



## Housing Scrutiny Committee

**Wednesday 6 February 2019 at 6.00 pm**

Boardrooms 3-5 - Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way,  
Wembley, HA9 0FJ

### Membership:

#### Members

Councillors:

Long (Chair)  
Maurice (Vice-Chair)  
Aden  
Ethapemi  
Hassan  
Johnson  
Kennelly  
Stephens

#### Substitute Members

Councillors:

Afzal, Conneely, Hector, Knight, Shahzad, Ketan Sheth  
and Thakkar

Councillors:

Colwill

#### Co-opted Members:

Karin Jaeger, Brent Tenants Representative

**For further information contact:** Nikoleta Nikolova, Governance Officer  
tel: 0208 937 1587, [Nikoleta.Nikolova@brent.gov.uk](mailto:Nikoleta.Nikolova@brent.gov.uk)

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**The press and public are welcome to attend this meeting**

## **Notes for Members - Declarations of Interest:**

If a Member is aware they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest\* in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent and must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If a Member is aware they have a Personal Interest\*\* in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent.

If the Personal Interest is also significant enough to affect your judgement of a public interest and either it affects a financial position or relates to a regulatory matter then after disclosing the interest to the meeting the Member must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item, except that they may first make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to the matter, provided that the public are allowed to attend the meeting for those purposes.

### **\*Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:**

- (a) **Employment, etc.** - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit gain.
- (b) **Sponsorship** - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect of expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of election; including from a trade union.
- (c) **Contracts** - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between the Councillors or their partner (or a body in which one has a beneficial interest) and the council.
- (d) **Land** - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.
- (e) **Licences**- Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.
- (f) **Corporate tenancies** - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which the Councillor or their partner have a beneficial interest.
- (g) **Securities** - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

### **\*\*Personal Interests:**

The business relates to or affects:

- (a) Anybody of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management, and:
  - To which you are appointed by the council;
  - which exercises functions of a public nature;
  - which is directed is to charitable purposes;
  - whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy (including a political party or trade union).
- (b) The interests a of a person from whom you have received gifts or hospitality of at least £50 as a member in the municipal year;

or

A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial position of:

- You yourself;
- a member of your family or your friend or any person with whom you have a close association or any person or body who is the subject of a registrable personal interest.

# Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Item	Page
<b>1 Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members</b>	
<b>2 Declarations of interests</b>	
Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting, the nature and existence of any relevant disclosable pecuniary, personal or prejudicial interests in the items on this agenda and to specify the item(s) to which they relate.	
<b>3 Minutes of the previous meeting</b>	1 - 8
To approve the attached minutes from the previous meeting on 29 November 2018 as a correct record.	
<b>4 Matters arising (if any)</b>	
To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.	
<b>5 Deputations (if any)</b>	
To hear any deputations received from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 67.	
<b>6 Petitions (if any)</b>	
To discuss any petitions from members of the public, in accordance with Standing Order 66.	
<b>7 Brent based Registered Providers (RP) delivery of social housing</b>	
<i>To follow</i>	
<b>8 Welfare Reform and Homelessness (including the Homelessness Reduction Act)</b>	9 - 20
The report provides information about the impact of Welfare Reform on housing services and homelessness in the borough, feedback on the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 as well as an overview of how challenges and outstanding risk have been managed.	

**9 Performance Update** 21 - 40

The report outlines the current performance for Brent Housing Management from April – December 2018 in key improvement areas for the service. Performance targets are presented alongside monitoring data, commentary and progress against the improvement plan work.

**10 Housing Complaints** 41 - 62

This version of the 2017/18 Complaints Annual report focuses on complaints performance in the Housing directorate, with an overview report on complaints performance in the Housing directorate provided in Appendix A and a summary of the root cause of complaints and improvement actions in the Housing Directorate in 2017/18 in Appendix B.

**11 Work Programme 2018/19** 63 - 78

**12 Forward Plan** 79 - 92

**13 Any other urgent business**

Notice of items to be raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Head of Executive and Member Services or his representative before the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 60.

**Date of the next meeting: Wednesday 27 March 2019**



Please remember to **SWITCH OFF** your mobile phone during the meeting.

- The meeting room is accessible by lift and seats will be provided for members of the public.



## MINUTES OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE Thursday 29 November 2018 at 6.00 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillor Long (Chair), Councillors Colwill, Aden, Ethapemi, Hassan, Kennelly, Stephens and Ms Michelle Lonergan (co-opted member).

**Also Present:** Councillors McLennan (Deputy Leader) and Wilhelmina Mitchell Murray

### 1. **Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Maurice (substituted by Councillor Colwill), Johnson, Ms Karin Jaeger (co-opted member) and Councillor Eleanor Southwood (Lead Member for Housing).

### 2. **Declarations of interests**

None.

### 3. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 September 2018 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

### 4. **Matters arising (if any)**

The following matters were raised:

- i. Housing report on estate cleaning contract options originally planned for November Cabinet deferred to January 2019 to allow officers to undertake further work on the report.
- ii. Information across all housing related areas, including that on private sector tenants on Council's housing webpage currently being reviewed. Overall website structure review also scheduled for spring/summer 2019.

### 5. **Deputations (if any)**

None.

### 6. **Petitions (if any)**

None.

### 7. **Progress on Housing Asset Management Strategy**

Sean Gallagher (Head of Housing Property Needs, Brent Council) presented a report which updated the committee on progress and next steps towards developing the Council's Housing Asset Management Strategy and sought

members' views on how it could be improved further. Members heard that an essential part of the draft strategy was the stock condition survey which was completed in the period between May and October 2018, surveying 100% of all external and 20% of internal arrangements.

Responding to members' questions on projections of demands and forward planning, Hakeem Osinaike (Operational Director Housing, Brent Council) explained that the strategy was aimed at building long term commitment including future opportunities over a period of time ranging from 1 to 30 years. As such, the existing conditions could be mechanically assessed via a formula to plan ahead in terms of financial arrangements. However, he reminded members that the strategy was a live document, updated on an annual basis but also influenced by changes to local demographics, political context and overall shape of stock. Therefore, a combination of accurate data and continuous clear steer from the executive was seen as essential in informing key decisions, maintaining assets and adequately projecting needs.

