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Candidate for Chairman of the
Jewish Leadership Council

INTRODUCTION

To be a British Jew is to be part of a vibrant, proud, innovative, and collaborative community. While we number fewer than 300,000 in a country with a general population of 65 million, Jews are at the forefront of our national life.

Our contributions affect change across politics, business, education, medicine, arts and culture and beyond. Within our community, we support and care for one another through over 2,000 charities encompassing a range of sectors from education to welfare, to security and more. Though we live in the Diaspora, we showcase and take great pride in our historical connection and unbreakable commitment to our ancestral homeland, the State of Israel.

There has never been a better time to be Jewish in Britain; but, at the same time, we face a number of challenges, from changing demographics and antisemitism, to growing financial needs in the face of fewer resources.

The Jewish Leadership Council (JLC) plays a fundamentally important role for British Jews - and specifically its 32 constituent members who are the central organisations of our community. It provides a cohesive, thoughtful and forceful voice with which to promote and protect everything we stand for, everything we have achieved thus far, and that which we aspire to accomplish in the years ahead.

MY COMMITMENT TO OUR COMMUNITY

I am a passionate Jew. I care deeply about Jewish life, our history, our traditions, and ensuring our people's continuity. To serve our community as JLC Chair, I would draw upon almost 30 years of involvement in and activism on behalf of our community. From my days as JSOC President in Manchester, to being a JLC Council Member and Chair of PaJeS, I have developed a deep understanding and established a proven track record of tackling issues from education, to social care, to community security and more.

This document sets out my vision for the JLC. It outlines the key issues on which I would focus as Chair, including education, security, welfare, political engagement, Israel's centrality

in our lives, as well as our community's religious and cultural life. It speaks to the need for greater diversity across our membership and my desire to build upon Sir Mick Davis' successes while addressing the challenges we must overcome in the future.

Bolstered by my business experience as a lawyer, a chief executive and an entrepreneur, I believe that my mission as Chair will be to aid and support the community by ensuring the JLC is an organisation that reaches out across the entire Jewish community, working together for all our benefit.

COLLABORATIVE, CO-ORDINATED, CONSIDERED

Big issues require big resources. The next generation of leadership must support the JLC's standing as the central organisation for Anglo Jewry, one that is focused on long-term strategic issues.

The JLC must be seen to be proactive and to represent – in a collaborative, co-ordinated

and considered way – the democratic views of those institutions that are integral to the vitality of daily Jewish life.

The focus should be entirely on being the collective voice of the JLC's constituent institutional members.

FORWARD THINKING

There is a need to eradicate duplication, waste of resources, and multiple voices wherever possible. This can be achieved through collaborative leadership.

Working groups and communal structures will tackle the key areas on which the JLC currently focuses, together with a new area of cultural life. Each working group will be responsible for creating a consensus around the JLC's position on matters affecting its constituent members. This will make the process of representation more effective and efficient.

I believe we also have a duty to work together to pool resources and eliminate unnecessary waste. As JLC Chair, I will launch a comprehensive review to identify ways for our communal organisations to

save approximately £10 million per annum by working together, rather than in silos. A leading business figure with a proven track record of running major corporations will spearhead this taskforce, which will be supported by an independent report prepared by a leading consultancy firm.

With fundraising demands and operating costs continuously increasing, the pressure placed on charities will only be exacerbated. Our community is not large enough to support so many charities, each with their own back offices. This is a strategic effort that is vital for the longevity and self-sufficiency of our community and the JLC should lead it for the benefit of its members.

JEWISH LEADERSHIP IN SERVICE OF ALL BRITISH JEWS

Our community requires a strong representative body to advance its strategic interests and address long-term challenges. It must represent communal institutions across political and religious affiliations, and ensure that all Jews across Britain have a voice.

BOLSTERING REGIONAL OUTREACH

Some 40% of our community live outside London. Indeed, Jews live in every single local authority across Britain and the JLC must ensure that Jews from across the country have a voice and effective representation.

The JLC's regional strategy has already proven highly effective. Public affairs managers from Glasgow and Manchester to Leeds and Birmingham have established

themselves as authoritative individuals and team players. Working alongside or leveraging existing communal infrastructure, they have shown a unique ability to promote cooperation, build relationships with key stakeholders, and ensure Jewish needs are understood and addressed. As Chair, I would seek to enhance these efforts.

I want to continue to prove to every Jewish community and organisation that the JLC understands their concerns and is working on their behalf – this will continue to be at the heart of the JLC's mission.

GREATER DIVERSITY WITHIN OUR RANKS

The JLC must encourage and work towards equal representation for women, as well as members of the LGBTQ community.

Our community's diversity is one of our greatest strengths and promoting this principle across the JLC Board of Trustees, its Council and its working groups will ensure that the organisation, its constituent members, and the community as a whole benefit from a more rounded, informed perspective on the issues we need to address. We are stronger as a community when the voices of all our members are heard, irrespective of gender or sexual orientation.

ENGAGEMENT WITH CHAREDI JEWS

Today, approximately 16% of British Jews belong to the various Charedi communities and, by the end of the century, it is estimated

that this will climb to 50%. However, Charedi Jews are still not represented within our communal structures. More needs to be done to ensure that we reflect our diverse religious fabric in order to be truly representative and to address the various challenges we face, whilst being respectful of their communities' traditions.

As Chair, I would continue the positive work that has been done in recent years. I would seek to build bridges with Charedi communities across the country and work together with them and with Government to find workable solutions to their challenges.

