



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 10 November 2025 at
6.00 pm

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Ryan Hack

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Narinder Singh Bajwa

COUNCILLORS:

Aden	Afzal
Agha	Ahmadi Moghaddam
Ahmed	Akram
Begum	Benea
M Butt	S Butt
Chan	Chohan
Choudry	Clinton
Collymore	Conneely
Crabb	Dixon
Donnelly-Jackson	Ethapemi
Farah	Fraser
Gbajumo	Grahl
Hirani	Hylton
Johnson	Kabir
Kansagra	Kelcher
Kennelly	Knight
Long	Lorber
Matin	Maurice
Miller	Mitchell
Molloy	Nerva
J.Patel	M Patel
Rajan-Seelan	Rubin
Shah	Ketan Sheth
Krupa Sheth	L.Smith
T.Smith	Tatler

1. Mayors Introductory Statement

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

2. **Apologies for Absence**

The Mayor reported that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Chappell, Dar, Mahmood, Mistry and Moeen.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the of the Council meeting held on Monday 15 September 2025 be approved as a correct record.

4. **Declarations of Interest**

During the meeting Councillors Knight, Miller & Mitchell declared personal interests in relation to Motion 10.3: Supporting Labour's 30 hours of Free Childcare – A Better Start for Every Brent Child as they were all in receipt of the governments offer of free childcare.

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

5. **Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor made the following announcements:

(i) Remembrance Sunday

The Mayor began his announcements by taking the opportunity to pay tribute to all those who had lost their lives in conflicts around the world. As part of the tribute, the Mayor advised he had been honoured to attend the borough remembrance service at Barham Park, which he was pleased to report had been well attended. He felt the service had been an opportunity to remind everyone about the importance of peace and need to work towards a future where such sacrifices were no longer necessary.

(ii) Mayoral Events attended

During October the Mayor advised he had been pleased to participate in the celebration of Black History month, which had included a visit to HMS Belfast where the Windrush anchor flag had been raised celebrating Caribbean heroes.

In addition, the Mayor reported he had also enjoyed attending several Navratri and Diwali celebrations across the borough and had been delighted to meet Their Majesties The King and Queen Camilla when they had visited BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir (Neasden Temple) in order to mark the Mandir's 30th anniversary, which had also coincided with the Diwali and Hindu New Year celebrations.

(iii) Petitions

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

6. **Change in Order of Business**

Before moving on, the Mayor informed members, in accordance with Standing Order 30, of a change in the order of business listed on the agenda,.

This followed the recent change in political balance on the Council, with the intention to move consideration of the report reviewing the Representation of Political Groups on Committees (listed as Item 16 on the agenda) prior to any associated appointments to committees arising as a result being dealt with.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- (1) The business to be considered at the meeting be re-arranged in the following order:
 - Agenda Item 5 - Representation of Political Groups on Committees.
 - Agenda Item 6 - Appointments to Committees
- (2) The remaining items of business to then follow in the same order as listed on the agenda.

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

Following the change agreed in the order of the agenda, the Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) to introduce a report from the Corporate Director of Finance & Resources which fulfilled the Council's duty to review and determine the representation of different political groups on the Council's ordinary Committees following a change in balance between the political groups on the Council. Members were advised that the report reflected a recent change in political balance on the Council following the resignation of a member of the Labour Group and that individual having joined the Conservative Group. In presenting the report, members noted the impact outlined in terms of the existing allocation of seats on those ordinary committees of the Council to which the political balance rules applied, based on the revised overall composition of political groups.

As no other members indicated that they wished to speak on the item and the Leader of the Council advised he did not wish to exercise any right of reply, the Mayor moved straight on to put the recommendations to the vote which were declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To agree the size of each committee, which remained unchanged from the previous review undertaken at the Council meeting in July 2025.
- (2) To confirm (where the rules of political balance apply) the allocation of seats on committees to each of the Council's political groups as set out in the report.
- (3) To make appointments, where identified as required, to those committees giving effect to the wishes of the political group allocated the seats; and

- (4) To note that the political balance on sub-committees would be reviewed at the first available meeting of the General Purposes Committee and the Licensing Committee.

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

Following directly on from the previous item, the Mayor then referred members to the list of changes circulated in relation to appointments to Council Committees and other bodies arising from the review of political representation on the Council's Committees.

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

- (1) To approve the following changes in committee membership:
 - (a) Vacancy to replace Councillor Rajan-Seelan (in his capacity as a former Labour member) as a full member of the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.
 - (b) As a result of the outcome of the political proportionality review to replace Councillor Rajan-Seelan (in his capacity as a former Labour member on the Licensing Committee) with Councillor Maurice in order to fulfil the reallocation of the seat on that Committee to the Conservative Group.
 - (c) Vacancy to replace Councillor Rajan-Seelan (in his capacity as a former Labour member) as a substitute member on the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee.
 - (d) Vacancy to replace Councillor Rajan-Seelan (in his capacity as a former Labour member) as a substitute member on the Planning Committee.
- (2) To approve the following changes in membership on other bodies and panels:
 - (a) Vacancy to replace Councillor Rajan-Seelen (in his capacity as a former Labour member) as a substitute member on the Employers Joint Consultative Committee
 - (b) To replace Councillor Rajan-Seelan (in his capacity as a former Labour member) with Councillor Donnelly-Jackson as a member on the Service User Consultative Forum – Disability.

9. **Deputations (if any)**

Returning to the order of business as listed on the agenda, 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 two minutes to respond on each matter.

1st deputation - Update on progress being achieved through One Kilburn.

2nd deputation – Impact of Gambling Harm and support for work being led by Brent Council.

(1) 1st deputation: Update on progress being achieved through One Kilburn

As no objections were raised on the approach outlined, the Mayor then moved on to welcome Stephane Goldstein (as Co-Chair of One Kilburn Co-ordinating Group) to the meeting who members were advised would be presenting the first deputation.

Prior to the deputation being presented, the Mayor allowed Councillor Conneely (representing the local ward councillors in Kilburn) to speak (in support of the deputation) highlighting their support for the work being delivered through One Kilburn and its impact on the local community.

In thanking the Mayor for the opportunity to present the deputation, Stephane Goldstein began by taking the opportunity to inform members about the role of One Kilburn as a resident-led open and democratic organisation (launched in January 2023) which served as an umbrella and collaborative forum for individuals, community groups, businesses and public agencies across Kilburn with the aim of seeking to nurture (as an enabler rather than service provider) a sense of community, place and belonging in Kilburn by fostering dialogue, collaboration and joint working between local people and facilitating community-led initiatives.

Highlighting the importance of the work being undertaken, members were reminded that Kilburn as a major town centre, was split across the boundaries of Brent, Camden and Westminster. Whilst this had previously hindered the ability for joint working, the increasing number of initiatives aimed at addressing the position were outlined, including the creation of a Town Centre Manager post with One Kilburn seeking to amplify these developments through a bottom-up, community-based, partnership approach including the three Councils as fully-fledged partners and the development of strong working relationships with local ward councillors and officers across all three boroughs. As such, One Kilburn was highlighted as an innovative model for collaboration and effective cross-boundary cooperation directly benefitting local residents and businesses.

In terms of its wider strategic relevance, the work being undertaken through One Kilburn was felt to support a number of Brent's strategic priorities including the move towards Radical Place Leadership and Integrated Neighbourhood Teams as well as complementing the Kilburn Neighbourhood Planning Forum and Camden's 'We Make Camden' framework for community engagement" and also reflecting (as a new area) the neighbourhood governance elements within the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill. Stephane Goldstein then took the opportunity to outline a number of important achievements delivered through One Kilburn, which members were advised had included:

- Driving and managing the One Kilburn Community Fund during 2023-24, with £50k from Camden Council. This had included the submission of 23

proposals of which 11 had been shortlisted and five funded following a public vote in which over 1,200 people had taken part and with Camden expected to award an additional tranche of £30k shortly.

- The recruitment of three temporary community activators in 2023 for community outreach work.
- The support of tri-borough plans for the remodelling of Kilburn High Road through the Better, Safer Kilburn Scheme, working with Transport for London.
- Facilitating a process of collaborative dialogue between the Metropolitan Police commands covering the High Road area.
- Supporting initiatives such as Kilburn Music Mile and trailing community-run public toilets in Grange Park (on the Camden side of the High Road)

Members were advised that further details were also available via <https://onekilburn.commonplace.is/>

Looking forward, members were advised that Brent was being asked (as a result of the deputation) to:

- Acknowledge the importance and relevance of One Kilburn as a significant local community initiative.
- Continue supporting One Kilburn, including through sustained engagement at senior Council level and, where appropriate, through funding.
- Recognise One Kilburn in Brent's relevant strategies and policies; and
- Develop and amplify effective cross-Borough collaboration as this continued to relate to Kilburn.

In once again thanking the Mayor for the opportunity to present the deputation, Stephane Goldstein ended by advising members of the additional information distributed at the meeting along with encouraging the need for ongoing volunteer support, diversified sources of funding and continued support across all Councils to develop the sustainable organisational structure required and continue the progress made to date.

The Mayor thanked Stephane Goldstein for presenting the deputation and then invited Councillor Benea, as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Property to respond.

In response, Councillor Benea began by thanking Stephane Goldstein and all the volunteers at One Kilburn for their energy and leadership as well as the Kilburn ward councillors for their ongoing support in championing the area and commitment to the partnership.

Recognising Kilburn as being unique, given the split of the town centre across three different boroughs, it was felt One Kilburn had demonstrated how powerful genuine

collaboration could be involving residents, traders, councillors as well as the local MP and community groups all coming together to deliver real results. It was noted these had included unlocking a £12m project remodelling the High Road and reviving Kilburn's proud musical heritage through the Kilburn Music Mile with One Kilburn felt to embody a spirit of community, creativity, connection and care whilst also serving as an example as a new, resident-led model of how councils and communities could work together across boundaries. As such, the importance of the approach was also recognised as part of Brent's wider place-based and neighbourhood leadership work. with the Council proud to be part of its story.

Councillor Benea continued, by assuring everyone of the Council's ongoing commitment towards enabling Kilburn to thrive, including a vibrant night-time economy built around music, theatre and culture in a way that not just celebrated the progress made, but would also help to sustain it by continuing to engage at all levels, working with its partners in Camden and Westminster while also supporting volunteers and residents to grow the movement for the future. As part of this approach, and in response to the deputation, the opportunity was also therefore taken to reaffirm Brent's commitment to continue working with colleagues in Camden and Westminster to unlock the financial contribution needed for a second round of the One Kilburn Community Fund, and to recognise One Kilburn within the Council's own strategies and policies as a model of community-led partnership.

In concluding, Councillor Benea once again thanked Stephane Goldstein and everyone at One Kilburn for the work being undertaken to strengthen community spirit, celebrate local culture and put Kilburn firmly back on the map.

Having thanked Councillor Benea for her response, the Mayor advised that concluded consideration of the first deputation and then moved on to invite Matt Smith (Betknowmore UK) to present the second deputation.

(2) 2nd deputation: Impact of Gambling Harm

In thanking the Mayor for the opportunity to present the deputation, Matt Smith began by commending the Council for the work being undertaken to tackle gambling harm in Brent. In sharing his lived experience, he advised members that he had been in recovery from gambling addiction for eleven years and was now working for the charity BetNoMore UK, as Director of External Affairs.

Outlining the importance of support being provided through BetNoMoreUK, he advised the charity had been in operation for over ten years having started in North London and offered three main support services: a peer support service, a program for women called New Beginnings, and a program called Goals for Gambling Outreach and Living Support. The charity was also part of the National Gambling Support Network, with over 50 staff at least 25 of whom also had experience of gambling harm, either as an individual or an affected other in the form of a relative or friend of someone impacted by gambling addiction, all focussed on working to tackle gambling harm in communities across London.

