



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

**Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 6 July 2026 at 6.00 pm**

PRESENT:

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

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Kanta Mistry

COUNCILLORS:

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

1. Mayors Introductory Statement

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

2. **Change in Order of Business**

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

As a result of discussions which had taken place between the Group Leaders following the Annual Council Meeting, the Mayor advised that a number of constitutional changes had been proposed relating to the way in which Full Council meetings should operate moving forward as well as to the Scrutiny Function and Members Allowance Scheme. In order for these changes to take effect during the meeting, members were informed of the intention to move consideration of the report outlining the constitutional changes (listed as Item 13 on the agenda) as the first item of business.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- (1) The business to be considered at the meeting be re-arranged in the following order:
 - Agenda Item 1 – Report from the Corporate Director Finance & Resources on Changes to the Constitution
 - Agenda Item 2 will then be Apologies for Absence
- (2) The remaining items of business to then follow in the same order as listed on the agenda.

3. **Changes to the Constitution**

The Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Leader of the Council, to introduce a report from the Corporate Director Finance and Resources detailing a number of proposed amendments to the Constitution in relation to the Council's existing scrutiny arrangements (Part 4 of the Constitution), including establishing an additional scrutiny committee with a housing remit; Full Council meeting standing orders (Part 2 of the Constitution) and the Members' Allowance Scheme (Part 6 of the Constitution).

In presenting the report, the Leader advised the changes had been designed to reflect the new political composition of the Council in terms of the Council's governance arrangements and discussion at the previous Council meeting relating to scrutiny arrangements. As such, members were advised the changes outlined did not represent a full rewrite of the Constitution but a more targeted set of amendments, which had been informed by cross party discussion facilitated through the reconstituted Constitution Oversight Group (GOG). Additional matters would continue to be progressed as part of the ongoing COG work programme with the changes outlined intended to make better use of the time available at Full Council meetings as well as making the arrangements for debate clearer and more manageable and continuing to provide opportunities for public participation,

members questions, scrutiny updates and motions based on a more focussed process allowing more time for debate on key issues.

In addition, members were advised the report included a number of proposals relating to the Members Allowance Scheme, designed to reflect the establishment of a new scrutiny committee, changes to councillor pension arrangements following national legislation as well as the work of Group Leaders and Whips/Group Managers across each of the four political groups represented on the Council all of which, it was pointed out, would continue to be managed within the existing budget provision.

In commending the proposed changes to members, Councillor Muhammed Butt ended by highlighting the living nature of the Constitution which he pointed out would remain subject to ongoing review and refinement as the Administration progressed and with the current amendments felt to represent a practical and proportionate approach reflecting the more plural nature of the council following the local election.

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

Council therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To approve the changes to the Constitution as set out in the report and the accompanying appendices.
- (2) To authorise the Monitoring Officer/Director of Law to amend the Constitution accordingly, including making any necessary incidental or consequential changes.

4. **Apologies for Absence**

Returning to the order of business on the agenda, the Mayor reported that an apology for absence had been received from Councillor Ahmadi Moghaddam.

An apology for lateness was also received from Councillor McLeish.

6. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the of the Annual Council meeting held on Monday 20 May 2026 be approved as a correct record.

6. **Declarations of Interest**

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

7. **Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor made the following announcements:

(i) Organisation to be supported through the Mayor's Charity Appeal 2026-27

The Mayor opened his announcements by advising members of the charity he would be supporting through his fundraising activity during 2026-27, which would be the Asian Women Resource Centre.

Highlighting their base within Harlesden, the Mayor was keen to outline the important role the organisation played in providing free, confidential support to Black, Asian and minority ethnic women and children, particularly those affected by domestic abuse, forced marriage and honour-based violence, which included a range of services such as advocacy, welfare and housing advice, immigration support, outreach, and group programmes with culturally sensitive assistance. Given the impact of the support provided he hoped members would support his fundraising efforts during the remainder of his year in office.

(ii) Kings Birthday Honours List

Moving on, the Mayor then asked members to join him in congratulating all those linked with Brent who had received an honour on the Kings Birthday Honours list for 2026.

(iii) Pride Flag Raising

In terms of other engagements, the Mayor advised he had also been pleased to join staff, councillors, residents and community representatives in celebrating Pride month at the annual LGBTQ+ Flag Raising ceremony at the start of June 2026.

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

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

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

As the next item, the Mayor then referred members to the list of changes circulated in relation to appointments to Council Committees and other bodies.

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

(1) To approve the following changes in committee membership:

(a) Councillor Perrin to replace Councillor Mitchell as the Green Groups full member on the Audit & Standards and Audit & Standards Advisory Committee.

(2) Councillor Jayanti Patel to replace Councillor Kansagra as the Conservative Groups full member on the Audit & Standards and Audit & Standards Advisory Committee.

- (3) Councillor Mitchell to replace Councillor Perrin as one of the Green Groups substitute members on the Audit & Standards and Audit & Standards Advisory Committee.
 - (4) Councillor Rubin to replace Councillor Thomas as Chair of the Corporate Parenting Committee.
 - (5) With no other nominations received, that Councillor Hack fill the vacancy as Chair and Councillor Thomas fill the vacancy as Vice Chair on Kilburn Brent Connects.
 - (6) Councillor Muhammed Butt to replace Councillor Grahl as the Council's nominated representative on the London Councils Greater London Employment Forum with Councillor Grahl to replace Councillor Muhammed Butt as deputy.
- (2) To approve the following change in membership on outside bodies:
- (a) Councillors Johnson, Mahmood and Rubin to fill the vacancies on the Agreed Syllabus Conference and Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE).

9. Deputations (if any)

The Mayor advised that he had accepted requests for the presentation of two deputations at the meeting, which had been received in accordance with Standing Order 32.

The deputations to be presented, were highlighted as follows, with the Mayor advising that unless otherwise indicated by members, he intended to allow up to five minutes for the presentation of each deputation before then providing the relevant Cabinet Member up to three minutes to respond on each matter.

1st deputation – Maintenance and upkeep of South Kilburn

2nd deputation – Progress on delivery of South Kilburn redevelopment including the impact on Granville Recreation Ground and other green spaces and how the programme links with Brent's wider policies in terms of the climate emergency, air pollution and biodiversity.

9.1 1st deputation – Maintenance and Upkeep of South Kilburn

Having confirmed the process to be followed, the Mayor welcomed Pete Firman to the meeting to present the first deputation.

In introducing the deputation, Pete Firman advised that whilst he served as Chair of a Tenants Association in South Kilburn and sat on the Residents Panel, the views being presented were his own, although they reflected concerns shared by many residents living within South Kilburn. As initial context he began by referring to previous reviews undertaken by the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee where the importance of placing tenants at the centre of everything the Council did had been recognised and acknowledged with safe, secure and decent homes

identified as forming the foundation of a fair and thriving borough. Whilst acknowledging these principles, he expressed concern that the lived experience of many residents in South Kilburn did not reflect these ambitions.

Members were advised that despite a number of newly constructed developments within South Kilburn receiving architectural recognition and awards, residents continued to experience a range of significant defects and management issues. These included the lengthy remediation works being undertaken to address cladding and ongoing problems relating to mould, heating and hot water systems with concerns also highlighted regarding the overall quality, affordability and size of the new homes being provided. As an example, it was pointed out that some residents who had moved into newly developed properties had actually felt their previous council homes had provided a better living environment.

Attention was also drawn to wider concerns regarding the pace and delivery of regeneration across the area. Members heard that two blocks still required substantial refurbishment works and that action in relation to the Granville New Homes blocks remained outstanding despite recommendations having been identified several years earlier. Residents were continuing to experience utility failures together with the operation of a 24-hour fire watch. Concern was also expressed regarding the management of contractors and the continued awarding of contracts to developers involved in original construction works which were still experiencing significant defects.

The deputation further highlighted concerns regarding the management of decanted properties and the impact this was having on remaining residents. It was felt that insufficient measures had been taken to secure empty flats, resulting in incidents of squatting, anti-social behaviour and wider community safety concerns. Examples provided included incidents affecting commercial premises in Stafford Road, where business owners had suffered significant disruption and financial losses following flooding and damage linked to unauthorised occupation of vacant buildings.

Members were advised that concerns also existed regarding the overall outcomes of the regeneration programme. Whilst substantial numbers of new homes had been delivered, it was argued that the level of genuinely affordable social rented housing available at the completion of the regeneration programme would be little different from that available before the programme commenced. Concern was also raised regarding the delivery and marketability of higher-value private housing resulting in approval for some properties to now be disposed of via a US-based private equity company. The wider social impact of regeneration and gentrification was also highlighted, including concerns regarding affordability pressures on existing communities.

In addition, concerns were raised regarding community infrastructure commitments that residents believed had not been fully realised. These included aspirations for additional health facilities, a sports centre and a community centre. Whilst a new GP surgery had been delivered, this was described as having been completed later than anticipated, with other promised facilities yet to materialise. In continuing, a number of environmental and estate management issues across South Kilburn were also highlighted with particular reference made to longstanding refuse accumulation problems, including the condition of the former Job Centre site on

Cambridge Avenue. Highlighting that residents had repeatedly requested action over a prolonged period before formal enforcement action was eventually pursued, concerns remained regarding the effectiveness of the response. Further concerns were raised regarding coordination between the various housing associations operating across the area and the ongoing lack of clarity regarding responsibility for maintenance of communal spaces and infrastructure.

The deputation also highlighted a number of operational and safety-related concerns affecting residents on a day-to-day basis, including reports of prolonged delays in repairing accessibility equipment including a stairlift, replacing damaged doors and windows, servicing fire safety equipment and addressing issues relating to fire-compliant entrance doors, with members advised that residents often experienced significant delays in obtaining information or securing resolution of the types of matters highlighted. Concerns were additionally raised regarding engagement with residents affected by the HS2 vent shaft development in South Kilburn with reference made to residents of Alpha House, who had received correspondence regarding monitoring works associated with tunnelling activities. It was felt that communication and reassurance from the Council regarding these impacts had been insufficient. More generally, concerns were expressed about the availability of community spaces for residents' associations and the extent to which resident involvement was reflected in decision-making and service delivery.