Members sought clarification on any plans the Housing Management Team had to improve estates, create a better living environment for residents and adequately manage expectations in terms of waiting lists/bidding system. In response, Mr Osinaike explained that the focus of the strategy was property maintenance, rather than building homes. A separate programme existed for new homes and addressing issues of long waiting lists for social housing. Referencing figures in the report, a question also arose on the potential of the strategy to expand beyond maintenance. Officers reiterated that the figures provided were for illustrative purposes only and stressed that further work was required before the strategy could be refined and considered representative of local context.

Responding to further questions on future planning and return of investments, Hakeem Osinaike explained that the Council's existing stock was worth significantly more than what it was originally built for – a price which was likely to increase in value with each subsequent investment made by the Council. Reminding members of the Council's primary aim to provide quality affordable accommodation for its residents, he added that the right to buy scheme was also being reviewed, with the possibility of lifting some of the existing restrictions.

The committee enquired on the South Kilburn Regeneration Project and in particular the duration of the projection which they felt had taken too long. Acknowledging members concerns, officers provided assurances that the Council was committed to alleviating existing issues on estates and deliver value for money accommodation, in consultation with its residents. Elaborating on the delay in the South Kilburn project, it was explained that this was a result of decision made to limit unnecessary relocation of residents and cause minimal disruption, while the new accommodation was being built.

Discussion moved on towards specific details of the strategy with the following points being raised:

- Due regard taken of implications of climate change and rise of temperatures and how this was factored in building of homes, with financial resources and assumptions factored in the design specifications. .
- Overall commitment by central government towards limiting number of non-electric cars and installing more electric car charging points. However, within

the context of Brent, a policy would need to be developed in order to understand the market and potential demand for it.

- Bike storage, particularly in old buildings, not included in strategy yet but would be considered
- Wider digital provision being explored, including extra broadband provision.
- Use of green products was being considered. However, understanding of existing stock as well as the longevity of the products themselves and relevant consultation were required prior to implementation. Furthermore, a balance had to be stricken between affordability and amount of returns within the context of the council strategy, alongside an appropriate timetable.
- Redundant garages had been surveyed with more details expected to emerge as part of ongoing consultation

Finally, in terms of future steps, the committee heard that these included a data validation to ensure robustness, a fire risk report expected by January 2019 and a preparation of a first draft of the strategy. Completion of the latter was planned for February 2019, following which it would be referred for consideration to Cabinet by April – May 2019.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- i. That an additional housing scrutiny meeting be convened to discuss the first draft of the asset management strategy report in early 2019 (date to be confirmed).
- ii. That Housing Management Team provides committee members with a progress update on South Kilburn Regeneration Project.

#### **8. Fire Safety of Low-Rise Domestic Properties**

Sean Gallagher (Head of Housing Management, Brent Council) presented the committee with a progress update on the fire safety recommendations in low rise properties provided by the Scrutiny Committee Task Group and confirmed that each recommendation set out in the report had been addressed, with progress made on some.

In the discussion which followed, the Chair stated that the original report request had in fact referred to fire safety across all properties and tenures. As such the level of detail required was not fully evidenced in the report, which focused solely on low-rise Council domestic properties. The Chair also noted her disappointment with the provided response to Recommendation 11 on improved communication on Fire Safety, stating that communication channels such as the Brent Magazine and social media could be better utilised, at a nil cost to the Council and registered providers. In assuring members that a full fire safety review of low rise domestic properties would be completed, Mr Osinaike drew members' attention to existing legislation and reminded them of the level of responsibility underpinning any fire safety advice issued by the Council. He stated that the Council was committed to learning from past experience such as Grenfell Tower and would consider adopting relevant good practices going forward.

Focusing specifically on the condition of the existing council stock in terms of fire safety, the committee heard that a programme was in place, with a fire risk assessment already completed in all high rise, specific low rise and in a limited

number of converted properties. Despite the intrusive nature of the programme and the subsequent cost implications, it was stated that alongside further maintenance work, the expectation was for all council properties to be fitted with fire doors by March 2020, starting with converted properties.

A question arose on the cost implications and eligibility arrangements for fire doors on private properties. In response, officers explained that for those type of properties the responsibility sat with the landlords themselves, with the Council only responsible for those private properties which fell under the licensing scheme, including all Houses of Multiple Occupancy. A process was also in place to force private landlords to carry out necessary fire safety measures or allow Council to do them on their behalf at a cost. Similarly, the committee heard that with leaseholders' properties, the full cost of the fire door installation would fall on the leaseholders themselves. The committee was informed however that a payment plan was available for those on lower incomes to ensure safety measures were not compromised, whilst also avoiding going into arrears. Finally, in terms of registered providers (RPs) it was stated that they were responsible for their own fire safety measures. While acknowledging members concerns on the potential repercussions of this, officers state that it was difficult to justify investing in resources into something that the Council had no powers to enforce.

In the subsequent discussion, members raised questions on some of the recommendations set out in the report as follows:

- **Recommendation 1:** Publication of fire risk assessments for all properties on an ongoing basis –officers advised that tenants and landlords could login and check the reports online for their specific properties. However, for data security the documents would not be fully available to the public. Copies of the FRAs would also be available via the Members Enquiries system for elected members. It was stated that the Council was also pursuing the idea for requiring FRA consultants to employ builders to provide estimates on the cost of works during inspections. A report was due in January with any actions required to be built into respective remedial programmes
- **Recommendation 2:** Amnesty from prosecution for landlords with unlicensed properties in wards where landlords licensing scheme is in force - it was stated that the initiative was widely publicised and number of people who had signed up to it had surpassed original estimates. Further details on the breakdown of uptake figures would also be provided following the committee meeting.
- **Recommendation 7:** - referencing the report, a query was raised on the high number of fire risk identified. In response it was stated that these were classed as FRA1 and considered low risk. A fires risk log had been maintained since 2016 and the Housing Management Team was actively engaged with building surveyors on all aspects of fire safety. Officers advised that FRAs were carried out routinely, every three years on both high and low rise properties, with another round due in 2019. It was stated that the Council had adopted a case by case approach and emphasised that fire safety was largely dependent on the specific configuration of the building, adding that compartmentalisation was seen a particular issues for high rise blocks.