Referring to his personal circumstances, Matt Smith advised that he had previously worked in radio and television and at FIFA, meaning he had spent time in Brent working at Wembley Stadium with a large part of his gambling having taken place in the borough, providing first-hand experience of the effect gambling had on those

communities and individuals affected. His personal experience had included the loss of his job, family, relationships and friendships as well as financial security which had provided his subsequent focus, following his recovery, on ensuring individuals were not impacted in the same way as he had been by gambling harm.

Highlighting the shame, stigma and embarrassment caused by his gambling addiction, he was grateful for the support he had received during his recovery and way it had been possible to rebuild relationships with his family with the support being provided through BetNoMoreUK. In noting the extent of support now available across the whole of the UK and also internationally, this was felt to be crucial in placing lived experience at the forefront of the work being delivered to raise awareness of the issue of gambling harm.

In recognising the well-established support available around alcohol and drug harm, Matt Smith, in concluding, also welcomed the focus being raised by Council's such as Brent in relation to gambling harm as a means of ensuring those in need of support were also protected from the type of harm he had experienced and signposted to the appropriate support.

The Mayor thanked Matt Smith for providing such a personal account of his lived experience as part of the deputation, which he felt would resonate with many people, before then inviting Councillor Mili Patel, as Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to respond.

In response, Councillor Mili Patel began by thanking Matt Smith for his powerful contribution and outlining the work local ward councillors including those in Harlesden and Kensal Green had been undertaking for several years on the issue of gambling harm in Brent supported by the significant and continued level of support from residents in seeking to tackle the moral and social injustice and harm being created as a result of the proliferation of gambling establishments across Harlesden and other parts of the borough.

Highlighting that there were more than 80 gambling premises in Brent, Members were advised this represented one of the highest rates in London, and the fifth highest number per capita in the country with, she pointed it out, it easier to find a place to gamble in some wards than shop at a major supermarket, visit a job centre, or see a GP and analysis from The Guardian showing that 33% of Adult Gaming Centres were located in the top 10% of poorest neighbourhoods, which was a position the Council was determined to address.

As part of this approach, members were reminded that the Council had written to the Government setting out a 6 Point Plan for Change on gambling reform, which had included support from over 40 other local authorities across the country. This breadth of support was felt to demonstrate the level of concern regarding the issue, which had also seen a number of councils passing motions and holding debates in support of ending the 'Aim to Permit', which made it effectively impossible for councils like Brent to currently refuse new licensing applications. In recognising the progress made with the campaign the Council, working with the Social Market Foundation Think Tank, had recently published a new report entitled 'High streets at stake', containing six new recommendations for the Government to consider aimed at empowering local communities to prevent the spread of Adult Gaming Centres. This had included a proposal seeking the immediate introduction of Cumulative

Impact Assessments, which the Council was continuing to work with the Government in support of.

As such, it was felt the message from the Council was clear on the action being sought around fairness, instilling pride in local communities and doing everything possible to safeguard residents from harm. In summing up, Councillor Mili Patel advised she was pleased to note this was a message that appeared to have been recognised by Government thanks to the support of organisations like BetKnowMoreUK with the Council, at the same time, also committed to the development and expansion of its local support offer, working in collaboration with Public Health and the NHS acknowledging the lived experience of local communities in Brent.

Having thanked Councillor Mili Patel for her 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.

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

10.1 **Questions from the Public**

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

Question 1 from Giulia Karkhoff regarding anti-social behaviour along Harlesden Hight Street.

Question 2 from John Poole reading progress being made in tackling climate change and reducing emissions as part of the Council's Climate and Emergency Strategy

Question 3 from Marc Harris regarding the provision of step free access at Alperton and Queens Park Station

The Mayor advised that those members of the public who had submitted questions had been given the opportunity to attend the meeting in order to ask a supplementary question. Whilst he was pleased to welcome John Poole and Marc Harris to the meeting, members were advised that Giulia Karkhoff had not been able to attend with the written responses provided in relation to that question therefore noted.

Following the Mayors introduction, the following supplementary questions were then raised:

Question 2 Supplementary question from John Poole to Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Climate Action & Community Power)

In thanking Councillor Rubin (as Cabinet Member for Climate Action & Community Power) and Councillor Krupa Sheth (as Cabinet Member for Public Realm & Enforcement) for their response to his original question, John Poole sought further details on how the Council believed work to enhance Brent's Waterways working

with voluntary environmental groups in Brent, would also be able to help in achieving the objectives within the Council's Climate and Ecological Strategy as well as tackling pollution, highlighting the improvements already delivered working with the Mayor of London in terms of reducing nitrogen dioxide levels across London.

In response, Councillor Rubin thanked John Poole for the question and his ongoing efforts in supporting the local community across Kenton. Referring to the Big River Watch, led by the Rivers Trust and supported by thousands of citizen scientists including many in Brent, he began by highlighting their work in identifying the level of pollution unfortunately present in nearly every waterway across the UK which he felt was a national shame and had arisen as a direct result of the political choices made by previous Conservative governments. On a more positive level, he was pleased to be able to acknowledge and thank the many volunteers, community groups and environmental champions for the time and energy they devoted to caring for waterways across Brent, with specific thanks extended to the Friends of Wealdstone Brook for their continued work with the Environment Agency, Thames Water, and the highway service to reduce misconnections causing so many of the pollution incidents in the brook. The combined efforts of all involved were felt to embody the spirit of the Climate and Emergency Strategy in terms of partnership, stewardship and pride in the borough although the work still required in addressing the issue was also recognised with the Council continuing to work closely with the Mayor of London to strengthen environmental protection and seek greater accountability in terms of the responsibilities of the water companies (including Thames Water) and the Environment Agency. In ending his response, Councillor Rubin confirmed that the Council would continue to back and promote national and regional initiatives such as the Big River Watch along with other citizen science projects recognising their value in supporting the continued monitoring, protection and celebration of local waterways.

The Mayor thanked John Poole for his attendance and supplementary question along with Councillor Rubin for his response and then moved on to deal with the next question.

Question 3 Supplementary Question from Marc Harris to Councillor Benea (Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Property)

In thanking Councillor Benea (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Property) for her response to his original question Marc Harris, in noting the progress which had been made in terms of the provision of step free access at Alperton Station and constructive discussions continuing around the same provision at Queens Park Station, sought confirmation that the Council would continue to advocate strongly for the provision of step-free access at both stations and would continue working with Transport for London, Network Rail, and the Department for Transport to explore all available funding options to deliver these improvements as soon as possible.

In response, Councillor Benea took the opportunity to confirm the Council's intention to continue working closely with Transport for London on this matter. In noting the progress achieved in relation to Alperton Station, she felt this reflected the value of work being undertaken in partnership with TfL and assured residents

that the Council would continue to adopt the same approach in relation to Queens Park Station.

The Mayor thanked Marc Harris for his attendance and supplementary question along with Councillor Benea for her response and, with no further questions to be considered, then moved on to deal with the question submitted by Brent Youth Parliament.

10.2 Questions from Brent Youth Parliament

The Mayor advised that the following question had been received from Brent Youth Parliament:

Question 1 from Brent Youth Parliament to Councillor Grahl, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools, relating to the engagement of young people in shaping how Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) investment allocated for youth facilities and spaces would be designed and used.

The Mayor thanked Brent Youth Parliament (BYP) for their question, with members noting the written response provided, and advised that representatives from the Youth Parliament had also been invited to attend the meeting in order to ask a supplementary question. As a result, the Mayor welcomed Kenechi Ezeajughi and Tajari McLeod from BYP to the meeting who asked the following supplementary question.

Question 1 Supplementary Question from Kenechi Ezeajughi and Tajari McLeod to Councillor Grahl, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools regarding the way in which the outcomes being achieved in relation to wider priorities identified by young people would be measured and assessed as part of the investment allocated.

Having thanked Councillor Grahl for her written response and welcoming the level of collaboration with a wide range of young people across the borough, details were sought as to how the Council was planning to measure success (beyond the physical infrastructure upgrades being delivered as a result of the investment identified) in meeting young people's wider priorities such as mental health support, employment opportunities, careers services and community safety and whether this would include funding for the day to day delivery of these services.

In response, Councillor Grahl thanked Brent Youth Parliament for the question and work they were continuing to undertake to represent young people across the borough, including their recent attendance to address MPs at the House of Commons representing the children and young people of Brent. In terms of the question raised, Councillor Grahl felt it important to start by highlighting the impact of the previous Conservative government's programme of austerity on the provision of youth services including the loss of almost 75% of youth worker positions. In contrast, she therefore felt the recent decision taken by the Council to target SCIL funding in local youth service provision and infrastructure presented an exciting opportunity to once again be able to invest in the type of provision so valued by young people. In terms of the measurement of success and outcomes being achieved, Councillor Grahl advised this would be assessed against a number of key performance indicators focussed on young people's health and wellbeing, working

in collaboration with schools and the NHS in seeking to improve the experience of children and young people. The offer was also extended to attend a future meeting of Brent Youth Parliament in order to provide further details on the range of different indicators and seek feedback on how further improvements could be made.

The Mayor also took the opportunity to acknowledge and commend BYP for the work undertaken in seeking to represent young people across the borough and, in outlining his support for the contribution made, thanked Councillor Grahl for her response and Kenechi Ezeajughi and Tajari McLeod for attending the meeting to ask their supplementary question. With no further questions to be considered, the Mayor advised that concluded the public question session.

11. **Petitions**

The Mayor advised that he had also accepted a request for the presentation of a petition at the meeting, which had met the threshold for consideration at Full Council based on it containing more than 200 signatures.

The petition to be presented related a campaign in support of reopening the public toilets in Roundwood Park, with the Mayor advising that unless otherwise indicated by members, he intended to allow up to five minutes for the presentation of the petition by Amandine Alexandre (as lead petitioner) before then providing the relevant Cabinet Member up to two minutes to respond on the matter and then providing any other members who indicated they would like to speak with an opportunity to contribute (within the overall time limit available).

Campaign to reopen the public toilets in Roundwood Park

As no objections were raised on the approach outlined, the Mayor welcomed Amandine Alexandre to the meeting to present the petition.

In thanking the Mayor for the opportunity to present the petition, Amandine Alexandre began by introducing herself as a longstanding resident of Brent and active member of her local community as well as someone who regularly enjoyed using Roundwood Park not only with her family but also friends as one of the only major green spaces within Harlesden. In highlighting the importance in maintaining as wide an access as possible to the park, it was unfortunately felt that the park, since 2022, had lost much of its attraction to local people as a result of the more limited accessibility due to the public toilets located at the back of the Veolia depot, being closed by the Council.

Reference was made to the concern this had caused many park users, with local residents having contacted the Council leadership and local councillors to highlight the need to provide a working public toilet facility as an essential and absolute requirement for a park the size and popularity of Roundwood with the impact of the closure becoming more acute in terms of the antisocial and unhygienic behaviour it encouraged.

As a result of a long running campaign seeking the reinstatement of the toilets, Amandine Alexandre advised she had, as a trustee of Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum, met with the Park Service and been advised that the closure had been due to anti-social behaviour with the lack of funding available to enable the reprovision

of the toilets in another location in the park where the facilities would be less likely to attract as much vandalism and antisocial behaviour highlighted as a key challenge. It was pointed out that with no action, the negative impact created by the closure and lack of suitable alternative provision had increased frustration amongst residents and park users with the lack of toilet facilities continuing to have what was felt to be a detrimental effect on most park users including the elderly, parents with children as well as the disabled and those with other health issues. This impact was felt to be an even greater issue for women who, it was highlighted, already spent less time using park facilities, with the lack of provision therefore felt to increase the detrimental impact on their health and sense of well-being and access to more accessible green space provision.