In concluding the deputation, Pete Firman referred to a recent example where a Council officer had facilitated remedial works to address a number of longstanding issues which had remained unresolved for several years. Whilst welcoming the action taken, concern was expressed that the intervention had arisen primarily through the personal initiative of the officer involved. It was argued that this illustrated wider systemic issues regarding service delivery and responsiveness with a call for the Council, in response, to ensure that its stated commitments to residents were reflected consistently through service provision and regeneration delivery.

The Mayor thanked Pete Firman for presenting the deputation and then invited Councillor Kelcher (Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning) to respond.

In responding, Councillor Kelcher began by thanking Pete Firman for raising the concerns outlined and acknowledged the importance of South Kilburn as one of the most significant regeneration programmes within the borough. He advised members that, having recently assumed responsibility for the regeneration portfolio, he recognised both the strength of feeling within the local community and the scale of the challenges faced by residents. Whilst noting that he was still developing a detailed understanding of all aspects of the programme, Councillor Kelcher advised that his first site visit as Cabinet Member had been to South Kilburn, reflecting the priority he attached to the area and assured members and residents of his commitment to maintaining a visible presence within the community, undertaking further visits and engaging directly with residents in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the issues being experienced.

Addressing the specific points raised within the deputation, Councillor Kelcher acknowledged the seriousness of concerns relating to cladding remediation and fire safety. Members were advised that Government funding had now been secured to support the required works and that whilst interim fire safety measures remained in

place, the Council's objective was to progress towards permanent solutions as quickly as possible. The concerns raised in relation to the management of vacant properties, anti-social behaviour and the impact on residents remaining within partially decanted blocks were also recognised with an acknowledgment (reflecting on his families own personal experience) that residents should not be left living in uncertainty for prolonged periods and that improvements were required in the way these situations were managed.

In further acknowledging the complexity of working with multiple development and housing providers across the regeneration area, Councillor Kelcher outlined the efforts being made to strengthen accountability and oversight through partnership arrangements and future delivery models in order to improve performance and ensure a more consistent standard of service. These included the work to not only secure a single delivery partner but also development of the Housing Compact, being led by Councillor Johnson as Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters.

In concluding his response, Councillor Kelcher assured members that the concerns raised had been heard and carefully noted and reaffirmed his commitment to working with officers and residents to address the issues identified advising that he would be keen to meet with the South Kilburn Residents Panel in order to continue discussions and better understand residents' experiences ahead of future decisions affecting the area based on the South Kilburn regeneration programme remaining a key priority for the Council.

Having thanked Councillor Kelcher for his response, the Mayor advised that concluded consideration of the first deputation and then moved on to invite Leslie Benson (representing Granville Community Kitchen) to present the second deputation.

9.2 2nd deputation – Progress on delivery of South Kilburn redevelopment including the impact on Granville Recreation Ground and other green spaces and how the programme links with Brent's wider policies in terms of the climate emergency, air pollution and biodiversity.

The Mayor then invited Leslie Benson (representing Granville Community Kitchen - GCK) to present the second deputation concerning the future of the Granville REC and proposals affecting the site as part of the ongoing South Kilburn regeneration programme.

In thanking the Mayor for the opportunity to address the meeting, Leslie Benson began by acknowledging the issues highlighted by Pete Firmin in the previous deputation relating to the wider challenges experienced in South Kilburn over many years before focusing attention on the Granville REC (Granville Recreation Ground), which he advised was a small community green space located on Granville Road. Members were advised that the site had originally been created in 2009 following the development of Granville New Homes replacing a larger area of open space that had been lost during redevelopment works. Despite its intended purpose, a lack of funding to manage the space had resulted in the area falling into disrepair and becoming associated with antisocial behaviour before ultimately being closed around 2011. The site subsequently remained unused and neglected until 2023 when it had temporarily been allocated to Granville Community Kitchen for

community growing activities following the loss of the organisation's previous gardening space during regeneration works. Having taken responsibility for the site, volunteers and community members had undertaken significant work to restore and revitalise the area, transforming an overgrown and abandoned space into a thriving community asset. Highlighting the positive outcomes achieved through community management of the site, Leslie Benson advised that the Granville REC now provided a valuable resource supporting residents' physical and mental wellbeing, environmental sustainability and community cohesion. The space had been used for educational activities, food-growing projects, volunteer programmes and community events serving a wide range of local residents, including children, families, older people, refugees and individuals experiencing mental and physical health challenges. The site was also viewed as contributing to local economic wellbeing through volunteer training, skills development and food production initiatives. In outlining the scale of activity currently taking place, members were advised that during 2025 the site had accommodated:

- 407 visitors participating in organised educational visits.
- 275 school learners and 1,102 educational sessions.
- Two community open events attended by more than 100 residents.
- Regular volunteer sessions operating twice each week.
- Activities delivered in partnership with organisations including Brent Family Services, Salisbury World Refugee Project, Princess Road Tenants and Residents Association and Kilburn Co-operative.
- The production of more than 100 kilograms of vegetables distributed amongst volunteers, community meals and local residents.

Turning to the current regeneration proposals impacting on the site, Leslie Benson reminded members that the current plans involved the construction of 16 new family homes on the Granville REC site. Whilst acknowledging that a replacement open space had been proposed located to the edge of the estate near Kilburn Park Underground Station, concerns were expressed that the alternative provision would not adequately replace the existing community green space. Members were informed that the proposed new area, whilst larger in overall size, would incorporate roads, parking spaces and a more formal landscaped design which, it was felt would diminish its value as a community-focused natural environment. As result, Leslie Benson advised that the deputation was seeking to outline a number of specific objections to the proposals which included:

- The loss of a centrally located community asset that was easily accessible to residents throughout the South Kilburn Estate.
- Reduced usability of the replacement space due to the inclusion of roads, parking and segmented recreational areas.
- The perceived conflict between the proposals and Brent Council's declared objectives relating to climate action, air quality, green infrastructure and health equity.
- The loss of biodiversity associated with mature trees, natural vegetation and established wildlife habitats currently present within the Granville REC.
- The reduction in opportunities for community growing, environmental education and informal recreation.
- Concerns that the proposed replacement area would represent a more formal and less ecologically diverse landscape.

Members were advised that residents and community organisations had therefore requested amendments to the plans in order to preserve the existing REC as a permanent public park. Reference was also made to a petition supporting retention of the site which had attracted nearly 1000 signatures. In concluding Leslie Benson (supported by an expression of support from attendees in the public seating area at the meeting) hoped members would listen to local residents and community groups, reconsider the current proposals and seek opportunities to protect existing green space within what was described as an increasingly high-density urban environment.

The Mayor thanked Leslie Benson for presenting the deputation and once again invited Councillor Kelcher, as Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning, to respond.

In response, Councillor Kelcher began by recognising the strength of feeling expressed by local residents and acknowledged the important contribution made by community gardening initiatives in supporting health, wellbeing and community cohesion. Drawing on experience from his own ward, he highlighted the value of shared outdoor spaces, particularly for residents living in high-density housing with limited access to private gardens. The opportunity was also taken to update members on regeneration activity within the wider Granville area, including visits undertaken earlier that day to local facilities such as the nursery, affordable workspace provision and rooftop growing space.

Whilst recognising the importance of the Granville REC, Councillor Kelcher felt it was also important to highlight that the redevelopment proposals outlined would deliver 16 new family-sized social homes, which he considered represented a significant opportunity to improve housing outcomes for local families, with the Council remaining committed to achieving an appropriate balance between housing delivery and the retention of valued community spaces.

In recognising the strength of local feeling, Councillor Kelcher assured Leslie Benson and those present in support of the deputation that further engagement with residents and stakeholders would continue over the coming months to ensure views were fully considered and to explore potential adjustments capable of enhancing the overall proposals, underlining the importance of ensuring any replacement open space delivered the maximum possible benefit for residents whilst also supporting wider community objectives.

In addressing the environmental concerns highlighted, Councillor Kelcher also reaffirmed the Council's commitment to its climate objectives and outlined the role of wider regeneration initiatives, including the South Kilburn heat network, in contributing towards cleaner, more affordable and sustainable energy provision for local residents. Whilst acknowledging that difficult choices often needed to be made between competing priorities, an assurance was provided that all relevant environmental, housing and community considerations were being carefully evaluated as part of the decision-making process.

In concluding, Councillor Kelcher reiterated his commitment to continued dialogue with residents and community organisations and thanked Leslie Benson and supporters of the Granville REC for their contribution to the discussion.

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

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

10.1 Questions from the Public

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

Question 1 from Chi Wong to Councillor Johnson (Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters) regarding support available to Private Sector tenants under the Renters Right Act.

Question 2 from Ranya Dauteva to Councillor Johnson (as Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters) regarding the assessment of housing need and Councillor Amadi (as Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture and Cost of Living Support) regarding the blue badge assessment process.

The Mayor advised that whilst the members of the public who had submitted questions had been given the opportunity to attend the meeting in order to ask a supplementary question both had, unfortunately, been unable to do so. In thanking both for the questions submitted, members were advised that written responses had been provided, which were noted at the meeting. With no further questions to be considered, he 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 Rubin, Cabinet Member for Children Services, Employment & Climate Action, relating to progress on introduction of the Educational Maintenance Allowance.

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 George Main Sin from BYP to the meeting who asked the following supplementary question.

Question 1 Supplementary Question from George Main Sin to Councillor Rubin, Cabinet Member for Children Services, Employment and Climate Action regarding eligibility for the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

Having thanked Councillor Rubin for his written response, George Main Sin highlighted the reference included to the development work being undertaken in relation to introduction of the EMA, including eligibility, and sought further detail on

the process and how the Council would ensure that all eligible young people were made aware and able to access the Allowance, once introduced.

In response, Councillor Rubin thanked Brent Youth Parliament for the question and work they were continuing to undertake to represent young people across the borough highlighting the personal significance of EMA having received the allowance himself whilst studying, prior to its withdrawal by the Coalition Government in 2010. Reference was made to the current Government's wider investment in young people, including the roll-out of free breakfast clubs and free school meals for primary school children, with the Council seeking to build on this by introducing an EMA for eligible young people locally. Whilst confirming that the detailed eligibility criteria was still subject to final modelling, analysis and development of costed options, an undertaking was given to attend an upcoming Brent Youth Parliament session to discuss the scheme further and to work on a communications campaign to ensure all eligible young people were made aware of the allowance once introduced.