PROUD

ENGAGEMENT

Greater investment and support are required to ensure that Jewish youth – the next generation and those beyond – is energised about and engaged with the community.

Education is a core component of our success as a community; more investment and support are required – academic, financial and otherwise – to benefit Jewish schools, informal Jewish education, and those who do not attend Jewish faith schools.

While I believe that education begins at home, our Jewish day schools are crucial vehicles in our efforts to preserve our collective identity and reinforce the historical bonds with our ancestral homeland. My work at PaJeS has inspired me to think creatively about how we can help our children so they can emerge as confident and knowledgeable men and

women, secure in their appreciation of and commitment to our people – its past and its future.

Our schools are centres of excellence, constantly ranked amongst the best performing schools in the country and we are justifiably proud of them. However, I believe we would benefit from a more holistic, long-term approach to Jewish education.

We would start in early childhood and continue through and after the university years; this would involve enhanced teacher training, a consultation on appropriate benchmarking of the knowledge levels achieved by our children, and ensuring Jewish studies and modern Jewish and Israeli history are taught as well and as creatively as possible.

I cannot stress enough how deeply I care about this issue. I know I would not be where I am today without the education I received and I suspect the same applies to most of us. Being inquisitive, knowledgeable, and critical thinkers enhances our ability to shape the world in which we live. Moreover, as the “People of the Book”, continually learning and asking questions has been our lifeblood. Tradition commands us to be learned and educated and we owe our children, the leaders of tomorrow, nothing less.

ISRAEL

The community requires and expects its leaders to be strong advocates, embodying our pride as the Jewish community of Great

Britain. At the same time, it is incumbent upon us to unabashedly celebrate Israel’s centrality in our Jewish existence and our unbreakable bond with the Jewish state.

Often, this demonstration of pride is overshadowed by a fear of being seen to take a political position. The recent spate of antisemitism – cloaked in the language of anti-Zionism – has shown our current approach to be, too often, overly cautious.

This year, we have begun anew with the celebration of the Balfour Declaration Centenary, and in 2018 we will step up our efforts with a clear JLC-driven programme to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the State of Israel.

REPRESENTATION

The JLC must represent the community's views in a considered and unified manner. This can be achieved using a structure built on working groups comprised of individuals whose expertise corresponds with the group's issue areas.

Harnessing the pooled talent of their members, groups will formulate action plans on key issues collectively, thus fostering harmony through fairer representation and co-ordination across the membership.

Wherever appropriate, the JLC and the Board of Deputies should work together. The history of the two organisations is just that. I want to focus on the present and the future and my preference is for the two organisations to work much harder to find synergies and common ground.

To this end, both sides will need to respect each other and cede areas of responsibility to streamline the community's representation.

MY EXPERIENCE

HEALTH, CARE, WELFARE AND WELLBEING

- Former Vice Chairman of Jewish Care.
My association with Jewish Care started with the Pentland Business Lunch Committee (now the Topland Lunch) in the 1990s, which I eventually chaired). After four years, I was asked to be Vice-Chair, a position I held until 2008 when I took on the Redbridge Project (see below).
- Trustee of Camp Simcha since 2006.

SECURITY

Intimately involved in many of the key issues in this area since 2007, resulting from my close working relationship with Gerald Ronson CBE, Chairman of the Community Security Trust.

EDUCATION, SCHOOLS AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- Since 2012, I have been Chairman of the Partnership for Jewish Schools (PaJeS). I am proud to have been the first Chair of PaJeS following the publication of the report on The Future of Jewish Schools, also referred to as The Wagner Report. Since its inception, and under the able stewardship of Rabbi David Meyer, PaJeS has become the pre-eminent representative body for Jewish schools.
- Chairman of the Governors of Kerem School in Hampstead Garden Suburb for eight years.

- Chairman of the Redbridge Jewish Education Renewal Project since 2008, whose purpose was to incorporate and improve the facilities of Kantor King Solomon High and Wohl Ilford Jewish Primary School in Essex. This included the sale of the old Ilford Jewish Primary School site and development and construction of a new primary school on the Kantor King Solomon site. I led all aspects of negotiations with Redbridge Council, design, construction and fundraising of this £11 million project.
- Active supporter of SEED and co-Chair of its 2016 Annual Dinner.

POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

I am well connected to and involved with the major political parties and have been heavily involved in the political arena since my Manchester University days over 30 years ago.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

- Since 2015, I have served as the Chair of the Chief Rabbinate Trust, overseeing planning and fundraising efforts.

ISRAEL

A committed Zionist my entire life, I believe in the centrality of Israel within the hearts and minds of the Jewish community. I believe the community should be loud and proud of our support for Israel and our quest for peace, with its neighbours.

IN SUMMARY

The JLC has a vital role in protecting and promoting Jewish life; in stimulating and communicating the vitality and breadth of activities of its representative organisations; and in promoting Israel as a central part of its ethos.

The entire community owes a debt of gratitude to the JLC's outgoing Chair, Sir Mick Davis, whose commitment and tireless efforts have taken us to new heights. Sir Mick continues to challenge us not to be complacent but to think creatively about the obstacles that lie ahead and to work together to develop solutions that will benefit and strengthen British Jewry for years to come.

In this document, I have set out the ways in which I would seek to continue and build upon Sir Mick's work. Change of leadership gives an opportunity for fresh direction and I believe I am the right person to take the JLC forward. I hope you will place your confidence in me.

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