- **Recommendation 8:** Provision of storage for bulky items for all property types and sizes – a query was raised on bike storage provision and whether that was incorporated in the fire safety programme. Officers advised that although a programme of bike sheds was in place, issues existed in terms of street and converted properties due to lack of available space. In terms of funding for this officers expressed willingness to explore possibility of utilising CIL money and liaise with colleagues from environment.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- i. That the contents of the Fire Safety of Low rise Domestic Properties report be noted

### **9. Housing Revenue Account Overview**

At the invitation of the Chair, Minesh Patel (Head of Finance, Brent Council) introduced the report which provided members with an overview of the housing revenue account (HRA) budget, focusing on specific aspects of the HRA such as ring-fenced funding, self-financing arrangements and impact on HRA as a result of the lifting of the borrowing cap.

*(7.40pm – Cllr Kennelly left the meeting)*

The meeting began with the committee questioning aspects of the HRA finances and funding. Members were advised that the approximate total overspend inclusive of admin charges and overheads used from the HRA was close to £2m, which covered some of the housing corporate elements. In terms of debt, he advised that the Council's actual debt was £142m, and following changes to legislation, each council was now responsible for managing its own debt based on a starting deposition. A query was also made on funding of the anti-social behaviour (ASB) team on which Mr Osinaike explained that, as part of council reorganisation and due to recognizing the borough wide scope of anti-social behaviour, it was decided to merge existing ASB teams into one and combine funding from HRA and General Fund.

Discussions moved on with the committee spotlighting on the lifting of the borrowing cap – a decision which was made in October 2018. It was noted that the extent to which the borrowing cap could be increased and the type of units to which it applied by were subject to appraisal of each scheme and assessment of repayment viability, with any properties built with HRA money kept within the scheme. Officers added that whilst considered a welcome change and a positive move in the right direction, guidance from central government had been limited with a lot of details around borrowing conditions yet to be clarified.

The committee also focused on the Right to Buy (RTB) scheme with members seeking further clarification on the impact of RTB receipts on HRA loan repayments as well as on the possibility of stopping RTB receipts to Registered Providers (RPs). In terms of loan repayments, the committee was informed that once a property was sold the Council could retain a proportion (up to 30%) of the sale value and use it to pay back some of its debt, with the other 70% having to be re-borrowed. Officers continued by saying that although with the lifting of the borrowing cap, it was expected local authorities would be able to borrow more, this

was not a universal solution and due regard should also be paid on individual circumstances including availability and cost of land.

The committee was further informed that a decision on whether or not to stop RTB receipts to RPs had not yet been made as the Council needed to consider the implications of the lifting of the borrowing cap in line with existing interest rate and amount of acquired debt. Officers added that giving a proportion of RTB receipts to RPs was being made on a case by case basis but always on the condition of 100% nominations. This in turn enabled the Council to determine who lived in those properties even if they were under its ownership. Members were informed that a designated team within the Council was in the process of reviewing the existing agreements to ensure compliance and maximisation of nomination opportunities.

Finally, referencing information in the report on net investment returns a question was raised on the possibility carrying further work towards highlighting the amount of savings that could be delivered as a result of lifting the borrowing cap. Welcoming the suggestion, officers advised that this was ultimately a political decision but they would be willing to investigate and report back at a later date.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. That the contents of the HRA Overview report be noted

**10. Allocations Policy Consultation (verbal update)**

Hakeem Osinaike (Operational Director, Housing) presented to the committee a verbal update on the allocations policy consultation, stating that the Council had received complaints from residents on having to relocate in order for the scheme to progress. The consultation was due to close in January 2019 and members were reassured that adequate actions had been taken to publicise it and ensure appropriate public engagement, including information on the website and sharing of views.

Responding to a question from the Chair regarding rehousing some of the residents, Mr Osinaike explained that discharge of duties within the private sector was not a straightforward process and there were various lengths of temporary accommodation tenancies to be considered. A further issue raised by the committee related to waiting lists for social housing and what criteria was applied. Officers advised that a common scenario was for residents to be offered a place even if they hadn't waited as long as someone else. This was a common issue across all regeneration areas but particularly pertinent for residents of the South Kilburn area.

In response to a question on whether the regeneration process could be better managed, officers explained that the SK regeneration had to be done on the basis of no double decanting, which resulted in a lengthier and more complicated process. However, they stressed that they were open to engage with residents and consider the view views/needs. A number of Tenants Associations forums also ran parallel with the consultation to ensure this was in place. It was noted that the Council had been very responsive and had listened to the needs of residents, particularly in informing them on decision making.

In terms of timescales, officers said that the consultation was due to end in February 2019, with a report to Cabinet in March 2019, with any new policy adopted likely to be implemented from April 2019 onwards.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. That the verbal update on Allocations Policy Consultation be noted

**11. Private Housing - HMO and Selective Licensing Fee Structure (verbal update)**

The Chair introduced an item which sought to inform the committee on a recently taken individual cabinet member decision on HMO<sup>1</sup> and selective licensing fee structure, in particular the anticipated impact on housing licensing applications.

Following several court rulings, Private Housing Services were now being asked to review the way selective licensing fees were collected and set up a two part payment - one at the point of the application and another upon confirmation of successful application. Hakeem Osinaike advised that within the context of Brent the required changes had been made and assured committee members that appropriate processes were in place to manage increased workload and mitigate any potential impact on income collection. Addressing members' concerns on unlicensed landlords in certain wards, officers stated that Housing Management was aware of the issues but noted that resolving these would be a resource heavy task, one on which no firm commitment could be made at this stage.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. That the verbal update on HMO and Selective Licensing fee structure be noted.