Given the concerns outlined, residents had recently gathered in the park to call for the re-opening of the public toilets with the response provided by the Lead Cabinet Member encouraging use the toilets in Roundwood Lodge Café as alternative provision felt to be unacceptable. Those in support of the petition had felt this response failed to understand that the cafe toilets would not provide a suitable replacement for public toilets and that the ongoing closure was creating a wider health issue for residents.

Given the Council had now approved a £3m investment in Green Corridors across Roundwood and Church End focussed around encouraging more use of Roundwood Park and in seeking to address wider health inequalities, Amandine Alexandre advised that the petitioners were calling in the Council, as part of the investment programme, to consider either refurbishing and re-opening the existing public toilets or providing a new facility in a different, better location in the park where there would be a reduced risk of anti-social behaviour to maximise the impact of the investment for local residents.

In summing up, it was hoped members would listen and take account of the views being expressed by residents in the Harlesden and Kensal Green area, who it was felt deserved to be able to enjoy the widest rather than any more restricted access to their local park.

The Mayor thanked Amandine Alexandre for presenting the petition and then invited Councillor Krupa Sheth, as Cabinet Member for Public Realm and Enforcement to respond.

In response, Councillor Krupa Sheth began by thanking Amandine Alexandre and the other signatories of the petition for taking the time to make their views known. In acknowledging the issues highlighted in terms of the toilets in Roundwood Park, the opportunity was taken to outline the efforts made to identify a constructive solution, working with the local ward councillors in Harlesden and Kensal Green and Roundwood recognising the importance and priority to ensure Roundwood Park remained accessible to as many people as possible.

Despite years of unprecedented financial pressure, it was felt the local challenges identified had been recognised including, it was pointed out, significant investment being made to improve the playground in the park with a major upgrade of play equipment and Councillor Krupa Sheth expressing pride that this upgrade had included the introduction of a range of accessible play equipment so that young people with disabilities could also enjoy the space. Whilst it was acknowledged that

the reopening of the toilets would make the park even more accessible, and was something supported by the Council, the need to balance this against the associated cost implications was also highlighted as a key issue for consideration. As additional context in terms of the approach adopted, Councillor Krupa Sheth felt it important to remind members of the instances of significant damage and vandalism the toilets had experienced over many previous occasions, often having just been repaired and reopened resulting, once again, in the actions of a small group of individuals ruining the enjoyment of a park recently awarded Green Flag status for so many. Highlighting the Council's financial responsibility, however, it was also not currently seen as an effective use of resources (given the other competing pressures on the Council's funding) to continue the cycle of refitting and reopening the toilets only to have to close and repair them once again soon after.

Recognising the concerns expressed, however, it was pointed out that officers continued to work with local ward councillors across Harlesden & Kensal Green and Roundwood in seeking a suitable design solution that would not be so easily vandalised and would be truly accessible for all residents across the area on which Councillor Krupa Sheth advised, in closing her response, residents would continue to be engaged.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Krupa Sheth for her response and, with no other members indicating they wanted to speak on the petition, advised that concluded consideration of the item.

12. **Motions**

Before moving on to consider the motions listed on the summons, the Mayor advised members that a total of 40 minutes had been set aside for consideration of the four motions submitted for debate, based on an initial allocation of 10 minutes per motion. Should the time taken to consider the first motion be less than 10 minutes he advised that the remaining time available would be rolled forward for consideration of the remaining motions.

12.1 1st Motion (Conservative Group) – Holding Highways Contractors & Utility Companies accountable for unsafe and substandard reinstatement works.

The Mayor invited Councillor Jayanti Patel (on behalf of Councillor Kansagra) to move the first motion which had been submitted on behalf of the Conservative Group. Councillor Jayanti Patel began by highlighting the way in which the motion had been presented to reflect concerns being raised by many residents across the borough and with the examples of issues within his ward outlined within the motion not felt to represent isolated incidences but a wider pattern of neglect and disregard for public safety as well as a breach of trust in the way reinstatement works were being undertaken and completed by highways contractors working on behalf of utilities companies. As a result, he pointed out the motion was seeking a consistent approach towards enforcement to ensure works were being carried out to the required standard and in compliance with the relevant legislation in an effort to deter repeated defects requiring enforcement activity. Highlighting the use of disputes by contractors as no excuse for delays in reinstatement works being completed to the required standard, the motion was seeking to challenge the level of reinstatement failures whilst reaffirming the Council's commitment to public

safety, transparency, and in seeking to hold highways contractors and utility companies accountable for the quality and timeliness of their works, which it was hoped all members would be willing to support.

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

In moving the amendment, Councillor Krupa Sheth began by acknowledging that the motion highlighted real issues faced by residents which, it was recognised, caused significant frustration when highway reinstatement works being undertaken by utility companies caused prolonged disruption and supporting the need for those utility companies to be held accountable. At the same time, however, it was also felt important to recognise the problem as not being new or isolated but reflecting the product of decades of mismanagement and underinvestment following the sale of publicly owned utilities under past Conservative governments resulting in shareholder returns being prioritised over public service with Thames Water being one of the clearest examples of what was regarded as the failure in public policy.

In terms of the amendment, Councillor Krupa Sheth felt this better reflected the action already being taken locally to address the concerns highlighted with the Council's inspectors taking the necessary enforcement action against defective reinstatements under Section 72 powers and ensuring responsibility was established and repairs made safe when ownership of unsafe apparatus was disputed under Section 81. This approach had also included additional investment in a further Inspector (for a 12-month period) using Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) funding to strengthen enforcement capacity. In terms of providing a wider context, the amendment moved had also been designed to highlight the need to move towards a model where utility companies were established to serve people rather than profit with the action being sought also strengthened to invite Thames Water's leadership be held accountable via the Council's scrutiny function and answer directly to Brent residents. As a further action, it was also proposed to write to the Secretary of State supporting the Water Act, recognised as the first serious attempt to fix a broken system, by banning bonuses for polluters, giving Ofwat stronger powers, and putting environmental protection first.

In concluding, the need for a new model of public ownership for essential services like water was highlighted as a means of ensuring utility companies operating in the borough were focused on delivering first and foremost for Brent residents. On this basis, the amendment moved by Councillor Krupa Sheth was as follows:

To add the wording underlined and delete the wording indicated:

“Holding Highways Contractors and Utility Companies Accountable for Unsafe and Substandard Reinstatement Works

This Council notes with concern the increasing number of highways works, and substandard reinstatement activities carried out by utility companies across Brent—particularly on Kingsbury Road, Westmoreland Road, and Dryburgh Gardens. These works have led to unsafe footways, prolonged disruption and unacceptable conditions for residents, businesses and road users.

This Council further notes:

- After decades of underinvestment through their model of privatisation, Thames Water are now finally undertaking major upgrade works across Brent – work that should have been delivered years ago. While these long-overdue improvements are essential, they are also causing significant congestion and disruption on local roads.
- That on Dryburgh Gardens, outside several properties, Thames Water subcontracted a company whose backfill works failed to meet required standards. The ground has since sunk, leaving footways hazardous for pedestrians.
- That on Kingsbury Road, the footway was excavated near a BT chamber and reinstated with concrete rather than the original paving slabs. When contacted, Brent's Highways team confirmed no permit had been issued for these works. This raises serious concerns about illegal excavation, ~~and lack of oversight and whether Brent Council is maintaining a record of roads being dug up without authorisation and left in a dangerous state~~ adherence to public realm safety management from utility companies operating in Brent.
- That outside Morrison Patrol Station, two clear breaches have been identified and reported:
 - A footpath originally laid with paving slabs has been reinstated with low-grade asphalt;
 - A double yellow line across the carriageway has not been reinstated following trenching works.
- These reinstatement failures breach the “like-for-like” standard and pose trip hazards to pedestrians.

This Council further notes:

- That defects identified under the New Road and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA) Section 81, where apparatus is unsafe or unrepaired, are subject to strict response timelines yet often remain unresolved due to disputed ownership.
- That defects identified and that come within Section 72 of the NRSWA — where reinstatement fails to meet prescribed standards—are enforceable and chargeable, yet enforcement remains ~~underutilised~~ difficult without transparent public ownership and accountability of these utility companies.

As a result, this Council therefore resolves to:

- (1) ~~Publish~~ Explore new options within out Transformation programme to publish a public-facing defect tracker for Section 72 and Section 81 of the NRSWA, detailing timelines, responsible parties, and enforcement actions, as well as making reporting easier.

- (2) Escalate Maintain strict enforcement under Section 72 of the NRSWA for all confirmed defective reinstatements, including chargeable inspections and remedial permits.
- (3) Report ~~quarterly~~ annually to Full Council on progress, enforcement outcomes, and resident feedback.
- (4) Reaffirm its commitment to public safety, transparency, and holding highways contractors and utility companies accountable for the quality and timeliness of their works.
- (5) Invite Thames Water's senior leadership to attend a Brent Council Scrutiny Committee to present their new investment plan, explain current disruption, and set out how they will deliver lasting local benefits.
- (6) Write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, expressing Brent's support for continued reform of Thames Water and other utility companies, and urging that any future restructuring of Thames Water prioritises a transparent pathway toward a publicly accountable, sustainable model of ownership."

The Mayor thanked Councillor Krupa Sheth for moving the amendment before inviting other members to speak, with the following contributions received.

In opening the debate, Councillor Chan (speaking in support of the amendment) also took the opportunity to highlight his concern at the impact which he felt the privatisation of key utilities such as water had created in terms of their focus on shareholders as opposed to the service being provided for residents and customers. Support was therefore expressed for the renationalisation of all water companies and key utilities as a more publicly accountable and sustainable model of ownership.

As a further contribution, Councillor Rajan-Seelan (speaking in support of the original motion) raised concerns about the current effectiveness of enforcement mechanisms in seeking to address issues relating to reinstatement works along with proposed annual reporting on enforcement outcomes, given previous attempts made through scrutiny to hold Thames Water to account regarding drainage and discharge issues. It was consequently felt that a focus needed to be maintained on concerns relating to public safety and disruption given the impact on residents, businesses and road users.

As a final contribution, Councillor Kansagra (also speaking in support of the original motion) felt it important to highlight it's focus on the standard of work being carried out in terms of highways reinstatement by utility companies and the Council's responsibility in enforcing the necessary compliance and holding them to account. Given the wider focus of the amendment moved and way in which the original motion had been designed to reaffirm the Council's commitment to public safety, transparency, and holding highways contractors and utility companies accountable for the quality and timeliness of their works, he advised the Conservative Group would not be supporting the amendment and instead voting in support of the original motion, as moved.

At this stage, the Mayor advised that the time limit allocated for debate on the motion had been reached. In drawing the debate to a close, he therefore invited Councillor Jayanti Patel (as mover of the original motion) followed by Councillor Krupa Sheth (as mover of the amendment) to exercise their right of reply.

As Councillor Jayanti Patel advised he did not wish to exercise any right of reply the Mayor then invited Councillor Krupa Sheth to speak who, in exercising her right of reply, felt it important to highlight the range of work being undertaken to address the concerns identified in seeking to hold utilities companies to account and also with Transport for London regarding implementation of a lane rental scheme as a further means of seeking to control the quality of work being undertaken by utility companies in the borough.

Having thanked councillors for their contributions, the Mayor then moved to the vote on the motion starting with the amendment moved by the Labour Group.

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

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

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

“Holding Highways Contractors and Utility Companies Accountable for Unsafe and Substandard Reinstatement Works

This Council notes with concern the increasing number of highways works, and substandard reinstatement activities carried out by utility companies across Brent—particularly on Kingsbury Road, Westmoreland Road, and Dryburgh Gardens. These works have led to unsafe footways, prolonged disruption and unacceptable conditions for residents, businesses and road users.

