ability to call-in future Executive decisions for review. For these reasons he urged all members to join him in supporting the amendment as moved.

As no further members indicated they wished to speak the Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt to exercise his right of reply in relation to the report and amendment moved at the meeting.

In summing up, Councillor Muhammed Butt began by reminding members of the opportunities available to hold the Executive to account as well as participate and engage in the way scrutiny was being delivered but also felt it important to once again highlight the clear mandate provided for the current Labour Administration in seeking to implement their programme in support of local residents. As a result, he advised the Labour Group would not be supporting the amendment moved by Councillor Lorber.

As a final contribution, the Mayor then invited Councillor Lorber to exercise his right of reply in relation to the debate on the amendment. In responding Councillor Lorber expressed concern at the stance taken by the Labour Administration in relation to the proposal moved by the Leader, which he felt not only undermined the overall effectiveness of scrutiny and its ability to meaningfully hold the Executive to account but also the mandate provided for all local ward councillors in seeking to support, empower and represent their constituents. On this basis he once again urged all members to support the amendment as moved at the meeting.

Having thanked members for their contributions the Mayor then moved on to put the amendment and recommendations within the report to the vote.

On putting the amendment moved by Councillor Lorber to the vote this was declared **LOST**.

The substantive recommendations, as detailed within the report, were then put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To approve adoption of a change in arrangements for call-in of Executive decisions (requiring the submission of a valid call-in request by five non-

cabinet members) to involve those members representing more than one political group.

- (2) Following on from (1) above, to authorise the Corporate Director of Law & Governance to amend the Constitution accordingly, including making any necessary incidental or consequential changes.

13. **Urgent Business**

As there was no urgent business to be transacted the Mayor declared the Annual Meeting closed and advised that he looked forward to seeing all members at the next Council meeting on Monday 8 July 2024. He then invited all members and guests to join him at his reception.

The meeting closed at 7.42 pm

COUNCILLOR TARIQ DAR MBE
Mayor