**12. Service Provision on Housing Estates: Members' Scrutiny Task Group**

The Committee heard a report on the service provision on housing estates carried out by the housing scrutiny task group, which sought members input on the enclosed scoping paper as well as approval of the terms of reference of the task group.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. That the terms of reference of the task group be approved, as set out in the report.

**13. Housing Scrutiny Cafe**

The Chair introduced the item which sought to update members on the recently held Housing Scrutiny Café.

Particular emphasis were placed on landlord licensing issues and inspections which were frequently raised by residents over the year. The committee heard that the licenses were valid for the duration of the licensing scheme, starting from when the

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<sup>1</sup> House in Multiple Occupation

application was first made. A backlog of applications from new five licensing areas was pending with assurance given from officers that this would be investigated and reported back to the committee at the next meeting.

Discussion continued with members emphasising the importance of proactive inspections. Hakeem Osinaike explained that number of inspections was related to cost but assured the committee there was willingness to do them, alongside unscheduled raids. Licensing application process included a set of questions landlords had to answer when submitting an application and if any of them were answered falsely, then the council had powers to prosecute. Overall effectiveness of this approach however was reliant to an extent on residents reporting issues to Council for further investigation.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. That the Housing Scrutiny Café report be noted
- ii. That information on backlog of licensing applications be shared with the committee.

**14. Work Programme 2018/19**

**RESOLVED:**

- i. That the contents of the Housing Scrutiny Work Programme 2018/19 be noted

**15. Forward Plan**

**RESOLVED:**

- i. That the contents of the Forward Plan be noted subject to clarification on items on contracts for lifts and Tenant Management Organisation reports from officers.

**16. Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm

COUNCILLOR JANICE LONG  
Chair

 <p><b>Brent</b></p>	<p><b>Housing Scrutiny Committee</b> 6 February 2019</p>
	<p><b>Report from the Strategic Director of Community Wellbeing</b></p>
<p><b>Welfare Reform and Homelessness</b></p>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Non-key
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	None
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer:</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Laurence Coaker, Head of Housing Needs <a href="mailto:Laurence.Coaker@brent.gov.uk">Laurence.Coaker@brent.gov.uk</a> 020 8937 2788

## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report provides information about the impact of Welfare Reform on housing services and homelessness in the borough. It also provides feedback on the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and provides an overview of how challenges have been managed as well as outstanding risk.

## 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the committee note the information provided on the impact of both Welfare Reform and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 on housing services and homelessness in the borough, and how the Council has worked in partnership with other agencies to deliver these changes.

## 3.0 Impact of Welfare Reform

- 3.1 Since 2010, the UK welfare system has experienced far-reaching changes and major welfare reforms have been introduced. These reforms have significantly impacted the housing market and homelessness in Brent, specifically the changes to Local Housing Allowance (LHA), the introduction of the Overall Benefit Cap (OBC), and most recently the replacement of six key benefits with Universal Credit (UC).

## Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

- 3.2 There are over 36,000 private renters in Brent who have to claim housing benefit in order to help cover the cost of their rent. Many of these households are working, but their income is not sufficient to afford the rents in the borough.

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is the name given to housing benefit for private renters. LHA rates are calculated based on local rents, and are capped at five different rates per area:

- Shared Accommodation rate
- One bedroom rate
- Two bedroom rate
- Three bedroom rate
- Four bedroom rate

The four bedroom rate is the maximum, even if a household requires more bedrooms. The maximum amount of housing benefit support a household can claim will depend on where they live, the minimum number of bedrooms they need and their income. If a person is younger than 35, single with no children, they are restricted to the shared accommodation rate of LHA, even if they live in a self-contained property. There are exemptions, for example, severely disabled people, care leavers under 22 years of age or those with a bedroom used by care workers providing overnight care.

- 3.3 LHA rates are set at the cost of renting a home in the bottom third of the private rental market. Since 2010 LHA have not risen in line with rising rents, and have been frozen since 2016 for four years. This means that they will remain frozen at the 2016 levels until 2020, regardless of how much private rents go up by in Brent.
- 3.4 Table 1 below illustrates the number of households living in the private rented sector in Brent, who claim housing benefit, and who face a shortfall between the actual cost of their rent, and the housing benefit support available.

*Table 1: Households who have to make a monthly contribution towards their rent.*

Contribution Bands	Number of HB Claims
£0 to £49.99	16065
£50 to £99.99	5323
£100 to £149.99	2278
£150 to £199.99	788
£200 to £249.99	307
£250 to £299.99	133
£300 to £349.99	46
£350 to £399.99	27
£400 to £449.99	10
£450 to £499.99	12
£500 to £1000	38
£1000+	16
No Contribution	11653

- 3.5 Due to the gap between the LHA rate and the Market Rate for private sector accommodation in Brent (see Table 2 below), the majority of private sector accommodation in Brent is unaffordable for households on low income or those dependent on benefits.