This Council further notes:

- After decades of underinvestment through their model of privatisation, Thames Water are now finally undertaking major upgrade works across Brent – work that should have been delivered years ago. While these long-overdue improvements are essential, they are also causing significant congestion and disruption on local roads.
- That on Dryburgh Gardens, outside several properties, Thames Water subcontracted a company whose backfill works failed to meet required standards. The ground has since sunk, leaving footways hazardous for pedestrians.
- That on Kingsbury Road, the footway was excavated near a BT chamber and reinstated with concrete rather than the original paving slabs. When contacted, Brent’s Highways team confirmed no permit had been issued for these works. This raises serious concerns about illegal excavation, and adherence to public realm safety management from utility companies operating in Brent.

- That outside Morrison Patrol Station, two clear breaches have been identified and reported:
 - A footpath originally laid with paving slabs has been reinstated with low-grade asphalt;
 - A double yellow line across the carriageway has not been reinstated following trenching works.
- These reinstatement failures breach the “like-for-like” standard and pose trip hazards to pedestrians.

This Council further notes:

- That defects identified under the New Road and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA) Section 81, where apparatus is unsafe or unrepaired, are subject to strict response timelines yet often remain unresolved due to disputed ownership.
- That defects identified and that come within Section 72 of the NRSWA — where reinstatement fails to meet prescribed standards—are enforceable and chargeable, yet enforcement remains difficult without transparent public ownership and accountability of these utility companies.

As a result, this Council therefore resolves to:

- (1) Explore new options within our Transformation programme to publish a public-facing defect tracker for Section 72 and Section 81 of the NRSWA, detailing timelines, responsible parties, and enforcement actions, as well as making reporting easier.
- (2) Maintain strict enforcement under Section 72 of the NRSWA for all confirmed defective reinstatements, including chargeable inspections and remedial permits.
- (3) Report annually to Full Council on progress, enforcement outcomes, and resident feedback.
- (4) Reaffirm its commitment to public safety, transparency, and holding highways contractors and utility companies accountable for the quality and timeliness of their works.
- (5) Invite Thames Water’s senior leadership to attend a Brent Council Scrutiny Committee to present their new investment plan, explain current disruption, and set out how they will deliver lasting local benefits.
- (6) Write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, expressing Brent’s support for continued reform of Thames Water and other utility companies, and urging that any future restructuring of Thames Water prioritises a transparent pathway toward a publicly accountable, sustainable model of ownership.”

12.2 2nd Motion (Liberal Democrats Group) – Affordable Homes for Brent – Standing Up to Labour’s failure and the Mayors retreat on housing

The Mayor then invited Councillor Clinton to move the second motion, which had been submitted on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group. As context to the motion, Councillor Clinton began by highlighting the need to recognise that the housing crisis, was not one impacting on the wealthy or investors and instead was one disproportionately affecting working people, families and young people. The way out of the crisis was therefore not felt to be solved by the building of expensive apartments, with the hope that benefits would then trickle down, but by delivering more genuinely affordable homes. As such the motion was seeking to highlight significant concern and disappointment at the Mayor of London's decision to lower the affordable housing target from 35% to just 20% for new developments seeking fast-track planning approval, which it was felt represented a surrender to developer pressure as well as a betrayal of local residents enabling corporate interests and “viability” arguments to be prioritised over the moral imperative of providing homes people could actually afford. In commending the motion to members, Councillor Clinton felt it reflected a need to introduce stronger requirements on developers, for investment in new council homes, and for revised affordability standards supported by the introduction of a national target for affordable housing as being called for by the Liberal Democrats.

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

In opening the debate Councillor Maurice spoke in support of the principles within the motion, also denouncing the Mayor of London's decision to lower the affordable housing threshold to encourage fast-track developments given the current nature of the housing crisis at a time when tens of thousands of residents in Brent were struggling with housing costs, and over 25,000 people remained on the borough’s housing waiting list. In highlighting the need to ensure flexibility was retained in terms of housing targets to avoid developments becoming unviable, the need was also identified to ensure the approach adopted in seeking to provide more affordable housing was initially focussed on the development of brownfield rather than green belt sites.

As a further contribution, Councillor Donnelly Jackson then spoke to respond in her capacity as Cabinet member for Housing and in support of the Council's record on delivering new homes. In thanking all those involved for their efforts in terms of delivery, the opportunity was taken to highlight the positive impact of housing developments delivered through schemes such as Fulton Road, Grand Union and Cecil House, with support also expressed for the Renters' Rights Bill in seeking to drive up standards and protection for tenants in the Private Rented Sector. In addition, members were reminded of work undertaken to develop the Council’s own supply of Temporary Accommodation as a means of addressing supply and cost pressures with the acquisition programme also being undertaken through i4B as a Council owned housing company also commended for the contribution being made to addressing demand pressures in relation to housing supply, reducing reliance on the use of temporary accommodation and supporting the provision of safe, good quality and genuinely affordable homes. Given the work outlined, Councillor Donnelly Jackson concluded by advising that the Labour Group would not be supporting the motion as moved.

As a final contribution, Councillor Benea (speaking in her capacity as Cabinet member for Regeneration, Planning and Property) also outlined her opposition to the motion, noting the irony of the Liberal Democrats championing housing development given their regular opposition to development across the borough. This approach was contrasted with the approach taken by the Labour Group and Affordable Housing update provide for Cabinet in July which had identified the Council remained on track to exceed the pledge to deliver 5,000 affordable homes by 2028, including 1,700 directly delivered by the Council which included over 4,000 affordable homes having already been delivered, and more than a thousand currently on site across sites at Grand Union, Watling Gardens, Church End, Alperton and South Kilburn. As a result, it was pointed out that Brent had been one of just three London boroughs to not only meet but exceed its housing target representing real progress. It was also felt important to recognise the role of successive Conservative (including the coalition) governments in driving the current housing crisis through reducing the level of available Council housing and funding available to support local government, which it was felt had created the broken market that Labour were now seeking to fix. In light of this, Councillor Benea stated that the Council were committed to continue taking the tough pragmatic decisions that were needed to deliver more homes, recognising the need to deliver the affordable and sustainable homes needed by local residents in a way that not only balanced ambition with realism but also sought (working with the Mayor for London) to unlock investment for Brent in order to build a fairer, more affordable borough.

At this stage, the Mayor advised that the time limit allocated for debate on the motion had been reached. In drawing the debate to a close, he therefore invited Councillor Clinton (as mover of the original motion) to exercise his right of reply.

In exercising his right of reply, Councillor Clinton questioned the definition of affordable housing, noting that if people could not actually afford the homes being built then even if targets were met the value of such housing became questionable. He stated that the Liberal Democrats had been consistent in opposing developments that did not deliver the homes it was felt people needed and would continue to do so. It was then emphasised that the Liberal Democrats were the only party willing to give councils the leverage to properly challenge developers, setting targets for social homes in law rather than allowing corporate interests to take precedent over the imperative of providing homes people could actually afford. In his final remark Councillor Clinton urged Brent Council to stand up to the Mayor for London's decision to reduce affordable housing and also to developers.

Having thanked members for their contributions, the Mayor then moved to the vote on the motion which was declared **LOST**.

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

“Affordable Homes for Brent – Standing Up to Labour’s Failure and the Mayor’s Retreat on Housing

For years, Brent Liberal Democrats warned that Labour-run Brent Council and the Labour Mayor of London are failing on housing.

Despite endless press releases and photo opportunities, the delivery of **genuinely affordable** and **council-owned** homes has fallen well short of what is needed. Developers have been allowed to dictate terms, pushing up their profits while the Council accepts watered-down deals that do little to help local people.

In a move that is a retreat from responsibility, the Mayor of London has announced that he will lower the affordable housing target from 35% to just 20% for new developments seeking fast-track planning approval. This decision represents a complete capitulation to developer pressure and a betrayal of Londoners who were promised a fairer, more affordable city. Instead of standing up for communities, Labour in London is bending to corporate interests, allowing “viability” arguments to trump the moral imperative of providing homes people can actually afford.

This Council notes:

- The Mayor of London has reduced the GLA affordable housing requirement for major developments from 35% to 20% to “unblock” stalled sites.
- This comes at a time when tens of thousands of Brent residents are struggling with housing costs, and over 25,000 people remain on the borough’s housing waiting list.
- Brent’s Labour Council has consistently failed to deliver on its own council housing targets, while approving developments that contain too few genuinely affordable homes and too many at so-called “affordable” rents far beyond local incomes.
- Brent Liberal Democrats have long campaigned for stronger requirements on developers, for investment in new council homes, and for affordability standards based on what people **actually earn**, not arbitrary percentages of market price.
- That while the building sector faces cost pressures, cutting affordable housing obligations is not the answer, it merely passes the problem on to those already priced out.

As a result, this Council believes:

- That the Mayor’s decision represents a serious backward step that will reduce the number of homes affordable to Brent residents, deepen inequality, and damage public trust in the planning process.
- That Labour, both locally and at City Hall, has chosen to side with developers instead of Londoners.
- That **targets for their own sake** mean nothing if the homes being built are unaffordable to the people who need them most.
- That national government must also shoulder responsibility, its “*build, build, build*” slogan rings hollow when councils lack the powers and funding to build the right homes.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- (1) Oppose the Mayor of London's decision to reduce affordable housing targets.
- (2) Request the Leader of the Council publish within three months a detailed plan setting out how Brent will:
 - (a) Increase the number of new council homes built or acquired each year;
 - (b) Enforce stronger Section 106 obligations to deliver genuinely affordable housing;
 - (c) Publicly report on how viability assessments are used and challenge developer claims.
- (3) Call on the Government to provide sufficient funding for council-led building and land acquisition to support a new generation of council homes."

12.3 3rd Motion (Labour Group) – Supporting Labour's 30 hours of Free Childcare: A Better Start for Every Brent Child

The Mayor then invited Councillor Begum to move the first motion submitted by the Labour Group. In moving the motion, Councillor Begam began by highlighting what she felt to be the transformative nature of the Government's 30 hour offer of free childcare, which the motion was seeking to support given the significant burden which it would lift in relation to childcare costs for families struggling with cost-of-living pressures within Brent and across the country. In supporting evidence that investment in early years education improved children's life chances, narrowed attainment gaps and supported economic growth by enabling parents, particularly mothers, to return to work, the motion also sought to highlight the difficulties created as a result of childcare costs within the UK reaching one of the highest levels in Europe under the previous Conservative government, which had led many parents to make the tough choice to leave work to care for their children and the cost of childcare identified as a barrier to work and a major contributor to hardship.

As such, Councillor Begum advised the motion sought to recognise the proposed expansion of the free childcare offer as representing a once-in-a-generation opportunity to rebuild a fair and universal early years system that would ensure every child in Brent could thrive, regardless of background or circumstance. In commending the motion to members, Councillor Begum ended by taking the opportunity to commend officers within the Children & Young People Department for the work also being undertaken to support childcare providers in delivery of the offer and also in ensuring the high quality of care was maintained.

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

In opening the debate, Councillor L. Smith, speaking in support of the motion, took the opportunity to thank a childcare provider in Brondesbury Park for the high quality early years childcare provide for a member of her family, recognising from a personal perspective, the positive impact this had provided. In highlighting the

importance in ensuring the same type of provision was more widely available to families across Brent it was felt the 30 free hours childcare offer being made available by the Government would be crucial not only in terms of easing the cost-of-living pressures faced by local families, reducing child poverty, and giving thousands of parents better support, but also in ensuring access to childcare was affordable, accessible and fair. In recognising the wider benefits which good quality early years childcare had been demonstrated to provide in terms of the outcomes achieved by those families in receipt, Councillor L. Smith ended by commending the motion to members for support.