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 Rubin for his response and George Main Sin for attending the meeting to ask the supplementary question. With no further questions to be considered, the Mayor advised that concluded the public question session.

11. Petitions

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

12. Motions

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

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

12.1 1st Motion (Labour Group) – Declaring a Gambling Harms Emergency in Brent

The Mayor invited Councillor Bajwa to move the first motion which had been submitted on behalf of the Labour Group. Councillor Bajwa began by highlighting the importance of the motion in recognising the harm associated with gambling as not only a public health crisis but also a community safety issue and something that

needed to be confronted working together. In recognising the concerns raised by residents across Brent at the spread of betting shops and adult gaming centres on High Streets and in Town Centres including Wembley, Willesden, Kilburn and Harlesden, Councillor Bajwa also reflected on the impact of these gambling premises being located within communities experiencing some of the greatest need across the borough, with 81 licensed gambling premises currently located with Brent.

Referring to the impact of gambling harm in relation to not only health and wellbeing but also in terms of financial and family pressure, mental health and community safety, Councillor Bajwa advised the motion was seeking to move from campaigning alone to provide a co-ordinated council-wide response based around a Gambling Harms Strategy. Members were advised the Strategy had been proposed as a means of increasing understanding about the scale of the problem in Brent and structuring resource to support prevention, advice and ensure licensing, planning, public health, schools, community safety, debt advice and resident services were all supporting each other under a co-ordinated approach.

In commending the former Deputy Leader of the Council (Mili Patel) for the work already undertaken in seeking to raise awareness and co-ordinate a response to address the issues identified, members were reminded that Brent had also sought to take a lead nationally working with residents, campaigners, MPs, charities, public health experts and more than 40 councils with Andy Burnham MP also an early backer of the campaign and the motion therefore focussed in pushing for change at a national as well as local level. In commending the motion to Council, Councillor Bajwa ended by advising members that it was not intended to moralise and instead was focussed in seeking support for an approach that would provide the necessary powers locally to address the harms associated with gambling in a fair and open way.

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

In opening the debate Councillor Burn, speaking in support of the motion, began by reflecting on refusal of a recent gambling licensing application for premises on Walm Lane, Willesden highlighting the value of cross-party and community collaboration in securing that outcome and what could be achieved when political groups, residents, businesses and community organisations worked together to oppose these type of premises and applications. Referring to the significant level of public opposition generated against the application, he felt this demonstrated the depth of concern within the local community and whilst recognising the requirement for applications to be determined in accordance with local Licensing objectives and the evidence presented, he encouraged continued engagement from all relevant stakeholder in seeking to respond to future applications. In terms of the wider issues outlined within the motion, Councillor Burn supported the focus beyond individual licensing decisions on achieving national legislative reform and welcomed the action being taken by the current Labour Government and ongoing campaign being led by Brent East's MP in seeking amendments to gambling legislation, which he hoped would be supported as a means of strengthening regulation and reducing gambling-related harm.

As a further contribution, Councillor Maurice (speaking on behalf of the Conservative Group) advised they would also be supporting the motion, recognising the significant harm that betting shops and adult gaming centres caused to individuals, families and communities. Whilst supporting the motion, he felt it was also important to acknowledge the wider historical context pointing out that the expansion of gambling premises had been facilitated through changes introduced by a previous Labour Government and contrasted this with the approach of the last Conservative Government in introducing a requirement for planning permission to be obtained when seeking a change of use relating to the establishment of gambling premises. Recognising the social harms arising from gambling, Councillor Maurice also supported the need for stronger national measures suggesting that gambling should be regulated in a similar way to smoking, including tighter restrictions on advertising and warnings regarding the associated risks. In summing up, he reiterated the Conservative Group's support for the motion whilst urging the Government to bring forward more robust legislation to tackle gambling harm and protect vulnerable residents.

Speaking on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor Georgiou also confirmed his Groups support for the motion whilst also reflecting on the role previous Labour Governments had played in facilitating the growth of gambling premises through the Gambling Act 2005 and its "Aim to Permit" licensing framework, which he felt needed to be recognised when discussing the current challenges faced by councils in controlling the concentration of gambling premises on local high streets. Despite these concerns, Councillor Georgiou advised that the Liberal Democrat Group fully recognised the significant harms associated with gambling and the disproportionate impact experienced by residents living in less affluent communities. Referring to town centres such as Willesden Green, Wembley and Kilburn, he highlighted the continuing concentration of betting shops and also welcomed the recent refusal of the licensing application for the gambling premises in Walm Lane, emphasising the importance of all stakeholders working collectively to address gambling harm within Brent.

Speaking next on behalf of the Green Group, Councillor Gallagher also welcomed the motion but felt that any declaration of a gambling harms emergency should only be seen as the first step in a wider programme of action. Whilst recognising the efforts made locally, concern was expressed about the continued influence of the gambling industry at a national political level and need for strong leadership to achieve meaningful reform. The opportunity was also taken to pay tribute to local campaigners whose personal experience had informed the ongoing campaign to recognise and tackle gambling-related harm. As an example, of the concerns being highlighted reference was made to the operation of many gambling establishments, including cash-based operations, limited retention of CCTV footage and financial incentives provided to staff along with the estimates produced by GambleAware regarding the economic costs associated with gambling harm. In support of the need for reform, Councillor Gallagher called for a revised Gambling Act providing greater powers to refuse new licensing applications for gambling premises, the ability to recover administrative and legal costs associated with licensing activity and the introduction of levies capable of funding prevention, support and treatment services as opposed to the costs falling on local authorities and public health services. She also advocated for restrictions relating to machine speeds, stake levels and taxation arrangements designed to reduce the commercial viability of

gambling premises, with members therefore urged to use the motion as a catalyst for broader change.

Councillor Dixon then spoke (as Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Public Health) to highlight her support for the motion and, in doing so, also took the opportunity to pay tribute to former Deputy Leader Milli Patel for her leadership in raising awareness of gambling harms and championing reform both locally and nationally. Whilst recognising that the motion was focussed on a gambling harms emergency, she felt it also reflected a more fundamental and broader issue in relation to securing freedom from harm and the protection of vulnerable individuals from an industry which benefited from financial distress, isolation and often addiction. Referring to Brent's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Councillor Dixon highlighted evidence demonstrating the significant financial, health and social costs associated with gambling harm locally, noting that the prevalence and impact of gambling addiction had increased considerably during recent years with the impact often hidden from view and extending beyond individuals to affect entire families and communities. In support of the wider approach outlined in the motion, members were advised of the active contribution being made by Brent's Public Health team towards research and awareness-raising initiatives in relation to gambling harms, including funding provided towards the research and report produced by the Social Market Foundation. This had been supported by communication campaigns across the borough encouraging people to stop and reflect before gambling., in an effort to prevent it becoming normalised by its visibility with further evidence highlighted at the inequality related to gambling harm and data suggesting residents from minority ethnic communities were being disproportionately affected. In concluding Councillor Dixon made reference to a quote from local a resident who had explained how financial desperation often drove individuals towards gambling in the hope of escaping poverty, despite frequently resulting in even greater hardship and urged all members to support the motion in seeking to deliver a Strategy that would provide a co-ordinated council-wide response whilst also supporting prevention and ensuring residents in crisis received the support needed.

As a further contribution, Councillor Dar also expressed his support for the motion, particularly welcoming proposals relating to Gambling Impact Assessments, which he felt would provide councils with the practical tools needed to support evidence-based decision-making and address concerns regarding the concentration of gambling premises within particular communities. Recognising the strength of opposition within local communities to the proliferation of gambling premises, he pointed out the priorities expressed by residents in support of high streets that felt safe and welcoming and which supported a diverse range of local businesses, which the expansion of gambling premises was not felt to contribute towards. He therefore highlighted the importance of assessing cumulative impacts rather than viewing applications solely on an individual basis. In welcoming Brent's role in seeking to secure national reform, he concluded by emphasising the need for Government to introduce the proposed powers swiftly, stating that local authorities and communities should be trusted to help shape the future character of their high streets.

Councillor Alexandre then spoke, also in support for the motion, to reflect on what she regarded as continuing stigma surrounding gambling addiction. Whilst acknowledging the significant progress made in improving public understanding of

other addictions, she felt the harms associated with gambling remained hidden despite affecting many households across the borough with many residents likely to be experiencing serious gambling-related difficulties given the number of premises operating across the borough. In support of the proposed Gambling Harm Strategy the need was highlighted for a focus on greater and long-term investment in prevention, education and support services designed to help residents affected by gambling addiction with particular emphasis on educating younger people regarding gambling-related risks and ensuring alternative opportunities and activities were available within local communities. In support of the regulatory reforms also being sought, Councillor Alexandre was also keen to ensure that the gambling industry was required to contribute more directly towards funding the public health response with concerns (in this respect) highlighted regarding political donations being provided by the gambling industry, which it was felt also need to be addressed.

As a final contribution, Councillor Grahl, (as Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources) welcomed the debate and acknowledged the points raised regarding the need for national policy reform. In commending the important role played by her predecessor (Milli Patel) in building support for reform across Councils and Members of Parliament it was felt this collaborative approach had been crucial in securing greater national attention on the issue. Whilst recognising the broader impacts of gambling harm, Councillor Grahl was specifically keen to focus on the associated consequences for children and young people, expressing concern at the growing mental health challenges already faced by many young people with the exposure to gambling activity and gambling-related advertising having the potential to normalise harmful behaviours from an early age. which increased access to online technologies and screen-based activities were felt to have further exacerbated. In concluding and commending the motion to members, Councillor Grahl welcomed the national campaign for reform and hoped all members would support the approach in seeking to advocate for a society in which the health and wellbeing of residents, particularly children and young people, were prioritised above the commercial interests of large gambling operators.

In drawing the debate to a close, the Mayor invited Councillor Bajwa (as mover of the original motion) to exercise their right of reply. Given the support expressed Councillor Bajwa indicated she did not intend to exercise a right of reply, with the Mayor therefore moving to put the motion straight to the vote which was unanimously declared **CARRIED**.