*Table 2 – LHA rates and Private Rented Sector Market Rates\* in Brent.*

Property Size	South Brent LHA Rates p/w	North Brent LHA Rates p/w	Market Rent* p/w
Shared Accommodation	£104	£90	£147
1 Bed	£268	£197	£293
2 Bed	£311	£250	£346
3 Bed	£365	£312	£426
4 Bed	£430	£386	£531

\*source - Valuation Office Agency

### **The Overall Benefit Cap (OBC)**

- 3.6 The Overall Benefit Cap (OBC) was first introduced nationally in 2013 and in Brent during August 2013 and refers to the maximum amount of specified Government welfare benefits that can be received by a household on a weekly basis unless they are exempt. It originally equated to £500 per week for working age couples and single parents and £350 per week for single persons. Where a household received more in weekly benefits than the cap permits, their Housing Benefit was reduced by the excess.
- 3.7 Since 7 November 2016 these limits had been reduced to £442.31 per week for working age couples and single parents and £296.35 per week for single persons resident in the London area. Unlike previously, there is now a separate lower Benefit Cap limit for residents of properties outside of the London area.
- 3.8 The cap is applicable to all working age benefit claimants unless they, their partner or any children that live with them, qualify for any of the following benefits:-
- Working tax credit
  - Attendance allowance
  - Disability living allowance
  - Personal independence payment
  - Employment and support allowance (support component)
  - Industrial injuries benefits
  - War widow or war widower's pension
- 3.9 In practice therefore, unless a person is exempt through disability, they can only avoid the cap through working sufficient hours to be eligible to receive Working Tax Credit. (16 hours per week for a lone parent; 24 hours per week for a couple; 30 hours per week for a single person.)

## Universal Credit (UC)

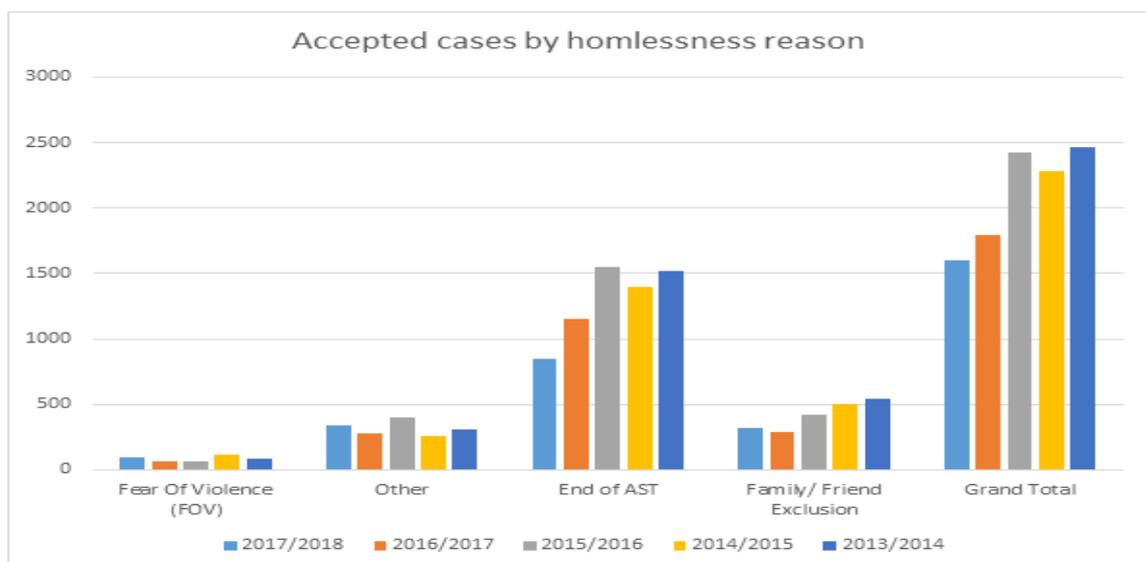
3.10 Universal Credit replaces a range of benefits and tax credits for working-age residents who are on low income. Universal Credit is administered by the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) and was rolled out in Brent on 21 November 2018 at Harlesden Job Centre, and on 5 December 2018 at Wembley Job Centre.

3.11 Universal Credit is a single monthly benefit payment which will eventually replace:

- Income Support
- Income related Job Seeker’s Allowance
- Income related Employment Support Allowance
- Housing Benefit
- Working Tax Credit/Child Tax Credit

3.12 A project team to ensure that the roll out of Universal Credit goes smoothly commenced work in September 2018. Representatives from all departments going to be affected by Universal Credit are represented and actions and relevant preparations completed to ensure the smooth delivery of the full service roll out.

3.13 Prior to the implementation of Local Housing Allowance and the Overall Benefit Cap, the main cause of homelessness in Brent was family/friends excluding a household. However the main cause of homelessness in Brent is now households being evicted from the private rented sector, through no fault of their own as landlords evict their tenants who claim Housing Benefit, as they are either exiting the rental market to sell their property, or want to charge a higher rent, significantly above the LHA rate.



#### 4.0 Community engagement and Welfare Reform Mitigation.

- 4.1 A Welfare Reform Mitigation strategy was developed in February 2016 via a coordinated cross-Council approach, and with external partners, to provide a joined-up response in response to the challenge of the reduced cap (and other welfare reforms, notably Universal Credit).
- 4.2 With regard to OBC, the strategy has specifically targeted vulnerable residents for assistance, including those residents in the following cohorts:
- Working With Families
  - Mental health
  - Substance abuse
  - Children with disabilities
  - Children with a child protection plan
  - Families in Temporary Accommodation or at risk of statutory homelessness
  - Claimants with learning difficulties or physical disabilities
- 4.3 General and specific advice is available to all claimants via a central information hub (on the Council's website) and in 2016/17 there was an associated publicity and engagement campaign across various media. An electronic Partner Toolkit is also located on the Council's website, with a Benefit calculator which provides claimants and caseworkers with a tool for calculating potential entitlement to welfare benefits (including Universal Credit), "better off" calculations and a household budgeting tool.
- 4.4 More specifically, those claimants vulnerable through Mental Health, Troubled Families and addiction issues etc. and / or likely to present a future statutory demand on the Council are prioritised for more dedicated support. The greatest impacts of the Cap also coincide broadly with the Council's priority neighbourhoods and officers have targeted support through place-based initiatives such as the Living Room and the Harlesden Hub.