Councillor Grahl (speaking as Cabinet member for Children, Young People and Schools) also spoke in support of the motion. In thanking Councillor Begum for highlighting such a crucial issue, the importance of the investment identified by the Government was recognised given the wider benefits identified with the Council continuing to work and support early years childcare providers in seeking to identify workforce pressures, address training needs, and fill gaps in provision. Councillor Grahl noted that across the country there had been a marked increase in the number of children with Education, Health, and Care Plans, with speech and language difficulties often a major contributing factor and early years educators recognised as playing a key role in detecting and supporting children with such needs. As a result of the investment being provided in the support of 30 hours of free childcare for working families, it was therefore felt this would not only nurture children during their vital early years but also reduce the level of support needed later in their development. In also commending the motion to Council, Councillor Grahl ended by assuring members of the Council's ongoing collaboration with the government and local childcare providers to ensure Brent's early years sector was fully prepared to deliver high-quality care to every child in an effort to ensure every child in Brent had the best possible start in life and with sufficient capacity identified to meet current demand across the borough.

As a further contribution, Councillor Hirani spoke to highlight concerns at the framing of the motion and debate as a new government policy when she felt the pledge had first been announced by the previous Conservative government and with the eligibility criteria remaining largely the same as that identified within the original Conservative governments proposal and not applying to all families. Whilst the offer had been highlighted as free, Councillor Hirani also felt it important to point out that the provision would not include other costs associated with child care such as travel etc which could also be prohibitive for those on low incomes or experiencing cost-of-living pressures.

As a final contribution, Councillor Kelcher spoke in support of the motion taking the opportunity to place the offer within the wider context of the Labour Government's overall approach toward families. As a result, the offer of 30 hours free childcare along with the Mayor of London's free school meals provision and wider package of wrap around support being provided through the Council's leadership in early years and family support through its network of Family Wellbeing Centres, Children's Centres and support of Early Help Partnerships were all felt to provide a comprehensive package of support delivering measurable impact and providing vital early intervention to help people access something that should always have been a right. In summing up, Councillor Kelcher therefore commended the motion for outlining the way in which the Government and Council were seeking to step up

to ensure families had the support needed to provide the next generation with the best possible start in life.

At this stage, as the time limit for debate had been reached, the Mayor then invited Councillor Begum to exercise her right of reply. In thanking members for their support and comments, Councillor Begum reiterated the importance of early year's education in setting the foundations for the start of every child's life with the formative early years of child development having been proved to have a sustained and significant impact on children's outcomes in later life. As such she was proud to have been able to move the motion on the basis that the cost of childcare should never provide a barrier for parents entering work or create financial hardship which, she felt, had unfortunately been the case under the previous Conservative Government.

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

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

“Supporting Labour’s 30 Hours of Free Childcare – A Better Start for Every Brent Child

This Council notes:

- The Labour Government’s pledge of 30 hours of free childcare per week for working parents of children aged 9 months to school age, ensuring affordable, high-quality childcare for families.
- Evidence that investment in early years education improves children’s life chances, narrows attainment gaps and supports economic growth by enabling parents – particularly mothers – to return to work.
- Brent is home to over 73,000 children and young people under 18, representing 22% of the borough’s population. Yet 35% of children aged 15 and under live in poverty after housing costs – one of the highest rates in London. For many families, the cost of childcare has been a barrier to work and a major contributor to hardship.
- The previous Conservative Government’s neglect left parents facing some of the highest childcare costs in Europe, with many local providers struggling to recruit and retain skilled staff due to chronic underfunding.
- Brent’s Family Wellbeing Centres, which reached over 7,400 residents in just one quarter of 2024/25, are a cornerstone of our local early years system – bringing together health visitors, early education, and family support to give children the best start in life.

This Council believes:

- Labour’s 30-hour offer will be transformative for Brent, easing the cost-of-living pressures faced by local families, reducing child poverty, and giving thousands of parents better support.

- Delivering this reform successfully requires sustained national funding and local flexibility – recognising the higher operational costs faced by London providers and the importance of valuing and retaining the childcare workforce.
- Brent’s experience through its Family Wellbeing Centres and Early Help partnerships provides a strong foundation for implementing the new entitlement locally, ensuring wrap-around support for children with additional needs and for parents seeking employment or training.
- This expansion represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to rebuild a fair, universal early years system rooted in community, equity and opportunity – helping to ensure that every Brent child can thrive, regardless of background or circumstance.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- (1) Welcome and support the Labour Government’s childcare reforms and commend the decisive action to make childcare affordable, accessible and fair.
- (2) Celebrate Brent’s leadership in early years and family support through its network of Family Wellbeing Centres and Children’s Centres, which are already delivering measurable impact and providing vital early intervention.
- (3) Work with local nurseries, schools, and childminders to ensure Brent is fully ready to deliver the expanded offer from 2025 onwards, identifying any workforce pressures, training needs or gaps in provision.
- (4) Write to the Secretary of State for Education to:
 - Welcome the policy and reaffirm Brent’s readiness to deliver;
 - Emphasise that funding must reflect London’s higher cost base and ensure sustainability for local providers; and
 - Highlight the importance of linking childcare expansion with wider Family Wellbeing and Early Help reforms.
- (5) Commit to convening a local childcare partnership forum, bringing together providers, parents, trade unions and council officers to oversee delivery, share best practice, and ensure that every Brent child benefits from Labour’s promise of a better start in life.”

12.4 4th Motion (Labour Group) – Reforming the Two Child Limit: A Fair Deal for Families funded by Fair Gambling Reform

The Mayor then invited Councillor Chan to move the second and final motion submitted by the Labour Group. In moving the motion, Councillor Chan highlighted the work he and a number of other ward councillors supported by other colleagues across the Council and local MPs had been undertaking on behalf of residents, not just in Harlesden and Kensal Green, but across Brent to fight for a better and fairer

future and to oppose the proliferation of gambling establishments specifically within Harlesden and across the borough as a whole. Whilst seeking to push this as far as possible, the motion represented an attempt to broaden the focus on the wider impacts arising from gambling related harm including on the local economy as well as health and social inequalities, which he felt also supported the case for wholesale reform and reconfiguration.

In recognising what was felt to be the negative impact arising from imposition of the two-child limit and household benefit cap in pushing many families and children into poverty, with Brent experiencing some of the highest child-poverty levels in London, he pointed out the motion was seeking to support a more credible fair funding route involving a reform of gambling taxation to fund the reform and lifting of the benefit cap. This had been supported as a proposal by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) as a means of raising around £3 billion per year through fair and progressive tax reform and increasing duties on the gambling industry as a means of helping to tackle child poverty and contribute in seeking to address the social harm associated with gambling in line with the principles of prevention, responsibility and fairness. In commending the approach outlined, Councillor Chan hoped all members would support the motion as an approach in seeking to reform and remove the two-child limit and benefit cap, funded by progressive gambling-tax reform as a means of lifting around half a million children out of poverty.

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

In opening the debate, Councillor Afzal spoke in support of the motion, highlighting that whilst recognised as a welcome approach towards supporting removal of the two-child benefit cap the imposition of the cap as a welfare reform should never have been introduced given its impact as one of the main drivers of poverty within the UK. Highlighting the disproportionate impact of the cap on those families on low income and ethnic minority communities he felt it reinforced wider issues of social injustice across society. As such, Councillor Afzal felt there was a need for an immediate and radical overhaul of the current social and economic system designed to lift the vulnerable, elderly, families and children out of poverty with the approach outlined within the motion welcomed as starting point in that process.

Following on, Councillor Kansagra then spoke, highlighting the Conservative Groups opposition to the motion. Whilst supportive of the need for gambling reform given the recognised harm being caused and commitment to child welfare and tackling child poverty it was felt the wider focus on welfare reform failed to recognise wider principles of fairness, fiscal responsibility as well as personal accountability in terms of lifestyle choices. On this basis, he advised the Conservative Group would not be voting in support of the motion.

As a further contribution, Councillor Clinton spoke next confirming the Liberal Democrats support for the principles and approach outlined in the motion towards a fairer taxation system including of the gambling industry. Having also opposed introduction of the child benefit cap, the approach outlined in seeking to ensure gambling firms (as wealthy businesses) contributed a fair share, linked to their profits, toward addressing the harm created by gambling was also supported and as such he confirmed the Liberal Democrats support for the motion.

As a final contribution to the debate, Councillor Mili Patel (as Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources) also took the opportunity to speak in support of the motion. Outlining what she felt to be the moral scar on the country created by the increase in child poverty whilst the Conservatives had been in government she contrasted this with the approach taken by the last Labour government in lifting over a half a million children out of poverty and the need now identified for a serious strategy to address the issue once again with the measures already implemented to undo this damage highlighted to include more breakfast clubs, free school lunches, family hubs and additional childcare. At the same time the need to adopt a financially responsible approach was also recognised, especially in seeking to protect and safeguard those frontline services relied on by the most vulnerable who it was felt had been failed by the previous Conservative Government and with a clear path identified recognising the profits generated through the gambling industry at the expense of local high streets, the local economy, and community wellbeing. In highlighting the national campaign pioneered by Brent in seeking urgent gambling reform to redress the balance and provide a fairer economy, it was pointed out that the harm being created by gambling was costing Brent's local economy over £14m a year, which represented very little to organisations worth over £11.5 billion yet only contributing £2 billion of that in tax. As a result, Councillor Mili Patel concluded by highlighting the need to ensure all options were considered to address the challenges identified recognising that whilst gambling would not build a country for the next generation, children, freed from poverty, would.

Prior to conclusion of the debate, Councillor Kansagra, raised a point of order regarding the application of time limit for speakers during the debate. In response, the Mayor advised the approach adopted had been designed to allow as many members as possible to speak within the time limit provided with the opportunity to seek a review of the arrangements available through the Constitutional Working Group.

As the time limit for debate had been reached, the Mayor then moved on to invite Councillor Chan to exercise his right of reply. In highlighting the focus of the motion as a means of supporting a fair, compassionate and fiscally responsible approach to ending child poverty and addressing the wider impact of welfare reforms imposed under austerity, funded through progressive gambling-tax reform and as a means of addressing the harm being created by gambling, Councillor Chan hoped this would encourage all members to support the motion as moved.

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

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

“Reforming the Two-Child Limit – A Fair Deal for Families, Funded by Fair Gambling Reform

This Council notes:

- That the two-child limit and household benefit cap are among the most punitive welfare policies in recent history, pushing hundreds of thousands of

children into poverty and disproportionately affecting single parents and larger families.

- Nationally, over 1.6 million children are impacted by the two-child limit, with affected families losing around £3,500 per year, while 115,000 households are affected by the benefit cap, most of them single-parent families.
- Research from the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) shows that removing these two policies would lift around half a million children out of poverty overnight, at a cost of around £3 billion a year.
- The IPPR and former Prime Minister Gordon Brown have proposed a credible and fair funding route – a reform of gambling taxation, raising around £3 billion per year by increasing duties on online casinos, slot machines and general betting, ensuring gambling companies contribute more to repairing the social harms they may help create.
- In September 2025, the Chancellor confirmed that reforming the two-child limit is “on the table”, signalling a welcome willingness to consider compassionate and fiscally responsible reform.
- Brent continues to experience some of the highest child-poverty levels in London, with around 35 per cent of children under 15 living in poverty after housing costs, and many families struggling with food and fuel insecurity.

This Council further notes:

- Brent’s leadership in tackling gambling-related harms, including our partnership with the Social Market Foundation (SMF), to examine how high-street gambling impacts communities and to develop evidence-based solutions.
- The recent Brent Council and SMF report, recommending reform of the licensing objectives that underpin the Gambling Act 2005 and the “aim to permit” principle – so that councils and communities have greater powers to protect public health, fairness and local wellbeing.