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

“Declaring a Gambling Harms Emergency in Brent

This Council notes:

- That gambling harm is a public health, community safety and issue of pride in Brent, with a visible concentration of betting shops and adult gaming centres in our most deprived communities.
- That Brent’s Joint Strategic Needs Assessment identified the financial, health and social costs of gambling harm locally, including its links to debt, poor mental health, family breakdown, crime and inequality.

- That Brent has led a national campaign for gambling reform, working with over 40 councils, alongside Dawn Butler MP and Andy Burnham MP to call for a five-point plan for change, including stronger local licensing powers, the removal of the outdated “aim to permit” duty, greater public health oversight and tougher enforcement.
- That Brent Council sponsored the Social Market Foundation report ‘*High Streets at Stake*’, which highlighted the growth of adult gaming centres and the weakness of the current licensing framework.
- The impact of this campaigning in securing a change in the law, with the Government legislating for Gambling Impact Assessments, so that when enacted, councils can introduce presumption against new premises licences in vulnerable areas.

This Council believes that:

- Gambling harm should be treated as a serious public health emergency.
- Residents should not have to watch their high streets permeated with gambling premises while councils are left with limited powers to act, and where residents and councils do not want gambling premises, they should have the power to say no.
- Residents and community leaders in Wembley, Willesden and Kilburn should be thanked for speaking with one voice in opposition to the further spread of gambling premises.
- With 81 licensed gambling premises in Brent, it is easier to find a betting shop or adult gaming centre than a supermarket. Any limited business activity these premises bring is far outweighed by the wider harm they cause.
- The growth of the gambling industry should not be supported in our borough and that every lawful tool available should be used to create a hostile environment to its entrenchment.

This Council resolves to:

- (1) Declare a gambling harms emergency in Brent and launch a Gambling Harms Strategy, setting out a joined-up approach across licensing, planning, public health, community safety, schools, debt advice and resident support.
- (2) Welcome the new Gambling Impact Assessment powers and urge Government to set a commencement date as soon as possible, so the new provisions can be implemented without delay and operators cannot rush applications through under the old regime before councils are equipped to act.
- (3) Write to major landowners in Wembley reiterating the Council’s opposition to gambling advertising and the normalisation of gambling in public spaces.

- (4) Write to the Gambling Commission challenging its hands-off approach to local licensing, making clear that Brent believes communities and their elected representatives, not distant regulators or the courts, should have the strongest voice in deciding what venues are on their high streets.
- (5) Continue working with residents, MPs, councils and campaigners across the country to push for a new Gambling Act that puts public health first.”

12.2 2nd Motion (Conservative Group) – Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy: Transparency, Strategic Use and Scrutiny

The Mayor then invited Councillor Jayanti Patel to move the second motion, which had been submitted on behalf of the Conservative Group. As context to the motion, Councillor Jayanti Patel began by highlighting the importance of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) funding as a significant public resource generated through development activity to support the provision of necessary associated infrastructure and growth across the borough. Whilst recognising the value of SIL as a funding mechanism, he advised the motion was seeking to highlight concerns at what was perceived to be a lack of transparency surrounding the way in which SCIL funding allocations were made and communicated, limiting opportunities for proper scrutiny and engagement. This included what was felt to be a lack of clarity regarding the justification for the funding of specific schemes and how they related to development pressures alongside a perceived lack of visibility regarding expected outcomes and delivery timescales.

In order to maintain public confidence in the use of SCIL, Councillor Jayanti Patel advised the motion was seeking greater openness regarding how decisions were reached and funding priorities were established and to strengthen governance arrangements by requiring all significant SCIL funding reports to include a clear justification demonstrating how proposals related to growth-related infrastructure needs and to ensure Group Leaders were provided with advance briefings on major allocations prior to them being taken forward for consideration and approval. In commending the motion to members, Councillor Jayanti Patel felt the measures outlined reflected a practical and reasonable approach designed to improve accountability, rebuild confidence and ensure that SCIL funding was managed in a transparent, strategic and collaborative manner.

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

In moving the first amendment, on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group, Councillor Clinton began by thanking the Conservative Group for bringing forward the original motion which, in his view, reflected principles that all Groups should be able to support. As such, he advised that the Liberal Democrat amendment had been designed to complement the original motion through the addition of two specific proposals. The first of these related to a review of SCIL funding that had been allocated but remained unspent, with concerns expressed that the allocation of that funding had been undertaken by a previous Administration without was felt

to now be the level of consultation and transparency being advocated for within the motion. Given the new political composition of the Council, it was therefore felt reasonable that Group Leaders should be briefed and consulted regarding the status and delivery of these outstanding projects. The second proposal focused specifically on highways infrastructure, with Councillor Clinton highlighting the backlog of road and pavement repairs across Brent requiring high-priority intervention on which it was felt the level of major development across growth areas had inevitably increased pressure and SIL therefore represented an appropriate funding stream to address the impact. Support was therefore expressed for the principle that a proportion of SCIL resources be directed towards planned investment in roads and pavements, with Councillor Clinton keen to highlight the wider benefits associated with such investment, including safer conditions for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians, reduced reliance on reactive maintenance programmes and improved resilience to the effects of extreme weather with proactive infrastructure investment felt to represent a more financially sustainable and environmentally responsible approach. Whilst acknowledging that SIL alone would not be able to address all challenges relating to infrastructure investment it was felt residents would welcome a more proactive approach in relation to highways. On this basis, the amendment moved by Councillor Clinton was as follows:

To add the wording underlined and delete the wording indicated:

“Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy: Transparency, Strategic Use and Scrutiny

This Council notes:

- That Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy, known as SCIL, is a significant funding stream derived from development and is intended to support infrastructure needed to accommodate growth across Brent.
- That recent debate in Brent has highlighted legitimate questions about how SCIL schemes are identified, prioritised and brought forward for decision, and whether members and residents are given sufficient clarity in advance.
- That the Council has itself acknowledged the need for a more strategic approach to Community Infrastructure Levy funding, including clearer alignment with infrastructure planning and more robust scrutiny of proposed allocations.
- That residents are entitled to confidence that SCIL is being used transparently, strategically and for infrastructure genuinely linked to growth and development pressures.
- In February 2026 £80m of SCIL was allocated to projects not yet started, agreed by the previous administration.
- In February 2026 the projected cost to repair the backlog of highest priority roads was £44.7m. The pavements backlog would cost £310.7m.

This Council believes:

- That SCIL funding should be allocated based on clear evidence, transparency and demonstrable public value.
- That all major proposed SCIL schemes should be accompanied by clear information on cost, rationale, delivery timetable and expected outcomes.
- That the Council should show explicitly how each proposed SCIL allocation supports growth related infrastructure needs, rather than using SCIL to address long standing issues that ought to be funded through other means.
- That in a Council with no overall control, all political groups should have a meaningful opportunity to scrutinise major SCIL proposals before final decisions are taken.
- That we must prioritise a proportion of SCIL funding for repairs to roads and pavement to stop the backlog increasing further. This must be done in growth areas due to rules governing CIL but will benefit the whole borough by taking pressure off the reactive repairs team.

As a result, this Council resolves to:

- (1) Request that Cabinet publish an annual forward pipeline of proposed SCIL schemes, including indicative costings, intended timelines and the service area or location concerned.
- (2) Request that every future report seeking approval for major SCIL allocations includes a clear written statement explaining why the proposed scheme qualifies for SCIL support and how it relates to infrastructure needed to support development and growth.
- (3) Request that, before any major new SCIL allocation is considered by Cabinet, all Group Leaders or their nominees are offered a briefing on the proposed programme and the basis on which schemes have been selected.
- (4) Request a quarterly update to all councillors setting out the SCIL balance, new receipts, allocations, expenditure and remaining available funds.
- (5) Request the provision of an annual public report setting out SCIL allocations approved, expenditure committed, progress of delivery and outcomes achieved.
- (6) Ensure that planned SCIL projects not yet started are reviewed by the group leaders (or nominees) – and request cabinet have regard to their recommendations.
- (7) Request that a portion SCIL is invested in road/pavement resurfacing in growth areas."

Councillor Mitchell was then invited to move the second amendment on behalf of the Green Group, who began by advising their amendment had also been prepared in support of the principles contained in the original motion and was intended to reinforce its emphasis on transparency, scrutiny and strategic planning. Reference was made to figures contained within the Council's last Infrastructure Funding Statement, which indicated that a substantial level of SIL funding remained unspent, including a significant balance that had not been allocated to any specific projects. Whilst recognising that more recent discussions suggested elements of this funding had subsequently been earmarked for future schemes, concerns were raised that the most recent Infrastructure Funding Statement for 2024-25 had not yet been published, which it was felt had limited scrutiny and had a detrimental impact in being able to understand how decisions were being made. Concern was also expressed that no coherent framework appeared to exist demonstrating how competing schemes were prioritised. Whilst acknowledging that individual projects were often accompanied by detailed business cases, the lack of an updated borough-wide assessment of infrastructure need or transparent ranking criteria through which schemes could be assessed was seen as impacting on the ability to hold decisions makers to account. In response, Councillor Mitchell advised the amendment was therefore seeking to promote a more strategic and consistent decision-making framework designed to ensure future SIL allocations reflected clearly established priorities and were subject to meaningful scrutiny, which it was also hoped all members would support.

On this basis, the amendment moved by Councillor Mitchell was as follows:

To add the wording underlined and delete the wording indicated:

“Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy: Transparency, Strategic Use and Scrutiny

This Council notes:

- That Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy, known as SCIL, is a significant funding stream derived from development and is intended to support infrastructure needed to accommodate growth across Brent.
- That recent debate in Brent has highlighted legitimate questions about how SCIL schemes are identified, prioritised and brought forward for decision, and whether members and residents are given sufficient clarity in advance.
- That the Council has itself acknowledged the need for a more strategic approach to Community Infrastructure Levy funding, including clearer alignment with infrastructure planning and more robust scrutiny of proposed allocations.
- That residents are entitled to confidence that SCIL is being used transparently, strategically and for infrastructure genuinely linked to growth and development pressures.

- That the Infrastructure Funding Statement for 2024-2025, providing a crucial view of SCIL allocation and spending, is delayed, and that Brent has not published an Infrastructure Development Plan since 2019.