#### Discretionary spending

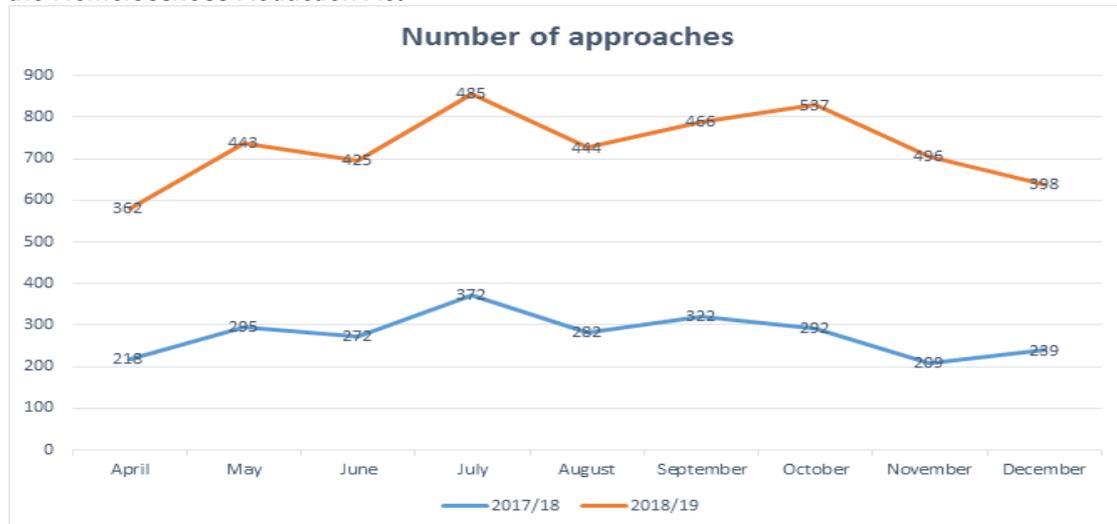
- 4.5 The Benefits Service administers two discretionary funds which are for the alleviation of hardship for benefit claimants, not exclusively aimed at those affected by welfare reforms, but heavily utilised by those claimants:
- The **Local Welfare Assistance (LWA) scheme** provides emergency payments to vulnerable residents in crisis situations or for large one-off costs (e.g. white goods).
  - The **Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)** fund has an annual government grant (which authorities may supplement with their own funds) to assist Benefit claimants (on HB or UC) who are experiencing hardship through housing-related costs. Payments may be one-off (e.g. costs associated with moving to a more affordable property) or ongoing

for prescribed periods (e.g. paying the shortfall in rent while the claimant undertakes a job brokerage course)

## 5.0 Impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

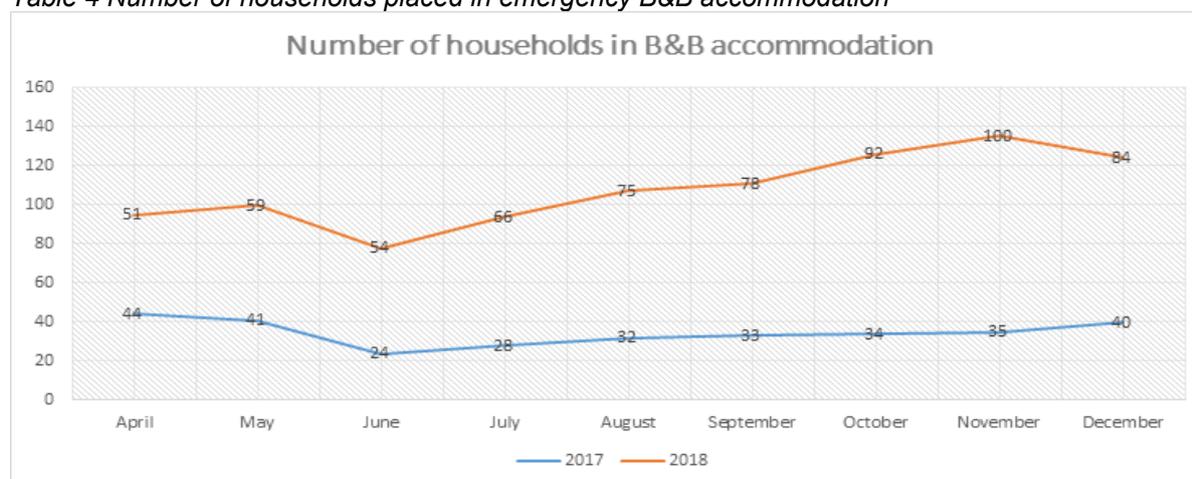
- 5.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (the Act) significantly reformed England’s homelessness legislation by placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. It also requires housing authorities to provide homelessness services to all those affected, irrespective of whether or not a service user has priority need or may be intentionally homeless, both as defined by the Housing Act 1996 Pt VII.
- 5.2 The introduction of the Act on 3 April 2018 has resulted in a 62% increase in the number of homelessness presentations received during the period of April to December 2018, compared to the same period in the previous financial year. The Act introduces a number of amendments to the existing legislation and imposes a statutory duty to prevent homelessness to all eligible households who are threatened with homelessness, irrespective of whether they meet the Priority Need test or not. This has had a significant impact on the number of approaches from single homeless households, many of whom are meeting the statutory threshold to be placed into suitable accommodation during the relief/assessment duty stage of their application.

Table 3: Increase in the number of approaches from households since the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act



- 5.3 The combination of an increase in demand and reduction in supply of affordable PRS accommodation to prevent homelessness or to end the main homelessness duty has resulted in an increased use of emergency bed and breakfast accommodation.
- 5.4 Since the implementation of the Act, the number of homelessness households being placed in B&B accommodation has more than doubled (an increase of 110%) for the period April to December 2018, compared to the same period in the previous financial year

Table 4 Number of households placed in emergency B&B accommodation



5.5 As stated above, some of this increase in demand is due to ongoing Welfare Reform. However, some households are accessing the service on the misunderstanding that the Act will result in an allocation of Social Housing, or at the very least, an allocation of accommodation in the Private Rented Sector. The Housing Needs Team are therefore working to prevent or relieve homelessness for a new cohort of households, who have historically not accessed the service.