This Council believes:

- That no child should grow up in poverty because of the number of siblings they have or where they were born.
- That reforming the two-child limit and benefit cap, funded through fair taxation of the gambling industry, offers a responsible way to reduce child poverty while remaining fiscally disciplined.
- That gambling firms should contribute their fair share, linked to their profits, toward addressing the harm, in line with the principles of prevention, responsibility and fairness.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- (1) Write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and to the Chancellor, expressing Brent's support for reforming the two-child limit and benefit cap, funded by progressive gambling-tax reform.
- (2) Reaffirm Brent's leadership in tackling gambling harms, building on our work with the Social Market Foundation to strengthen local licensing powers and protect communities.
- (3) Share this motion with Brent's Members of Parliament and the Local Government Association, urging them to support a fair, compassionate and fiscally responsible approach to ending child poverty.
- (4) Contact all landowners in Wembley to encourage them to replicate the Council's advertising policy, which prevents gambling operators from advertising in the public realm."

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

The Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Leader of the Council, to introduce the report updating members on the work being undertaken across each Cabinet portfolio in order to provide ongoing support and services to meet the needs of residents across the borough.

Following on from the debate on the final motion, Councillor Muhammed Butt began by commending all councillors involved for their commitment in support of the Council's tackling gambling harm campaign, building on work with the Social Market Foundation to strengthen local licensing powers and protect communities.

Moving on, the opportunity was also taken to thank all members of the Cabinet for the work being undertaken across their portfolios to continue supporting and safeguarding local residents in line with the Council's core strategic priorities, recognising the ongoing nature of the financial pressures faced by the Council. In commending the work being undertaken to manage demand and address the pressures identified whilst also delivering on their commitments, members were assured that the need for continued financial discipline and careful stewardship had also been recognised to sustain and ensure the Council's ongoing financial sustainability. As part of this approach, reference was made to the recent award of funding for Brent through the Government's Pride in Place Impact fund as well as decision made by Cabinet to allocate Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) and Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) funding to support local community initiatives, youth provision as well as a range of other real improvements for residents across the borough in support of the delivery a cleaner, safer, greener borough where residents felt connected and proud to live.

As part of the update, members were also asked to note the recent extension of the Landlord Licensing Scheme and Council's support for implementation of the Renters Right Act, as a means of providing additional safeguards for tenants across the Private Rented Sector. As a final update members also noted the list of Executive decisions (as tabled at the meeting) which had been taken under the Council's urgency procedures, since the previous update provided for the Council meeting in September 2025.

The Mayor thanked the Leader for the report and it was **RESOLVED** to formally note the update provided.

14. **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:

14.1 Councillor S. Butt thanked Councillor Grahl (as Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools) for the written response to his question seeking further detail on the £4m investment in youth facilities and how young people had helped shape the projects being funded. As a supplementary question, further details were sought on the plans being developed to maximise use of what was felt to be the landmark investment provided by the Government in early years funding to ensure children in Brent continued to receive the best possible start in life.

In response, Councillor Grahl began by commending the Government's Best Start in Life Strategy which it was noted included funding for family services and the wider early years sector, as well as the expansion of childcare entitlements for children from working families with the final funding allocations for both early years entitlements and the Best Start family services elements anticipated shortly. In the meantime, an overarching Brent early years strategy was being developed to deliver a universal and targeted framework of support from pre-birth to age five, which was identified as crucial for reducing inequalities and improving outcomes for children and families with the local multi-agency strategy also providing the framework for meeting the statutory targets set for Brent in the Best Start for Life strategy.

In terms of the investment already provided directly by the Council in youth facilities, it was pointed out these allocations had been based around a commitment to co-production with young people with Councillor Grahl expressing her pride at the investment made and core involvement of young people in the process with funding being provided for facilities and organisations delivering key priorities for young people in terms of access to mental health support, employment & skills opportunities and safe spaces to address youth crime and safety. As such the organisations who were benefitting from the investment had included the Church End Anchor Project focussed on establishing a new youth facility delivering skill building workshops, mentoring sessions, tutoring, and other such activities; Cricklewood Boxing Club to support the continued development and delivery of physical and mental wellbeing activities across Brent; Jason Roberts

Foundation in seeking to support their continued provision of holistic youth support through sport, mentoring, life skills, and education; The OK Club in South Kilburn as a longstanding youth project aiming to increase participation and empower young people from all backgrounds in a range of work programmes and Roundwood School and Community Centre as an accessible youth dedicated space that would be receiving funding aimed at developing sustainable, inclusive and engaging recreation. In conclusion, Councillor Grahl felt the investment and approach highlighted demonstrated the Council's commitment in seeking to nurture and support children and young people in providing them with the best start in life including provision of the necessary facilities to reflect the priorities outlined.

- 14.2 Councillor Hylton thanked Councillor Donnelly Jackson (as Cabinet member for Housing) for the response to her original question on how the renewal of Brent's borough-wide HMO licensing scheme would improve living standards for renters and strengthen protection against rogue landlords. As a supplementary question further details were sought on how the Council was preparing for the Government's forthcoming Renters Reform Bill to ensure local tenants were able to fully benefit fully from the change.

In response, Councillor Donnelly Jackson firstly took the opportunity to welcome and support the decision taken by Cabinet to introduce an additional Landlord HMO Licensing Scheme which had been specifically developed to drive up standards and protect tenants in smaller HMOs. In her view, introduction of the new Additional Licensing Scheme from February 2026 together with implementation of the new Renters' Rights Bill, would deliver even stronger protections for renters and fairer rules for responsible landlords recognising that HMO properties often presented higher risk challenges around safety and management. With this in mind, the Licensing Scheme had been introduced to help raise and deliver clear, consistent standards in a way that not only created a level playing field for landlords, but would also provide the Council with the powers needed to act decisively when standards fell short supported by a process of engagement with landlords to promote good practice and ensure collaboration across the Private Rented Sector. In terms of the Renters Reform Bill, Councillor Donnelly Jackson advised that the Council was already preparing for the Bill's implementation, which was expected sometime between April and June 2026 with dedicated projects underway across both the Council's Private Housing Services and Housing Needs teams to ensure tenants in Brent were able to benefit from the changes which it would felt would not only provide greater security but also a fairer balance between renters and landlords. Teams were also engaging closely in pan-London and subregional forums in order to share learning, and identify further opportunities to improve the quality of private rented housing and continued to work closely with the DWP and Housing Benefits colleagues to anticipate changes in income, affordability pressures, and Universal Credit delays, to ensure that Brent was able to support residents through the transition. In recognising the importance of the Bill in terms of the opportunity provided to deliver stronger protection for tenants and fairer more consistent rules of landlords, Councillor Donnelly Jackson ended her response by also welcoming the level of engagement provided with tenants through the annual Renters Fair, including Brent Renters Union, to ensure tenants received all the

support they needed as well as with landlords through the landlord forum as a further means of promoting good practice and collaboration.

14.3 No supplementary question was raised by Councillor Choudry with the written response provided by Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) on the intended use of funding allocated for Brent through the Pride in Place Impact Fund noted, as circulated with the agenda.

14.4 In noting the written response provided to his question regarding the enforcement of planning conditions relating to the planting of trees as part of the Callier House development, Burnt Oak Broadway Councillor Jayanti Patel, as a supplementary question, asked Councillor Benea (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Property) for a further update following advice from the Resident Association covering Callier House that they had not been made aware of the presence of any underground services beneath the footway at the designated planting location, based on recent utility works in the same area. In highlighting that this had been raised with the Planning Enforcement team, the request was made for a further survey to be undertaken in order to establish the feasibility of planting at the original location. Whilst noting that the building owners had agreed to make a financial contribution in order to cover the cost of planting the trees elsewhere in the local area, it was felt that should the condition be feasible to enforce the owners should be required to do so in order to allow the community to benefit from the greening and environmental improvements originally intended at that location.

In response, Councillor Benea advised that she would be willing to facilitate a further meeting with the planning team to review the position, as set out in her written response, and additional information provided although it was noted that the matter had already been subject to active discussions with the building owner with a financial contribution for the trees secured in order to ensure the original commitment was honoured.

14.5 In noting the response provided by Councillor Krupa Sheth (as Cabinet Member for Public Realm and Enforcement) to his written response regarding the disruption being created by what was felt to be poor coordination and planning of road works taking place across the borough, Councillor Lorber as a supplementary question queried the basis of the response provided in relation the action being taken to ensure Council led highway upgrade schemes were being planned to align with other utility works in an effort to minimise disruption. As an example he highlighted what he felt was the unnecessary disruption and costs incurred as a result of sections of the footway and highway along Carline Road in Alperton having to be reinstated following gas utility works in advance of their subsequent planned upgrade and replacement by the Council, with details therefore sought as to when the Council would begin to coordinate more effectively with utility companies to minimise disruption for residents and take advantage of economies of scale to deliver the improvements local people needed.

In response, Councillor Krupa Sheth took the opportunity to confirm the coordination mechanisms already in place between the Council and utility companies in order to ensure unnecessary disruption and duplication would not occur.

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 Johnson seeking an update from Councillor Nerva (as Cabinet Member for Adult Social care, Public Health and Leisure) on the measures being put in place by the Council to provide for the boroughs increasing elderly population.

In thanking Councillor Johnson for his question, Councillor Nerva advised he was pleased to highlight the upcoming launch of Age Friendly Brent reflecting work undertaken between the Council, Brent Pensioner Forum and a range of other organisations and community partners including, Age UK, Elders Voice and Ashford Place with the initiative aimed at fostering a secure, and accessible community for older people by focusing on social participation, public spaces, and health. It was hoped as many members as possible would be able to attend the launch being hosted at Brent Civic Centre which would provide an opportunity to outline the work being undertaken in partnership to support Brent as an age-friendly borough. The opportunity was also taken to recognise and thank Councillor Lorber for his work in advocating for the elderly community, with the Council also committed to supporting partners coming together in seeking to make life better for older people across the borough focussed around the principles of equity, accessibility and inclusiveness, creating environments that supported healthy, active and connected living. Issues to be featured during the launch event included transport and infrastructure improvements, including access to public toilet facilities on which the importance of ongoing work to advertise the location of facilities available for public use had been recognised.

- (ii) Councillor Matin, seeking support from Councillor Nerva (as Cabinet Member for Adult Social care, Public Health and Leisure) to secure funding for the provision of additional health facilities including a GP surgery as part of the St. George's development in Alperton. In raising the issue, Councillor Matin highlighted the significant level of development across Alperton which whilst generating almost £40m worth of Community Infrastructure Levy funding had also increased the local population and strain being placed on access to local health services within the area.

In response, Councillor Nerva felt it was important to recognise Brents strong record in working with the NHS to secure investment for the provision of services in the borough which had already included areas such as Alperton, South Kilburn and Wembley. Tribute was also paid to the current and previous Lead Members for Regeneration for their record in securing the use of CIL investment to support local health provision. Councillor Nerva advised, however, that he would be willing to meet with Councillor Matin in order to review the concerns identified and, if necessary, follow up to demonstrate what it had already been possible to deliver through the use of CIL investment in terms of local health provision.

- (iii) Councillor Long seeking further details from Councillor Krupa Sheth (as Cabinet Member for Public Realm and Enforcement) on the potential through the Local Plan review to consider the planning position and requirements in relation to the opening hours for retail premises where this was not regulated through the licensing process, given the potential for those premises to still cause nuisance for local residents (especially those living above or adjacent to the premises) in relation to noise, waste and their hours of operation.

In response, Councillor Kuppa Sheth advised that she would be willing (working in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Property) to liaise with the relevant planning and licensing officers to explore what action could be taken to review the issues raised including whether this was an issue that could be considered as part of the Local Plan review.