This Council believes:

- That SCIL funding should be allocated based on clear evidence, transparency and demonstrable public value.
- That SCIL spending should be aligned to more a transparent, up-to-date and granular documentation of local needs, e.g. a refreshed Infrastructure Development Plan, or town plans.
- That all major proposed SCIL schemes should be accompanied by clear information on cost, rationale, delivery timetable and expected outcomes.
- That the Council should show explicitly how each proposed SCIL allocation supports growth related infrastructure needs, rather than using SCIL to address long standing issues that ought to be funded through other means.
- That in a Council with no overall control, all political groups should have a meaningful opportunity to scrutinise major SCIL proposals before final decisions are taken.

As a result, this Council resolves to:

- (1) Request that Cabinet publish an annual forward pipeline of proposed SCIL schemes, including indicative costings, intended timelines and the service area or location concerned.
- (2) Request there is no further delay with the Infrastructure Funding Statement for 24-25, on the Cabinet agenda for 27th July.
- (3) Request that decision-making for SCIL spending is based on an up-to-date, detailed documentation of local needs.
- ~~(2)~~(4) Request that every future report seeking approval for major SCIL allocations includes a clear written statement explaining why the proposed scheme qualifies for SCIL support and how it relates to infrastructure needed to support development and growth.
- ~~(3)~~ (5) Request that, before any major new SCIL allocation is considered by Cabinet, all Group Leaders or their nominees are offered a briefing on the proposed programme and the basis on which schemes have been selected.
- (6) Request that all Group Leaders or their nominees are briefed on allocated but not implemented SCIL funded projects.
- ~~(4)~~ (7) Request a quarterly update to all councillors setting out the SCIL balance, new receipts, allocations, expenditure and remaining available funds.

~~(5)~~ (8) Request the provision of an annual public report setting out SCIL allocations approved, expenditure committed, progress of delivery and outcomes achieved.”

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

In opening the debate, Councillor Brown (speaking in support of the amendment moved by the Liberal Democrats Group) began by reflecting on the significant amount of SCIL funding accumulated by the Council over a number of years and querying whether available resources were being deployed effectively. He suggested that the existence of a substantial balance of unspent funding raised legitimate questions regarding delivery and prioritisation with support expressed for the principle that funding generated through development should primarily be invested in those communities most directly affected by that development and growth. In this context, he highlighted the condition of local roads and pavements as examples of infrastructure requiring greater investment and on which he felt residents would reasonably expect development related contributions to be used.

As the next contribution, Councillor Ryan (speaking in support of the amendment moved on behalf of the Green Group) took the opportunity to reiterate the concerns highlighted regarding the lack of an overarching strategic framework for SCIL investment and need for greater transparency, oversight and accountability to allow effective scrutiny and ensure the funding and investment being delivered provided tangible benefits for resident aligned to wider borough objectives. Noting the potential benefits which the use of SCIL funding had to make a difference and support investment in highways, community facilities, public spaces and environmental infrastructure the need was identified for a more proactive approach toward future investment decisions based around a longer term strategy, which also included consideration of associated social and community value in addition to financial metrics or growth projections.

Moving on, Councillor Kelcher (Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning) then spoke welcoming the opportunity to discuss the positive benefits available through the generation and use of SCIL more widely, highlighting the impact of numerous projects funded through SCIL including community facilities, libraries and youth services as tangible benefits arising from development and appropriate investment of these contributions. Whilst recognising the need to ensure that investment decision were as transparent as possible, Councillor Kelcher also took the opportunity to remind members of the way in which the generation of SCIL funding was inherently linked to future development and regeneration activity cautioning members that the availability of this funding could not be taken for granted, with all members therefore encouraged to recognise the relationship between development and infrastructure investment when considering future planning decisions.

As a further contribution, Councillor Georgiou then spoke (in support of the amendment moved by the Liberal Democrats Group) to highlight the significant level of development that had taken place across his ward and corresponding amount of developer contributions generated within the area. Reminding members that one of the principal purposes of SCIL was to mitigate the impacts of

development on local communities, he was therefore keen to ensure that its use was focussed on those areas and residents most affected by the impact of those developments and in seeking to mitigate against the associated infrastructure pressure. In welcoming the motion as an opportunity to begin wider discussion regarding how SCIL resources should be deployed and how benefits could be delivered more visibly to affected communities, Councillor Georgio hoped all members would support the principle that the communities most affected by development should receive proportionate SCIL investment to mitigate against its impact in terms of local infrastructure improvements.

Councillor Kansagra then spoke (in support of the original motion) highlighting what he felt was also the need to consider whether existing restrictions on the use of SCIL funding unnecessarily limited the Council's ability to utilise them more effectively. Whilst accepting the need for funding to be focussed on capital projects, it was suggested that greater flexibility could be explored to enable use of funding as a means of contributing directly towards service improvement as well as infrastructure improvement across the borough.

As a final contribution, Councillor Grahl (as Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources) whilst welcoming the debate felt it was important to challenge suggestions that existing SCIL governance arrangements lacked appropriate transparency or strategic focus. Highlighting that many of the actions being sought within the motion were already part of the governance approach adopted, members were advised these would be further strengthened through a refresh of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan with information already published on an annual basis regarding allocations and expenditure and SCIL investment also identified within the Council's annual budget alongside the Infrastructure Funding Statement. It was also felt important to recognise the significant level of SCIL receipts generated during recent years and wide range of infrastructure projects delivered using those resources, which it was felt demonstrated purpose and strategic direction alongside the more forward looking approach to identifying and prioritising future investment being developed was part of the updated Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

In terms of the wider use of SCIL, members were reminded that current regulations were clear with funding only available for use on infrastructure needed to support development. Whilst this would include transport, schools, health, parks, open space, sport culture and community infrastructure facilities it was not possible to redirect as a means of addressing wider budget pressures with the Administration, she pointed out, committed to ensure that SCIL continued to be invested transparently and strategically on infrastructure that would support Brent's growth and benefit communities across the whole borough.

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

In closing and exercising his right of reply, Councillor Jayanti Patel reiterated that the original motion was not intended to oppose investment in any particular infrastructure category with the emphasis instead focussed on the need for transparency and accountability in terms of the allocation and use of SCIL resources with a clear framework required on the outcomes expected to be

delivered. On this basis, it was felt the motion represented a proportionate attempt to enhance trust whilst strengthening the associated governance arrangements around use of a significant source of public funding.

Speaking next, Councillor Clinton in exercising his right of reply on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group, clarified that their amendment did not seek to constrain future decisions by the Executive but rather to encourage more proactive consideration of roads and pavement investment through the SCIL programme. Given the scale of repair backlogs and public concern regarding highway conditions, he hoped members would therefore recognise and support the amendment as a practical measure capable of delivering visible benefits for residents.

As the final right of reply, Councillor Mitchell advised that whilst supportive of the original motion and recognising the aim behind the Liberal Democrats amendment the Green Group were keen to avoid distracting from their principal focus on governance, accountability and transparency as opposed to specific areas of investment. On this basis, she advised the Green Group would not be able to support the amendment moved by the Liberal Democrats with concerns once again highlighted about the delayed publication of the latest Infrastructure Funding Statement and need to strengthen governance and accountability arrangements in order to provide a more robust strategic framework for future SCIL decision-making

Having thanked councillors for their contributions, the Mayor then moved to the vote on the motion starting with the amendments moved by firstly the Liberal Democrats and secondly the Green Groups.

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

This was followed by the amendment from the Green Group, as set out above, being put to the vote which was unanimously declared **CARRIED**.

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

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

“Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy: Transparency, Strategic Use and Scrutiny

This Council notes:

- That Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy, known as SCIL, is a significant funding stream derived from development and is intended to support infrastructure needed to accommodate growth across Brent.
- That recent debate in Brent has highlighted legitimate questions about how SCIL schemes are identified, prioritised and brought forward for decision, and whether members and residents are given sufficient clarity in advance.

- That the Council has itself acknowledged the need for a more strategic approach to Community Infrastructure Levy funding, including clearer alignment with infrastructure planning and more robust scrutiny of proposed allocations.
- That residents are entitled to confidence that SCIL is being used transparently, strategically and for infrastructure genuinely linked to growth and development pressures.
- In February 2026 £80m of SCIL was allocated to projects not yet started, agreed by the previous administration.
- In February 2026 the projected cost to repair the backlog of highest priority roads was £44.7m. The pavements backlog would cost £310.7m.
- That the Infrastructure Funding Statement for 2024-2025, providing a crucial view of SCIL allocation and spending, is delayed, and that Brent has not published an Infrastructure Development Plan since 2019.

This Council believes:

- That SCIL funding should be allocated based on clear evidence, transparency and demonstrable public value.
- That SCIL spending should be aligned to more a transparent, up-to-date and granular documentation of local needs, e.g. a refreshed Infrastructure Development Plan, or town plans.
- That all major proposed SCIL schemes should be accompanied by clear information on cost, rationale, delivery timetable and expected outcomes.
- That the Council should show explicitly how each proposed SCIL allocation supports growth related infrastructure needs, rather than using SCIL to address long standing issues that ought to be funded through other means.
- That in a Council with no overall control, all political groups should have a meaningful opportunity to scrutinise major SCIL proposals before final decisions are taken.
- That we must prioritise a proportion of SCIL funding for repairs to roads and pavement to stop the backlog increasing further. This must be done in growth areas due to rules governing CIL but will benefit the whole borough by taking pressure off the reactive repairs team.

As a result, this Council resolves to:

- (1) Request that Cabinet publish an annual forward pipeline of proposed SCIL schemes, including indicative costings, intended timelines and the service area or location concerned.

- (2) Request there is no further delay with the Infrastructure Funding Statement for 24-25, on the Cabinet agenda for 27th July.
- (3) Request that decision-making for SCIL spending is based on an up-to-date, detailed documentation of local needs.
- (4) Request that every future report seeking approval for major SCIL allocations includes a clear written statement explaining why the proposed scheme qualifies for SCIL support and how it relates to infrastructure needed to support development and growth.
- (5) Request that, before any major new SCIL allocation is considered by Cabinet, all Group Leaders or their nominees are offered a briefing on the proposed programme and the basis on which schemes have been selected.
- (6) Request that all Group Leaders or their nominees are briefed on allocated but not implemented SCIL funded projects to ensure that planned SCIL projects not yet started are reviewed by the group leaders (or nominees) – and request cabinet have regard to their recommendations.
- (7) Request a quarterly update to all councillors setting out the SCIL balance, new receipts, allocations, expenditure and remaining available funds.
- (8) Request the provision of an annual public report setting out SCIL allocations approved, expenditure committed, progress of delivery and outcomes achieved.
- (9) Request that a portion SCIL is invested in road/pavement resurfacing in growth areas.”