## 6.0 Preparation for the Implementation of the Act

6.1 The Housing Needs service restructured in preparation for the implementation of the Act to create separate teams to deal with demand from families and single households. This is because single homeless people who approach the Council tend to have a degree of vulnerability, above and beyond the fact that they are homeless or threatened with homelessness. These vulnerabilities range from issues with mental health, drug and alcohol abuse or being ex-offenders. Dealing with single homeless households therefore requires a different, more tailored response than homeless families, the majority of whom are in housing need due to issues of affordability.

6.2 The SHPS (Single Homeless Prevention Service), a consortium of the voluntary sector organisations Thames Reach and Crisis, working in partnership with a social investor, Bridges Fund Management was also established. Referrals are made to SHPS from the Single Homeless Team, of households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, eligible for assistance, but who would not meet the vulnerability threshold in homelessness legislation. The SHPS team develop and agree a Personal Housing Plan with the household on how they will work together to prevent or relieve their homelessness. The SHPS team then receive payment for outcomes achieved.

## 7.0 Housing Related Support Budget (formally known as Supporting People)

- 7.1 The annual Housing Related Support (HRS) budget is £3.9M, and delivers 536 units of Supported Accommodation, 750 Generic Floating Support hours per week and 480 Older Persons Floating Support hours per week. A full break down of the services and budget is outlined in Table 5 below.

*Table 5 Current Provision of services provided by the HRS Budget*

Client Group	Number of accommodation based Units	Annual Budget
Mental Health	155	£998,670
Multiple Needs	229	£989,675.
LD/PD/SI	57	£369,999.
Young People DA/Women and Family	95 (19 DA, 19 Teenage Parents, 6 complex needs and 51 YP (includes 3 crash pads)	£432,592.
Generic Floating Support	NA	£637,541
Older Persons Floating Support	NA	£474,750
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>£3,903,228</b>

- 7.2 The Single Homeless Team make referrals to accommodation based support services and floating support services, of vulnerable homeless households who require additional support. SHPS also have access to make referrals to floating support services of homeless households who require additional support to help sustain a tenancy.
- 7.3 However there are issues with move on of households from supported accommodation, due to the lack of affordable accommodation that is available, resulting in these services becoming silted up. A review of HRS services commenced in September 2018 and is due to finish in April 2019, which will make recommendations about possible changes to service provision to address this issue.

## 8.0 Risks

- 8.1 The implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has led to both an increase in the number of households seeking the Council's assistance for housing and the length of time they spending in Temporary Accommodation (TA). This is a combination that is putting pressure on the use of TA and is likely to continue for the foreseeable future.
- 8.2 With demand from homeless households increasing, the pressure to secure suitable settled accommodation has also increased. The Council has been using the power under the Localism Act 2011 to end the main duty to homeless households with an offer of suitable accommodation in the private sector, called a Private Rented Sector Offer (PRSO). However, there is an insufficient supply of PRS accommodation that is affordable in Brent to meet this demand. Therefore, some accepted homeless households are still placed into TA.

## **9.0 Risk Management**

9.1 To mitigate the risk of increased demand from homeless households, the Housing Needs service manages demand through the effective use of homelessness prevention services, and works to increase the supply of affordable accommodation options that are available.

9.2 The service has developed a number of key initiatives to manage demand and increase affordable accommodation options including the following:

### **Find Your Home Scheme.**

Work with households at risk of homelessness to resolve their housing needs by securing alternative accommodation in the Private Rented Sector (PRS) before they actually become homeless.

### **SHPS**

Specialist team who work with single homeless and childless couples to agree a Personal Housing Plan on how they will work together to prevent or relieve their homelessness

### **Invest 4 Brent (i4B)**

A wholly owned investment company to acquire properties on the private market to let at the LHA rate.

9.3 Future initiatives planned to be implemented in 2019 include

### **Reasonable Rents**

Convert the status of HALS Temporary Accommodation properties when they are vacated by the existing tenant, and re-let to newly accepted homeless households as RP excluded tenancies (i.e. excluded from Local Housing Allowance limits) at higher “Reasonable Rents” by way of an offer of accommodation under the Council’s Allocations Scheme. This is subject to approval by the Cabinet following the outcome of the review of the Council’s Allocations Scheme. This will enable the RP to pay landlords a more attractive lease rent, which would allow the properties to be retained, and the portfolio to be expanded, with additional cost to the tenant.

### **Capital Letters**

The Cabinet agreed in October 2018 to join “Capital Letters”, a joint endeavour between a group of London boroughs to jointly procure affordable Private Rented Sector accommodation across London, delivering at least the same level or potentially more PRS accommodation. The aim is to reduce costs and increase the supply of accommodation to use for the prevention and relief of homelessness or to end a main homelessness duty.

### **Modular Housing**

The Council’s housing’s development team has met with modular build suppliers to discuss the merits of this construction type, as part of the Council’s ambitions to self-develop 1000 new homes, which has been backed by the GLA with £65m in Grant from the Mayors Building Homes for Londoners Programme. Modular housing could be used to provide a Council owned

hostel/TA in the short term, while the redevelopment of Knowles House takes place. IT could also be used to develop more settled accommodation.

## 10.0 Financial Implications

10.1 The current Single Homelessness Prevention Service (SHPS) is funded via a £0.9m grant from the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and £0.9m match funded by the Council. The grant conditions require the use of voluntary sector organisations to provide the service.

10.2 The overall costs of posts within the Housing department to comply with the new duties under the Act, as well as deal with the anticipated increase in

Section	of	Purpose	Amendment to Housing Act 1996
demand is estimated at £1.3m per annum. A number of these additional posts have been created on 12 month fixed term contracts, to allow a degree of flexibility to reduce staffing levels should demand reduce.			

10.3 The government has provided one off funding to local authorities to meet the 'new burdens' costs associated with the additional duties contained within the Act. Brent has been allocated on average £0.4m pa up to 2019/20. There has been no indication of this funding being extended after this point.