- (iv) Councillor Lorber, highlighting concerns and seeking an update from Councillor Benea (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Property) on the status of works relating to the Afrex House housing development in Beresford Avenue, Alperton which despite building works having commenced had subsequently paused close to completion with no apparent progress made since and the units within the block remaining empty. The development had included a promotional sign highlighting the support being provided by the Mayor for London to deliver new homes with the associated financial impact and costs incurred as a result of the development not being completed also queried. Given the concerns highlighted, details were sought on whether the reasons for the delay were known and when it was anticipated the development would be completed given current pressures on the demand for housing across the borough.

In response, Councillor Benea advised that she would need to seek an update from officers and the Mayor for London's office prior to being able to provide a more detailed response, which would be undertaken following the meeting.

- (v) As a final question, Councillor Kelcher sought details from Councillor Knight (as Cabinet Member Customer Experience, Resident Support and Culture) on whether any plans had been considered to formal recognise the success and achievement in delivering the redevelopment and refurbishment of Harlesden Library, including the potential inclusion of a commemorative plaque recognising the importance of the improvements delivered in terms of the facilities and community hub space available, libraries Victorian heritage and patience of residents during the redevelopment works. In support, Councillor Kelcher felt that the recent development was as significant as any previous works during the library's history (which had also been commemorated) and had opened up the library and given more opportunities for local community access and use. As such it was felt the Council needed to celebrate its achievements and commitment to renovating and opening up access to the library.

In response, Councillor Knight thanked Councillor Kelcher for highlighting and celebrating the success achieved through the refurbishment and redevelopment of the library which had been funded through a significant £500k investment by the Council. As a result, Councillor Knight supported the value in seeking to celebrate the library's Victorian heritage, and continued

legacy in the modern era which had been reflected within the redevelopment delivered and advised she would therefore take the proposal away for further consideration with officers in terms of what it would be appropriate and possible to deliver.

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.

15. **Report from Chairs of Scrutiny Committees**

The Mayor then moved on to deal with the updates from each Scrutiny Committee Chair, reminding members that the time set aside for this item was 12 minutes, with each Chair having up to three minutes in which to highlight any significant issues arising from the work of their Committees. Once these updates had been provided, he advised the remaining time available would then be opened up for any other non-Cabinet members to question (without the need for advance notice) the Scrutiny Committee Chairs on matters relating to the work of their Committee.

Councillor Ketan Sheth was then invited to introduce the update report on the work being undertaken by the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, with the following issues highlighted:

- Since the previous update, the Committee had met on one further occasion with that meeting focussed on three significant items as well as an update from the CEO of London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust on improvements to sickle cell care and proposed changes in the opening hours for the Urgent Care Centre at Central Middlesex Hospital. With one of largest patient populations in North West London the Committee had been informed that the redesigned care pathway being offered through the Trust would include a new Acute Hub, a 24/7 triage service, and extended outpatient provision at Central Middlesex Hospital, with the changes aimed at improving patient experience and reducing health inequalities across the borough, which the Committee would continue to monitor.
- Other issues considered had included:
 - Children's Oral Health with concern raised that despite some progress being made, 43% of five-year-olds in Brent were still identified as experiencing dental decay. Details were provided on Public Health interventions including supervised toothbrushing programmes, the oral health bus, and educational campaigns however it was noted that systemic challenges remained in terms of national NHS contract limitations, cultural barriers, and access issues. As a result, the Committee were keen to ensure that as strong a programme of outreach continued to be offered as possible in order to accelerate progress.
 - Brent's Period Dignity Project, which members were advised had been initiated as one of the outcomes from the Brent Poverty Commission and had also been championed by Brent Youth Parliament. The project aimed to reframe period poverty as a dignity issue with support expressed for the provision of free menstrual products being made available across council sites and plans to expand this within school and care settings also welcomed. As part of the review, the Committee

discussed gaps in access for care leavers and culturally sensitive communities, with officers committed to improving outreach and tackling stigma.

- Youth Justice Service delivery, which the Committee were pleased to note had achieved reductions in custody rates and reoffending through restorative justice and early intervention although the focus in relation to Black Caribbean males and mental health needs were recognised by members as a key challenge. Members were also pleased to note the strengthening of preventative work through partnerships with organisations like CAMHS with the Committee continuing to closely monitor progress.
- Looking ahead, members were advised that the November meeting of the Committee would be focussed on housing, which would include an update on Brent's response to the social housing regulator findings, a review of progress from the Housing Improvement Board and its independent Chair as well as a focus on safety, tenant satisfaction and homelessness prevention with the Committee's focus on Housing recognised as key in terms of maintaining transparency and better engagement with tenants.
- The ongoing and active engagement of the Committee in the work of the North West London Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee Brent, which Councillor Ketan Sheth continued to Chair. Areas of upcoming focus included Special School Nursing, the future of Place Based Partnerships and dental health Commissioning.

In highlighting the ongoing focus and work of the Committee on evidence-based scrutiny that sought to address residents' priorities and add real value to policy development, Councillor Ketan Sheth ended by thanking members and officers for their ongoing contributions.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Ketan Sheth for his update and then invited Councillor Conneely as chair of the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee to introduce the update report on the work being undertaken by that Committee, with the following issues highlighted:

- The wide-ranging nature of scrutiny activity undertaken by the Committee since the last update, as set out within the update report circulated with the agenda which had included a focus on financial monitoring, funding and support for the voluntary & community sector as well as progress on development of the draft procurement and social value policy.
- As part of the Committee's ongoing role in monitoring Brent's overall financial position a detailed update had been provided on the current quarterly financial forecast. As part of the process members had been keen to focus on the progress being achieved on the measures introduced to tackle the significant budget pressures and challenges identified in relation to the rising demand and costs for Children and Adult Social Care as well as Temporary Accommodation. Whilst recognising the ongoing nature of the challenges identified, the Committee had been particularly encouraged by the work being undertaken to address the challenges in relation to supported exempt accommodation and had commended the work undertaken in relation to

Children's Services to invest in early intervention and reduce the reliance on agency staff, with it hoped this approach would be adopted more widely as best practice and the issues highlighted identified as key considerations for the upcoming Budget Scrutiny Task Group.

- In reviewing progress on the development of the Council's draft procurement strategy and social value policy, the Committee had examined the current local and national context, existing approach towards procurement, along with key performance data, achievements, lessons learned and opportunities that had informed the rationale for change and consequently the development of the draft strategy and policy. As part of this focus, members had been keen to consider how design of the strategy and policy had also aligned with key corporate priorities such as employment opportunities, sustainable supply chain and robust contract management in an effort to ensure maximum value for money and social value could be delivered, on which the Committee would continue to closely monitor progress.
- As part of their focus on funding and support for the Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) the Committee had been provided with a comprehensive overview of the Council's funding and support for the VCS, highlighting its impact on the sector's long-term sustainability and capacity. The review had also included consideration of the current and emerging needs of the sector along with the scope and distribution of funding and support and the demonstrable impact on both the sector and local communities with an analysis of the Council's VCS grant programmes and commissioned services to better understand key strengths, challenges, and opportunities for continuous improvement which the Committee had again agreed to continue monitoring.
- The ongoing focus and work of the Committee in seeking to encourage, where identified as required, change and improvements in the way services were being delivered for local communities across the borough and thanks expressed to members and other key stakeholders for their engagement in the work of the Committee to date.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Conneely for the updated provided and it was **RESOLVED** that the contents of both reports be noted.

Following the updates provided, the Mayor advised that the remainder of time available would be open for questions from non-cabinet members to the Scrutiny Chairs. The Mayor reminded members of the need to ensure that questions raised were focused on the updates provided or the work being undertaken by the relevant Committee. Questions relating to the following issues were raised and responses provided, as set out below:

- (i) Following on from the question raised at the previous meeting, Councillor Lorber asked Councillor Ketan Sheth for an update on any further review which had been undertaken in relation to the decision taken by the Northwest University Healthcare NHS Trust to close the hydrotherapy pool at Northwick Park Hospital and in an effort to ensure the Trust was properly held to account on the basis of the rationale behind the decision.

In response, Councillor Ketan Sheth (as Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee) thanked Councillor Lorber for the follow up question. In reminding members of the response provided at the previous meeting, he assured members that the decision remained one which the Committee was aware of and continued to monitor.

With no further questions raised, the Mayor advised that he would move to the next item and thanked all members for their contribution.

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

The Mayor invited Councillor Chan, as the Vice-Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee, to introduce the report updating members on the work of the Committee.

In terms of issues highlighted Councillor Chan 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 given the increase in local authorities needing to seek exceptional financial hardship support and challenging nature of decisions required to address the position and ensure the Council was able to continue delivering a balanced and financial sustainable budget. In noting the nature of key strategic risks identified in relation to Affordable Housing & Temporary Accommodation, impact of the Cost-of-Living crisis, DSG deficit and Council's Financial Resilience it was highlighted that the range of work undertaken had included assurance being sought on activity in response to the Council's self-referral to the Social Housing Regulator as well as an update on progress with the review of the Council's commissioning and procurement arrangements in an effort to drive further value for money and also focus on the approach towards delivering social value and community wealth building. In concluding his update, Councillor Chan 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. The opportunity was also taken to highlight the support expressed for ongoing lobbying in relation to reform of the local government funding regime and the introduction of a multi-year funding settlement for local authorities.

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

17. **Non Cabinet Members' Debate**

In accordance with Standing Order 34, the Mayor advised that the next item on the agenda was the non-cabinet member debate, with the subject chosen for consideration being “Broken Promises & Failing Finances – Brent Deserves better than Labour’s Short-Term thinking”.

Members were advised that the motion submitted as the basis for the debate had been circulated with the agenda and that the time available for the debate was 25 minutes before inviting Councillor Lorber to introduce the motion which had been submitted (on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group) as the basis for the Non-Cabinet Member debate. In introducing the motion, Councillor Lorber began by highlighting concern at the delay in delivery of the change promised by the government following the last election in terms of the financial support that local authorities such as Brent urgently required. As a result, it was pointed out that the Council was still awaiting provision of the multi-year funding settlements needed to plan ahead and invest efficiently, with the motion moved as the basis for the debate seeking to outline the resulting impact of the ongoing uncertainty on the ability to invest in essential services and rebuild local infrastructure. Referring to the Council’s own budget forecasts, Councillor Lorber outlined how these had shown continued shortfalls in funding for street maintenance, waste and recycling, local infrastructure and adult and children’s social care with demand and costs continuing to increase making it more challenging to prioritise those issues being highlighted by residents as concerns.

In terms of any response, it was felt the approach adopted by the Labour Administration needed to be challenged with its record of financial management characterised by short-term fixes, rising debt levels and an over-reliance on developer income, none of which was felt to provide sustainable solutions and the need therefore identified to stand up for local residents and demand a fair deal from government. In recognising the additional burdens being placed on local authorities and the lack of supporting funding in relation to the increased demand on temporary accommodation, Adult and Children’s Social Care and challenges needing to be address in health and social care provision, Councillor Lorber advised the motion was therefore calling on the Council to use its influence in calling for the government to honour their commitment to the provision of multi-year financial settlements, the fair funding review alongside greater flexibility to raise and manage revenue locally in order to provide greater stability and certainty on the essential investment required to deliver clean and safe neighbourhoods and effective public services that worked. On this basis the motion was moved as the basis of the debate.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Lorber for introducing the motion and then opened the debate for contributions from other members.

Opening the debate, Councillor Hirani supported the concerns expressed that despite the government’s promises, local authorities had still not received the multi-year funding settlements needed to provide stability and be able to plan ahead with the government’s approach increasing uncertainty and compared to that of a sticking plaster. Highlighting concerns being raised by local residents in relation to the level of Council Tax, given the neglect of public realm, rubbish and the state of highways and pavements across the borough it was felt residents deserved better and as such she highlighted the Conservative Groups support for the motion moved as the basis for the debate.