12.3 3rd Motion (Liberal Democrats Group) – Providing Choice to improve Recycling Rates across Brent

The Mayor then invited Councillor Chauhan to move the final motion submitted on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group. In moving the motion, Councillor Chauhan began by explaining that since being elected as a councillor for Alperton, one of the issues most frequently raised by residents had been the desire to do more to support environmental sustainability through improved recycling and cleaner neighbourhoods. Whilst highlighting that residents (based on his experience) were keen to recycle and reduce waste the Liberal Democrats had felt that the current collection arrangements did not always make participation easy or convenient with the motion therefore seeking to respond by recognising that a single collection model did not necessarily meet the needs of every household across the borough.

Highlighting Brent's recycling performance, Councillor Chauhan noted that recycling rates remained below the level the Council aspired to achieve. In order to therefore reach the Council's environmental ambitions, reduce waste and tackle climate change the need had therefore been identified to make recycling simpler, more accessible and more convenient for all residents, with the motion therefore calling for an evidence-led review of recycling collection methods, including consideration of alternatives such as wheelie bins where appropriate, improved facilities for flats and estates, and examination of best practice from other local authorities that had

achieved stronger recycling outcomes. In addition, Councillor Chauhan took the opportunity to emphasise the importance of education and community engagement, highlighting what he felt was the need for greater collaboration with schools, housing providers, community organisations and residents to improve understanding of what materials could be recycled and encourage wider participation. In commending the motion to Council, he ended by outlining what he felt to be the resident-focused nature of the action being sought in an effort to offer greater choice, improve service delivery and help Brent achieve its environmental objectives.

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

In moving the amendment, Councillor Knight (as Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport and Public Realm) began by acknowledging the broad agreement amongst all members of the Council on the importance of improving recycling rates, reducing waste and making it easier for residents to recycle. As such she advised that the amendment was not seeking to alter the ambition within the original motion but to ensure that its focus remained on the need for future action to be guided by evidence, practicality and value for money. In addressing specific concerns identified in relation to the blue recycling sack scheme, several benefits were highlighted relating to their ongoing use including lower contamination levels in paper and card recycling streams, improved quality of recyclable material and additional income generated through improved recycling quality, enabling further reinvested in frontline services. At the same time, however, it was acknowledged that the current arrangements did not work equally well in all parts of the borough and that concerns raised by residents regarding storage, litter and practicality merited further consideration. As a result, Councillor Knight highlighted that the amendment proposed a comprehensive evidence-led review to assess whether alternative collection models, including wheelie bins, could improve recycling performance and resident satisfaction in certain locations while recognising that existing arrangements may remain appropriate elsewhere. Reference was also made to forthcoming Government recycling reforms, creating an opportunity for Brent to review emerging best practice and develop a recycling approach tailored to local circumstances. In concluding it was therefore hoped members would recognise the way in which the amendment sought to reinforce the Council's commitment to making future changes based on robust evidence rather than a process of assumptions.

On this basis, the amendment moved by Councillor Knight was as follows:

To add the wording underlined and delete the wording indicated:

“Providing Choice to Improve Recycling Rates Across Brent

This Council notes:

- Brent continues to lag behind many London boroughs on household recycling, although evidence shows Brent is the leading the way with food waste collection with the 6th highest figures in London. While residents overwhelmingly support recycling and want to help tackle climate change, the

Council's current system must continue to be made easier, clearer and more consistent for residents.~~does not make recycling easy enough.~~

- Brent's household recycling rate remains around 30%, with the Government's Simpler Recycling reforms now requiring separation of waste streams, including paper and card by default, Brent has a responsibility and opportunity to improve its approach and deliver a recycling scheme that is legally compliant, environmentally effective and practical. ~~well below the Mayor of London's ambition of 50% municipal recycling by 2030 and behind several Liberal Democrat-run councils, including Kingston, Sutton and Richmond, which consistently exceed 45%. Their performance shows that better collection systems, clearer communication and stronger resident engagement can deliver higher recycling rates.~~
- Brent's blue recycling sacks have not on their own solved this problem. Residents continue to raise concerns about split or disintegrating sacks, litter, storage difficulties and confusion over what can be recycled. Three years after the Brent Liberal Democrats first called for the sacks to be scrapped, they the scheme has improved paper and card quality, but not yet delivered the step-change needed to meet Brent's climate ambitions.~~failed to deliver the improvement promised.~~
- As Brent seeks to cut carbon emissions, reduce waste disposal costs and create cleaner neighbourhoods, improving recycling ~~must~~ continues to be a key environmental priority.

This Council therefore believes that:

- Brent's recycling performance is not good enough and must improve.
- Blue recycling sacks should not longer be treated as Brent's default recycling model in every circumstance. ~~Any C~~continued use should be justified by clear evidence that sacks ~~are wanted by residents in the relevant area, are practical for those households, and perform better than alternatives in increasing recycling, reducing contamination and keeping streets clean.~~
- Residents deserve a recycling service that is simple, convenient and encourages maximum participation.
- Targeted education and engagement are essential to improve recycling rates and reduce contamination.
- Brent should will learn from the best-performing London boroughs and adopt approaches that work locally.

This Council therefore requests that Cabinet:

- (1) End Review the ~~blanket current reliance use on of~~ blue recycling sacks as Brent's default collection model and carry out an ~~urgent~~, evidence-led review of ~~alternative Brent's~~ recycling arrangements, ~~with a presumption in favour of replacing sacks with~~ considering the case for wheelie bins where sacks are

causing problems for residents, contributing to litter, reducing participation or failing to improve recycling.

- (2) Ensure any proposal to retain sacks in a particular area, housing type or circumstance is backed by published evidence, including resident feedback, recycling performance, contamination, street cleanliness, accessibility, storage and value for money.
- (3) Undertake a timely n-urgent options appraisal of the most effective recycling collection models for Brent, including additional wheelie bins, segregated containers, improved communal recycling and other best-practice systems.
- (4) Offer households who want one the option of an additional wheelie bin for segregated paper and card recycling, ~~as first proposed by the Brent Liberal Democrat Group in 2023~~ where practical, subject to cost.
- (5) ~~Develop~~ Continue strengthening targeted education and public awareness work with schools, community organisations, housing providers and residents' associations.
- (6) Improve recycling in flats and estates, where participation remains lower than elsewhere.
- (7) Present the review ~~and new recycling strategy to the~~ a next future Full Council Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, ~~including a timetable for a more effective,~~ detailing Brent's commitment to a resident-friendly collection model."

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

In opening the debate and speaking in support of the original motion moved on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group, Councillor Lorber began by focussing on concerns previously raised regarding the introduction of the blue recycling bag scheme and its suitability for all households, with introduction of the scheme not felt to have delivered the anticipated improvements in recycling rates and, in some cases, having even discouraged participation in recycling. Reference was made to previous recommendations from the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee calling for a wider review and consultation process, together with budget provision for wheelie bins to be provided as an alternative, with Councillor Lorber of the view that earlier implementation of these recommendations could have led to better recycling outcomes and prevented many of the concerns now being experienced by residents.

Speaking next, Councillor Donnelly-Jackson offered an alternative perspective. Drawing on personal experience as the tenant in a housing block she felt the blue sacks provided greater flexibility and ease of use for households with limited storage space and also highlighted they would often be easier to manage for residents with mobility needs. The operational advantages associated with the system were also highlighted, with reference to significantly lower contamination levels and reduced costs when compared with wheelie bin provision. Whilst recognising the need for service improvement, Councillor Donnelly-Jackson felt that

a single collection model would not be suitable for all household types and suggested that future efforts should in fact be focussed on improving communal recycling arrangements including flats and estates, through targeted intervention and enhanced infrastructure.

Councillor Warsame spoke next to highlight the Green Groups support for the original motion as moved. Highlighting that the blue bag system had failed to deliver the increase in recycling rates originally anticipated, Councillor Warsame also felt it important to recognise the concerns being raised by residents living in high-density developments and apartment blocks, many of whom relied on communal recycling facilities and often lacked adequate opportunities to separate recyclable materials effectively. As such he advised the Green Group were keen to ensure that any future recycling strategy addressed infrastructure shortages, overflowing communal bins and improved resident education in order to support better recycling outcomes across the borough.

Moving on, Councillor Brown (speaking in support of the original motion) also expressed concern regarding the borough's long-term recycling performance. Referring to historical recycling rates, he felt that progress had been insufficient over a prolonged period with opportunities to improve recycling outcomes not having been fully realised which, in his view, supported the need for a different approach to recycling policy and service delivery as set out within the motion.

In continuing the debate, Councillor Chadha then spoke (on behalf of the Conservative Group) who, whilst recognising that recycling performance in Brent required improvement, also queried the approach set out within both the motion and amendment. Although supportive of the need to increase recycling rates, Councillor Chadha emphasised the importance in seeking to identify the necessary approach to ensure this was based on a thorough review that considered issues such as costs, contamination rates, housing types, street cleanliness and value for money. On this basis she advised that whilst the Conservative Group remained committed to recycling, they were not convinced that the proposals outlined within the motion or amendment provided sufficient clarity regarding implementation and expected outcomes and would therefore be abstaining from supporting either.

As a brief additional contribution, Councillor Clinton felt it was important to also remind members of the Liberal Democrats alternative budget proposals presented when setting the 2026-27 budget, which had set out how the funding commitments associated with the motion could be achieved.

As the next contribution, Councillor Blackman then spoke to outline what he felt was a need for greater analysis of recycling performance across the borough, including the mapping of recycling rates on a ward basis to support any wider review of performance. The importance in raising awareness and education was also emphasised, noting that successful recycling depended not only on infrastructure but also in securing the necessary behavioural change. The opportunity was also taken to express support for the development of a borough-wide community engagement initiative based on local volunteers, councillors and officers working together through a "Brent Green Champions" style campaign supported through the comprehensive evidence led review proposed within the amendment to the motion.

As a final contribution, Councillor Mulaisho (also speaking in support of the original Liberal Democrat motion) felt it was important to recognise the willingness consistently demonstrated, from her perspective, by residents in seeking to recycle and support environmental initiatives. As such she felt the principal issue was not a lack of public commitment but challenges with how the current recycling arrangements were operating. The emphasis within the motion of the need for evidence-led decision making and resident choice was therefore welcomed with the need for a more flexible approach identified and it recognised that different communities would require different types of solution. As such, Councillor Mulaisho ended by commending the motion for providing a practical opportunity to develop a more effective recycling system while remaining focused on residents' needs and the borough's environmental obligations.

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

In closing and exercising his right of reply, Councillor Chauhan whilst acknowledging the reduction in contamination rates associated with introduction of the blue sack scheme also felt it important to recognise that overall recycling rates had not increased as expected following the original changes introduced. In clarifying that the motion was not seeking to impose a single recycling method, he highlighted the Liberal Democrats focus in providing residents with greater flexibility and choice through a range of recycling options tailored to different property types and individual circumstances in an effort to improve participation by ensuring residents could access the recycling arrangements most suitable for their needs and as such commended the motion for approval.

In exercising her right of reply, Councillor Knight reiterated that recycling was a complex issue requiring solutions based on evidence rather than assumptions and once again highlighted what were felt to be the operational benefits associated with the blue sack system, including flexibility and cost effectiveness, whilst also acknowledging the need for alternative approaches to be considered where evidence demonstrated they would improve performance. On this basis, she commended the amendment to members also taking the opportunity to highlight the importance of education, engagement and ongoing review in supporting future recycling improvements across the borough.

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

The amendment from the Labour Group, 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:

“Providing Choice to Improve Recycling Rates Across Brent

This Council notes:

- Brent continues to lag behind many London boroughs on household recycling, although evidence shows Brent is the leading the way with food waste collection with the 6th highest figures in London. While residents overwhelmingly support recycling and want to help tackle climate change, the Council's current system must continue to be made easier, clearer and more consistent for residents.
- Brent's household recycling rate remains around 30%, with the Government's Simpler Recycling reforms now requiring separation of waste streams, including paper and card by default, Brent has a responsibility and opportunity to improve its approach and deliver a recycling scheme that is legally compliant, environmentally effective and practical.
- Brent's blue recycling sacks have not on their own solved this problem. Residents continue to raise concerns about split or disintegrating sacks, litter, storage difficulties and confusion over what can be recycled. Three years after the Brent Liberal Democrats first called for the sacks to be scrapped, they the scheme has improved paper and card quality, but not yet delivered the step-change needed to meet Brent's climate ambitions.
- As Brent seeks to cut carbon emissions, reduce waste disposal costs and create cleaner neighbourhoods, improving recycling continues to be a key environmental priority.

This Council therefore believes that:

- Brent's recycling performance is not good enough and must improve.
- Blue recycling sacks should not be treated as Brent's default recycling model in every circumstance. Continued use should be justified by clear evidence that sacks are increasing recycling, reducing contamination and keeping streets clean.
- Residents deserve a recycling service that is simple, convenient and encourages maximum participation.
- Targeted education and engagement are essential to improve recycling rates and reduce contamination.
- Brent should will learn from the best-performing London boroughs and adopt approaches that work locally.

This Council therefore requests that Cabinet:

- (1) Review the current use of blue recycling sacks as Brent's default collection model and carry out an evidence-led review of Brent's recycling arrangements, considering the case for wheelie bins where sacks are causing problems for residents, contributing to litter, reducing participation or failing to improve recycling.

- (2) Ensure any proposal to retain sacks in a particular area, housing type or circumstance is backed by published evidence, including resident feedback, recycling performance, contamination, street cleanliness, accessibility, storage and value for money.
- (3) Undertake a timely options appraisal of the most effective recycling collection models for Brent, including additional wheelie bins, segregated containers, improved communal recycling and other best-practice systems.
- (4) Offer households who want one the option of an additional wheelie bin for paper and card recycling, where practical, subject to cost.
- (5) Continue strengthening targeted education and public awareness work with schools, community organisations, housing providers and residents' associations.
- (6) Improve recycling in flats and estates, where participation remains lower than elsewhere.
- (7) Present the review to a future Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, detailing Brent's commitment to a resident-friendly collection model."

13. 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:

13.1 Councillor Anderson thanked Councillor Kelcher (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning) for the written response to her question seeking further detail regarding the investment in roof and fascia replacement works at Donnington Park School. In welcoming the investment as evidence of the Council's commitment to maintaining and improving existing school buildings alongside the focus on new build and recognising the inadequate level of funding provided by previous Governments, she asked the Cabinet Member, as a supplementary question, whether the investment identified reflected the Council's approach towards a more proactive rather than reactive programme of maintenance.

In response, Councillor Kelcher thanked Councillor Anderson for her advocacy on behalf of the school and wider community within her ward. Recognising the schools importance to the local community, he felt the investment had

demonstrated the Council's commitment to supporting educational facilities within the area. Reflecting on his own educational experience under previous Conservative Governments he highlighted the impact which the underinvestment in schools and their facilities had had on pupils learning environments and wellbeing. The change under subsequent Labour Government's was therefore welcomed with investment in schools increased and educational conditions improved. Despite these improvements, funding pressures had re-emerged during the Coalition Government and subsequent years of austerity with, he felt, the subsequent reductions in public spending having led to significant problems across the education sector. These had directly impacted on school building estates, safety and maintenance which he highlighted as evidence of the long-term consequences of underinvestment and cumulative impact of austerity policies and delayed investment.

In contrast, Councillor Kelcher felt that the investment in Donnington Park School, represented the beginning of a process to reverse the decline outlined. In reminding members that the investment had been made possible as a result of increased funding for school repairs and maintenance provided through the current Labour Government via the Department for Education, it was felt this represented a significant step towards addressing longstanding issues, improving educational facilities, and ensuring that pupils and staff retained access to a safe and suitable learning environment.

- 13.2 Councillor Hack thanked Councillor Rubin (as Cabinet member for Children's Services, Employment and Climate Action) for the response to his original question regarding the use of SCIL to support development of the new College of North West London campus on Olympic Way, Wembley. As a supplementary question the Cabinet Member was asked to confirm whether he felt the project could be seen as demonstrating a strategic and transparent use of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to unlock growth, and whether it illustrated the wider type of social impact and return that SCIL funding could deliver not just in relation to infrastructure but also to unlock the provision of skills, training and educational opportunities.

In response, Councillor Rubin referred to a recent visit he had undertaken with the Mayor and Leader of the Council to the College of North West London awards ceremony, highlighting the achievements celebrated among lifelong learners, young people and students with SEND. As such, the SCIL investment to support the provision of a new campus was welcomed with its use to support education, as well as public realm and other infrastructure priorities identified as appropriate and equally important in terms of the wider social value provided.

- 13.3 In noting the written response provided to his question regarding the enforcement of School Street schemes and associated signage Councillor Maurice, as a supplementary question, asked Councillor Knight (as Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm) whether any assessment had been undertaken on the impact of School Street schemes in terms of the displacement of traffic and parking on surrounding streets. Given concerns raised about the high level of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) being issued relating to enforcement of the schemes, details were also sought as to whether the Council would review the visibility of signage, including the use of

eye-level signs and larger advance warning notices to ensure motorists were aware of each scheme and the hours of operation.

In responding, Councillor Knight confirmed that school street signage was governed by the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions, and that whilst the suggestion of eye-level signage was noted, the Council could not introduce signage that fell outside of the relevant statutory requirements. In highlighting the benefits of School Streets in creating a safer travel environment in the immediate area surrounding each school it was recognised that not all areas of the borough were the same with each scheme therefore needing to be assessed on a case by case basis working closely with local stakeholders and taking account of resident and school feedback. It was, however, felt important to recognise the objective of each scheme in seeking to maintain safer environments outside school gates and encouraging more sustainable and active modes of travel to school with the priority to ensure decisions made regarding their introduction and operation were based on evidence, local experience and what worked best for each community.

- 13.4 In noting the written response provided to his question regarding operation of Wembley event day parking enforcement and restrictions Councillor Lorber, as a supplementary question, asked Councillor Knight (as Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm) why, despite concerns highlighted at the time the Council was considering the application from Tottenham Hotspur Football Club to host matches at Wembley Stadium concerns highlighted in relation to effective signage and hours of operation for event day parking & traffic restrictions and subsequent undertakings to provide effective digital signage had not been implemented.

In responding, Councillor Knight began by expressing her disappointment at what she felt to be the negative focus by members of the Liberal Democrats Group on the events she felt Brent was privileged to be able to host through the Stadium and wider Wembley complex. At the same time, however, the impact on local residents was acknowledged, with Councillor Knight providing an assurance that she would continue to do everything possible to mitigate against and reduce disruption and ensure local people received a fairer deal. Highlighting the historic nature of Wembley as an asset to be celebrated within the borough this was also compared to Councillor Lorber's length of service on the Council, which due to the perceived nature and appropriateness of the comment led to a request (raised as a Point of Order) by Councillor Georgiou and supported by Councillor Brown for the reference to be withdrawn.

Having ruled that he was not minded to accept the issue raised as a Point of Order, the Mayor invited Councillor Knight to continue with her response who took the opportunity to clarify that her comment had not been intended to offend Councillor Lorber and merely to draw a comparison with Wembley Stadium and Wembley Arena as long-standing assets valued by the borough. In concluding her response Councillor Knight highlighted what she felt was the need to celebrate the profile, economic and cultural benefits generated for the borough as a result of the range of world class events hosted at Wembley.