Councillor Tatler then spoke to highlight what she felt was a need to correct a number of comments made in introducing the debate, with members advised that the announcement on the outcome of the government's fair funding review and implementation of multi-year financial settlements had not been delayed and was anticipated in a matter of weeks. The need was also identified to contrast this with the approach taken by the previous Conservative government who had presided over the current regime of single year settlements and reduced funding for local authorities as part of their programme of austerity, which it was pointed out the Labour government was now seeking to address including the focus on the fair funding review in addressing those areas with the highest level of need based on identified deprivation. In view of the approach adopted by the current Government she advised she would not be supporting the motion.

As a further contribution, Councillor Clinton then spoke to query the potential impact of the Fair Funding review recognising that whilst Brent included areas of high need and disadvantage this did not always get reflected in funding allocations provided for local authorities in London. Concerns were also highlighted in relation to what was regarded as the short term approach adopted by Labour in seeking to address the need for investment in services such as potholes broken pavements, rubbish and housing estate maintenance, with the need for more fundamental reform of local authority finance identified as essential in being able to provide more sustainable investment and funding to deliver cleaner and safe neighbourhoods, well maintained roads and pavements and other key public services relied on by residents.

Following on, Councillor Kelcher highlighted that whilst the motion moved as the basis for the debate had identified the need for a longer-term approach it was felt this contradicted the approach taken by the Opposition Groups in regularly seeking to oppose developments at the Planning Committee. In contrast, the Council's track record in meeting and exceeding delivery of its housing targets and associated impact on the Council Tax base and generation of CIL funding along with the record level of New Homes Bonus awarded was felt to highlight the Council's ability to deliver real and positive change when compared to what he felt was the short term approach reflected in the position taken by the Opposition Groups.

Speaking next Councillor Kennelley, referring to comments made earlier in the debate regarding Council Tax, felt it important to provide further context in relation to the level set by Brent when compared to that in Conservative controlled Harrow, which he pointed out was currently much higher and reflected what he felt to be the more financially sustainable and efficient way services being delivered within Brent.

As a further contribution opposed to the basis of the motion, Councillor Chohan felt it important to clarify and commend Brent's and the governments approach towards encouraging development and delivery of affordable housing despite the stance often taken by the Opposition Groups. It was also felt the efforts being made by the Council to support local community organisations and events as well as enhance parks, open spaces and the public realm should also be acknowledged and highlighted as a means of providing a further welcomed focus on resident priorities.

Continuing the debate, Councillor Nerva then spoke in support of the need for reform and introduction of a more progressive and fairer system of local government funding, also taking the opportunity to echo the comments made regarding the much higher levels of Council Tax currently being charged by a range of Conservative and Liberal Democrat led Council Administrations across London. Reference was also made to the additional funding which had been provided by the government to address issues such as pothole repairs supported by the award of funding through the Pride in Place Impact Fund for local authorities, including Brent, to deliver further improvements to the borough's high street and public spaces with Labours commitment to the re-introduction of multi-year funding settlements and the fair funding review also welcomed as a means of providing the ability to plan ahead with more certainty in a fair and viable way.

As a final contribution to the debate, Councillor Rajan-Seelan spoke to highlight what he felt had been the failure of the Labour Government to deliver the long term and more, stable and predictable funding required by local authorities and associated impact in terms of the basic services that mattered most to residents and wider public services such as access to the police.

In view of the remaining time available the Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) to summarise and close the debate.

In closing the debate, Councillor Muhammed Butt began by highlighting that whilst the motion had referred to "broken promises and failing finances" there was a need to recognise the role of the Liberal Democrats alongside the Conservatives as the architects of austerity, which had helped to break the system by reducing the funding available to support areas such youth provision, social care and housing budgets. As a result of austerity, Brent had been required to cut £238m from its budget since 2010 which had directly impacted on the provision of those services relied on the most by local residents, resulting in the Council seeking to deliver more with less while demand for services also continued to increase.

Given the impact of austerity, it was recognised the need to address the challenges identified would require a longer-term approach with the Council seeking to take the initiative as a campaigning authority by taking its case direct to the Treasury focussed around the Autumn Budget submission. Members were reminded this had set out six clear, practical steps that it was felt would make a real difference including a visitor levy to help fund local services; gambling reform to give councils real power to protect their high streets; investment in West London Orbital to unlock homes and jobs; a Cultural Contribution Requirement enabling Wembley's global success to support local services; a long-term housing partnership to deliver genuinely affordable homes and finally fairer funding formulas designed to reflect the true cost of housing and deprivation in London. This had already delivered progress with the successful lobbying (through London Councils) for housing costs to be included in deprivation calculations as part of the forthcoming financial settlement and work ongoing to make sure Brent's voice continued to be heard. In terms of the motion submitted as the basis for debate, Councillor Muhammed Butt, in concluding, felt that if members truly wanted to demonstrate they cared about Brent they should join the Administration in continuing to make the case for fair funding, housing and gambling reform and in support of the powers needed to build stronger communities and to deliver the funding, freedom and fairness the borough deserved.

Having thanked members for their contributions, the Mayor then moved to the vote on the motion moved as the basis for the Non-Cabinet Member debate which was declared **LOST**.

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

“Broken Promises and Failing Finances – Brent Deserves Better than Labour’s Short-Term Thinking

16 months since the general election that promised “change”, the Labour Government has failed to deliver the financial support that local authorities like Brent urgently need. Instead of providing sustainable funding allowing councils to plan properly, invest in essential services, and rebuild local infrastructure, ministers have continued the same pattern of uncertainty, offering only one-year settlements and short-term sticking plasters.

In Brent, the Labour Council’s response has been unacceptable. Rather than standing up for local residents and demanding a fair deal, the Council has meekly accepted the Government’s excuses while presiding over neglected streets, crumbling pavements, and services stretched to breaking point. Local people pay some of the highest Council Tax in London but see little in return - roads full of potholes, littered streets, unreliable waste services and a backlog of repairs to Council homes.

Brent Liberal Democrats have long campaigned for investment in the essentials: clean and safe neighbourhoods, well-maintained roads and pavements and public services that work. Yet Labour at both national and local level have failed to deliver the stability and competence.

This Council notes that:

- Despite a year of promises from the new Labour Government, Councils have still not received the multi-year funding settlements needed to plan ahead and invest efficiently.
- Brent’s own budget forecasts show continuing shortfalls in funding for street maintenance, waste and recycling, local infrastructure, and adult social care.
- The Labour Council’s record of financial management has been characterised by short-term fixes, rising debt levels, and an over-reliance on developer income, none of which provide sustainable solutions.
- Residents repeatedly raise concerns about potholes, broken pavements, overflowing bins and poorly maintained estates, everyday issues that the Council consistently fails to prioritise.
- The Labour Administration’s focus on photo opportunities has too often come at the expense of basic services that matter most to residents.

As a result, this Council believes:

- The Government's failure to deliver long-term, predictable funding for local authorities show their election promises to "rebuild Britain" and "empower local communities" have not been delivered.
- Brent Labour has failed to use its voice or influence to fight for our borough, choosing instead to remain silent while residents and front-line services suffer.
- Councils must be given multi-year settlements, fair funding formulas and greater flexibility to raise and manage revenue locally.
- Cleaning up our streets, fixing our roads, and investing in neighbourhood infrastructure are not optional extras. They are the basic responsibilities of any competent local authority.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- (1) To highlight that the Labour Government and Labour-run Brent Council have failed to secure and plan for long-term financial stability in Brent.
- (2) Urge the Government to introduce three-year funding settlements for Councils by 2026 and to provide additional ring-fenced investment for highways, pavements, and public-realm maintenance.
- (3) Support the commitment (as made by Brent Liberal Democrat Group) to campaign for a cleaner, safer, better maintained borough, with proper investment in local infrastructure, transparent budgeting and accountability for how every pound is spent."

18. Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025-28

The Mayor then invited Councillor Grahl, as Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools, to introduce a report from the Corporate Director of Children Young People and Community Development providing an overview of the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025-28 for consideration and adoption.

In presenting the report, Councillor Grahl advised the report provided an important opportunity to recognise the valuable nature of the service and support being provided for those children and young people who were at risk of, or had entered, the youth justice system in being able to turn their lives around. In highlighting the commitment and achievements of the Youth Justice Service and the wider partnership work being undertaken, including with schools and communities, members noted the overall progress being made in terms of the reduction in youth violence and reoffending with the 44% reduction in serious youth violence since 2016-17 welcomed as representing young lives steered away from harm, and communities that felt safer as a result.

Recognising that this success was founded on a commitment and successful approach towards partnership working, the opportunity was taken to pay credit to all organisations involved in supporting provision of the service, including the Youth Offending Service, police, parents, mentors and voluntary groups, with the process

also reflecting a deliberate shift towards prevention and fairness based on treating young people as children first and offenders second. As a result, members were advised of the way in which the plan presented in the report sought to build on that foundation by seeking to embed prevention hubs, expand mentoring and deepen anti-racist practices to ensure that every child and young person (not matter what their background) was able to benefit from the support available. The opportunity was also taken to pay tribute to all staff working in the Youth Justice service as well as wider children social care teams for the wraparound support being provided for young people and also to recognise and commend the multi-agency basis of the service being delivered with the opportunity also taken to recognise the positive feedback provided through young people and their parents and carers in relation to the value of the service and positive outcomes being delivered.

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

Speaking first, Councillor Kennelly took the opportunity to highlight his personal experience of those individuals being supported through the Youth Justice Service. Whilst commending the work being undertaken, the need was also highlighted to maintain a continued focus on prevention and in supporting young people either at risk of, or who had entered, the youth justice system in being able to turn their lives around including a focus on substance misuse and treatment.

In supporting the proposals outlined as a professional who had worked in the criminal and restorative justice system, Councillor Dixon also took the opportunity to commend the positive outcomes being achieved within such a challenging context in seeking to provide early intervention and divert young people from entering the criminal justice system and need for continued investment in the engagement and intervention process. As such she hoped all members would join her in supporting the recommendations within the report.

As no other members indicated they wished to speak the Mayor thanked members for their contribution and invited Councillor Grahl to exercise her right of reply. In closing the debate, Councillor Grahl took the opportunity to thank members for their support and the Mayor then moved on to put the recommendations in the report to the vote which were declared **CARRIED**.

Council therefore unanimously **RESOLVED** following its referral by Cabinet on 13 October 2025 to approve formal sign off and adoption of the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025-28 as detailed within Appendix A of the report.

19. **Constitution Update - Function & Procedure Rules West London Economic Prosperity Board**

As the final item of business on the agenda, the Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Leader of the Council, to introduce a report from the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources who advised that the report detailed a change in membership on the West London Economic Prosperity Board (on which Brent was a member) relating to the addition of Hillingdon, along with associated changes to the Boards Functions & Procedure Rules, as referred to with the Terms of Reference included within Part 4 of the Constitution.

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 **CARRIED**.

Council therefore unanimously **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To note the change in membership on the West London Economic Prosperity Board following the admittance of the London Borough of Hillingdon as a member and endorse the subsequent update and revision of the Function & Procedure Rules, which govern operation of the Board, as detailed in Appendix A.
- (2) To note that, to the extent that the changes related to executive functions of the Council, they had been approved by the Leader.

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

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

21. **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 the Council budget setting meeting taking place on Monday 23 February 2026.

As this was the final Full Council meeting prior to the Christmas and New Year holiday period the Mayor closed the meeting by thanking all members for their support over the year and wished everyone happiness for the festive season.

The meeting closed at 8.23 pm

COUNCILLOR RYAN HACK
Mayor