- 13.5 In thanking Councillor Kelcher (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning) for the written response provided on the process for selecting a

single delivery partner for the South Kilburn Regeneration programme Councillor Ryan (having referred to the deputations received earlier in the meeting) sought further assurance as a supplementary question on whether the cost of any rectification works or repairs identified once the contract was in place would rest exclusively and explicitly with the contractor responsible. As additional context reference was made to the ongoing issues with rectification works and costs arising from the Granville new Homes development. As a separate issue he then followed up by seeking a further commitment (following a recent decision to enable the sale of 143 new build units in South Kilburn to a US based private equity firm) that any further sales of units in South Kilburn to private equity firms would not be permitted.

In responding, Councillor Kelcher advised of ongoing work in relation to the appointment of the single delivery partner for the South Kilburn Regeneration Programme, assuring members that that social value considerations remained a key element of the process. Recognising the basis of the approach to date, it was confirmed that any appointed partner would be required to demonstrate relevant expertise and a commitment to investment in South Kilburn with the requirements in relation to social value included as a material term and backed up through key performance indicators. Members were further assured that under the arrangements sites would be released to the delivery partner on a phased basis to ensure that necessary works were complete to a satisfactory standard prior to any subsequent sites being released. Recognising the importance and interest in the process, members were also advised of work being undertaken to arrange a cross-party briefing on the process for appointing the single delivery partner, with Councillor Kelcher ending by advising that he would also be willing to engage further with members on the issues highlighted outside of the meeting.

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 Mulaisho who whilst welcoming the aim behind School Street schemes sought views from Councillor Knight (as Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm) on the detrimental health impact being created for local residents in terms of air quality and pollution by the displacement of traffic to surrounding residential streets where schemes had been introduced in some areas of the borough and how the outcomes for one group were assessed against the needs of another.

In response, Councillor Knight confirmed that a range of evidence was considered when reviewing proposals for the introduction of school street schemes, which included the potential impact on traffic volume, displacement and compliance trends along with site visits in order to carefully assess and balance the benefits of any proposal against the wider impact on the surrounding area. As an example of the success identified, however, reference was made as an example to a 70% reduction in traffic on Okehampton Road (covering Manor School) during operating hours for that School Street scheme.

- (ii) Councillor Choudry seeking an update from Councillor Kelcher (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Planning) on the key takeaways from the recent Willesden Green Delivery Workshop and inviting him to join a walkabout with local businesses and multi-faith groups to review the current High Street.

In response, Councillor Kelcher confirmed his main takeaway had been the strength of community feeling across Willesden in support of the High Street and wider area, with the Council now seeking to develop a more holistic High Street Strategy designed to support and enhance the health of the borough's High Streets. The opportunity was also taken to welcome the pre decision scrutiny in relation to development of the Strategy due to be undertaken at the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, with confirmation provided that he would also be willing to join ward walkabouts in any High Street or town centre.

- (iii) Councillor Brown seeking details from Councillor Knight (as Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm) as to the reason no school street scheme was in place to cover schools located on Chamberlayne Road, given its location within an area ranked amongst the top 50 poorest locations for air quality in London and recorded level of traffic collisions a. In addition, the Cabinet Member was asked to confirm whether there were any plans to reinstate the Public Transport Liaison Meeting discontinued in 2020.

In response, Councillor Knight whilst highlighting that Manor School was accessed directly via Chamberlayne Road recognised the impact of any scheme in that area given the levels of traffic compared to other quieter residential areas. Whilst willing to review the issues highlighted outside of the meeting, members were again reminded of the approach taken in assessing the introduction of schemes on a case by case basis.

- (iv) Councillor Jayanti Patel, highlighting concerns and seeking an update from Councillor Knight (as Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm) regarding the increasing number of abandoned supermarket trolleys across Queensbury which he described as a source of environmental blight and felt represented a visible indication of neglect. Despite the frequency with which residents reported dumped trolleys through the Council's reporting portal and the Trolleywise application, he pointed many remained unattended for extended periods. Concerns were also expressed regarding the financial burden placed on local taxpayers, noting that some local authorities operated recovery charge schemes requiring supermarkets to contribute towards removal costs. He therefore asked what oversight arrangements existed in relation to supermarkets, why a charging scheme had not been introduced in Brent, and whether consideration would be given to undertaking public consultation on enhanced measures to address the issue.

In response, Councillor Knight acknowledged the concerns being raised by local residents. Whilst advising that Council enforcement teams already worked in partnership with supermarkets to tackle trolley abandonment and associated littering issues, Councillor Knight advised she would be willing to follow up on the specific issues highlighted outside of the meeting in order to

review whether additional measures could be introduced to address the problem more effectively.

- (v) Councillor Clinton seeking clarification from Councillor Grahl (as Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources) regarding the allocation of Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) funding. Reference was made to practices adopted by a number of other local authorities where ward councillors were directly involved in determining local spending priorities. In light of the SCIL motion approved earlier in the meeting and the Council's commitment to community involvement, Councillor Clinton asked if the Deputy Leader would support a review of NCIL allocation arrangements in order to ensure councillors had greater influence over investment decisions within their wards going forward.

In response, Councillor Grahl confirmed that the NCIL programme for the forthcoming year would include direct involvement from local ward councillors, with each ward due to receive an NCIL funding allocation which had been designed to provide local ward councillors with an opportunity to contribute towards decisions regarding how funding was prioritised and spent within their local communities.

- (vi) Councillor H. Patel querying the effectiveness of the School Street initiative, particularly in relation to the stated objective of improving road safety, reducing child casualties and enhancing air quality. Expressing concern that the written response provided to the question submitted by Councillor Maurice had not included evidence demonstrating achievement of the objectives outlined and with significant emphasis instead placed on the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued (citing the example the Preston Manor School scheme) additional concern was also raised regarding the adequacy of advance warning signage. As a result, he asked Councillor Knight (as Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm) to comment on whether the schemes had become more focused on penalising residents than achieving their original transport and environmental objectives.

In response, Councillor Knight rejected any suggestion that School Street schemes operated as revenue-generating mechanisms and advised members that schemes were subject to trial periods and ward member engagement prior to implementation. Whilst reiterating her willingness to review concerns relating to individual School Street locations on a case-by-case basis, she emphasised that there were no numerical targets associated with the issuing of PCNs and that enforcement activity was not driving decision-making regarding the schemes.

- (vii) Councillor Chadha seeking further details from Councillor Knight (Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm) regarding reference to a review of the School Street initiative which had included reference to a light touch review of 22 pilot schemes and requesting clarification on when a full review would be published containing detailed evidence and performance data.

In response, Councillor Knight confirmed that the original 22 School Streets had been subject to review as pilot schemes with the programme having

subsequently expanded to 32 locations and on which a comprehensive review would be provided in due course to assist members in assessing the overall effectiveness of the programme.

- (viii) Councillor Jansali highlighting concerns regarding the frequency of roadworks affecting key routes across Wembley Central, particularly Wembley High Road and Ealing Road. Attention was drawn to the considerable congestion, delays and disruption experienced by residents, together with concerns over insufficient notice being provided when works commenced. As a result, he asked Councillor Knight (as Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm) what measures the Council was taking to improve coordination between utility companies, Transport for London and other delivery partners in order to minimise the disruption from these roadworks and ensure residents and ward councillors were kept appropriately informed.

In response, Councillor Knight felt it important to begin by highlighting that the roadworks identified often arose from reactive repairs undertaken by utility providers on which it was not always possible to provide advance notification to the Council. Whilst outlining the efforts made to manage and mitigate against the resulting disruption through traffic management measures, the concerns outlined were acknowledged with members advised that discussions were planned with major utility providers, including Thames Water, to highlight the issues and seek to improve coordination arrangements going forward.

- (ix) As a final question, Councillor Blackman referred to recent engagement undertaken with young people and youth organisations across the borough. Highlighting feedback that young people often engaged with services based on trust in individuals rather than organisational branding, he asked Councillor Dixon (Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Public Health) how trust and community credibility were being incorporated into the Council's approach towards procuring and commissioning organisations to work with young people, particularly in light of recent incidents affecting communities across Brent.

In response, Councillor Dixon began by taking the opportunity to extend condolences to the family of Jamal Ringrose, acknowledging the impact of his recent tragic death on the community. In terms of the specific question, Councillor Dixon advised that she had recognised the need for continued action to address challenges including knife crime, community safety concerns, gang violence, grooming and youth vulnerability. Trust was described as a critical component of effective youth engagement and intervention work with reference made, as an example of the type of initiatives being developed in response, to programmes such as I Am Brent, together with wider substance misuse and multi-agency initiatives, which had been designed to build trusted relationships with communities and young people. Whilst stressing the importance of partnership working, she ended by recognising the need for direct engagement and the development of trusted local relationships as fundamental to the Council's approach.

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.

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

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

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

15. **Annual Report from the Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee**

As the final item of business, the Mayor invited Councillor Choudry, as the Vice-Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee and Chair of the Audit & Standards Committee, to introduce the annual report from the Independent Chair of the Advisory Committee, updating members on the work undertaken during the 2025-26 Municipal Year.

In presenting the report on behalf of the Audit and Standards Committee and Advisory Committee, Councillor Choudry began by drawing 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 as well as members standards of conduct and providing independent oversight of the Council's governance, risk management, internal control and ethical standards.

Members were advised that the approach adopted towards the work undertaken had also included a number of deeper reviews focussed on the Council's risk management structure and strategic risk management process with an increasing focus not only on the effectiveness of governance processes but also in terms of the monitoring and reporting of information and data.

In concluding, Councillor Choudry took the opportunity to thank all members of the Committee along with the co-opted members, officers and the external auditors for their constructive contributions throughout the year and placed on record his thanks to David Ewart as Independent Chair of the Advisory Committee for the skilful chairing and independent oversight he was also able to provide. Members were advised that both Committees looked forward to continuing their work with key stakeholders to ensure the necessary focus was maintained in relation to the assurance, compliance and control of the Council's key governance arrangements.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Choudry for the update provided and in recognising the valuable role and work undertaken by both Committees it was **RESOLVED** to note the Annual Report provided by the Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee outlining the work undertaken during 2025-26.

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

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

17. Urgent Business

There were no urgent items of business raised at the meeting so the Mayor, in closing the meeting, thanked all members for their co-operation and support and advised that he looked forward to seeing everyone again in person at the next Full Council which would be taking place on Monday 14 September 2026.

The meeting closed at 8.22 pm

COUNCILLOR AMER AGHA MB BS, MSC, PHCM
Mayor