10.4 In addition, the council has been awarded £1.168m for 2017/18 and £0.832m as part of the package of support within the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (FHSG) to be utilised to support the prevention of Homelessness. As per the new burdens funding, there is no certainty of the funding continuing after 2018/19.

10.5 So in summary, in the short term, the current funding streams available to the council are sufficient to cope with the anticipated increase in demands. However, in the medium to long term the funding for these new duties is less certain. If the Council is not successful in preventing more households from becoming homeless, and meeting the demand for affordable housing from homeless households in the Private Rented Sector, then the use of Temporary Accommodation will grow. With no certainty of the future funding arrangements through the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (FHSG), this will lead to significant pressures on the General Fund.

## 11.0 Legal Implications

11.1 The legal implications regarding the introduction of the Overall Benefit Cap and Universal Credit and changes to the Local Housing Allowance are covered in the body of this report.

11.2 The main focus of the Housing Reduction Act 2017 ("the 2017 Act") is on 'prevention' and 'relief' of homelessness. In respect of non-vulnerable single persons, priority need is no longer the threshold. The s179 duty under the 2017 Act is to provide a more substantial advisory service. The Table below summarises the changes the Act makes to the Housing Act 1996.

<b>Homeless Reduction Act 2017</b>		
1	Extends definition of “threatened with homelessness” to 56 days	Amends existing s.175
2	Amends existing duty to provide advisory services	Substitutes a new s.179
3	Imposes a new duty to assess every eligible applicant’s case and agree a plan	Inserts a new s.189A
4	Amends existing duty in case of threatened with homelessness to take reasonable steps to help the applicant to secure that accommodation does not cease to be available.	Substitutes a new s.195.
5	Creates a new “relief” duty for anyone who is homeless and eligible and makes new referral provisions. Unless refer (local connection), must take reasonable steps to secure suitable accommodation becomes available for at least 6 months. Must have regard to s189A plan.	Inserts new s.189B and s.199A
6	Imposes new duties to help to secure accommodation	Inserts a new s.205(3)
7	Makes new provisions for failure to cooperate by an applicant for assistance	Inserts new ss193(A-C)
8	Makes new provision for local connection of a care leaver	Inserts a new s.199(8)-(11)
9	Extends existing statutory review duties	Amends s.202
10	Imposes a new duty on “public authorities” to refer cases to LHA	Inserts a new s.213B
11	Provides for a Code of Practice	Inserts a new s.214A
12	Further defines suitability of private rented accommodation sector	Amends Art. 3 of the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation)(England) Order 2012

11.3 The s189B relief duty ends for those eligible, homeless, in priority need and not intentionally homeless at the end of 56 days from when the authority is satisfied

that the appellant is homeless and eligible. Otherwise: when the authority secures accommodation for the Appellant for at least 6 months; the appellant refused an offer of accommodation; the appellant becomes intentionally homeless from s189B accommodation; the appellant is no longer eligible; the applicant withdraws his/her homelessness application; the applicant refuses a final Part 6 (Housing Act 1996) or final accommodation offer; the applicant deliberately and unreasonably fails to co-operate.

11.4 The s195 duty may be ended if: the applicant has suitable accommodation for at least 6 months; the authority has helped to secure accommodation and 56 days has elapsed since duty crystallised; the applicant becomes homeless; the applicant refused an offer of accommodation; the applicant becomes intentionally homeless from s195 accommodation; the applicant is no longer eligible; the applicant withdraws her application; the applicant deliberately and unreasonably fails to co-operate.

11.5 The range of s.202 statutory reviews has been extended to encompass reviews:

- of the steps the authority are to take in their personalised housing plan at the prevention duty
- to give notice to bring the prevention duty to an end
- of the steps the authority are to take in their personalised housing plan at the relief duty
- to give notice to bring the relief duty to an end
- to give notice under s.193B(2) in cases of deliberate and unreasonable refusal to co-operate.

## 12.0 Diversity Implications

12.1 The current legislation does not assist a substantial proportion of those seeking accommodation who are homeless. Currently the legislation owes a housing duty to those in priority need i.e. applicants with dependent children, applicants who are vulnerable as a result of medical/mental health issues, being in the armed forces, leaving institutional prison and who are elderly. The Homelessness Reduction Act excludes the priority need limitation to homeless applicants in relation to the relief and prevention duties as set out above and opens the prevention duty to all members of the public who are eligible and threatened with homelessness. It is therefore anticipated that this change will have a **positive or neutral impact** on service users across all age group, particularly the single working age homeless group.

**Report sign off:**

**Phil Porter**

Strategic Director of Community Wellbeing

	<p align="center"><b>Housing Scrutiny Committee</b> 6 February 2019</p>
	<p align="center"><b>Report from the Strategic Director of Community Wellbeing</b></p>
<p align="center"><b>Housing Management Performance (April – December 2018)</b></p>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Non-Key
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	None
<b>Background Papers:</b>	N/A
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	<p>Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director of Housing <a href="mailto:Hakeem.Osinaike@brent.gov.uk">Hakeem.Osinaike@brent.gov.uk</a> 0208 937 2023</p> <p>Troy Francis, Head of Customer Services <a href="mailto:Troy.Francis@brent.gov.uk">Troy.Francis@brent.gov.uk</a> 0208 937 2794</p> <p>Sean Gallagher, Head of Property Services <a href="mailto:Sean.Gallagher@brent.gov.uk">Sean.Gallagher@brent.gov.uk</a> 0208 937 1147</p>

## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report outlines the current performance for Brent Housing Management from April – December 2018 in key improvement areas for the service. Performance targets are presented alongside monitoring data, commentary and progress against the improvement plan work.

1.2 This report is also shared with the Housing Transformation Board which monitors the progress of the Housing Transformation Project implementing the CRM system for Housing Management.

**2.0 Recommendation(s)**

2.1 Housing Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the progress made on the Improvement Action Plans for Housing Management.

**3.0 Detail**

**CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**

**What are we trying to achieve?**

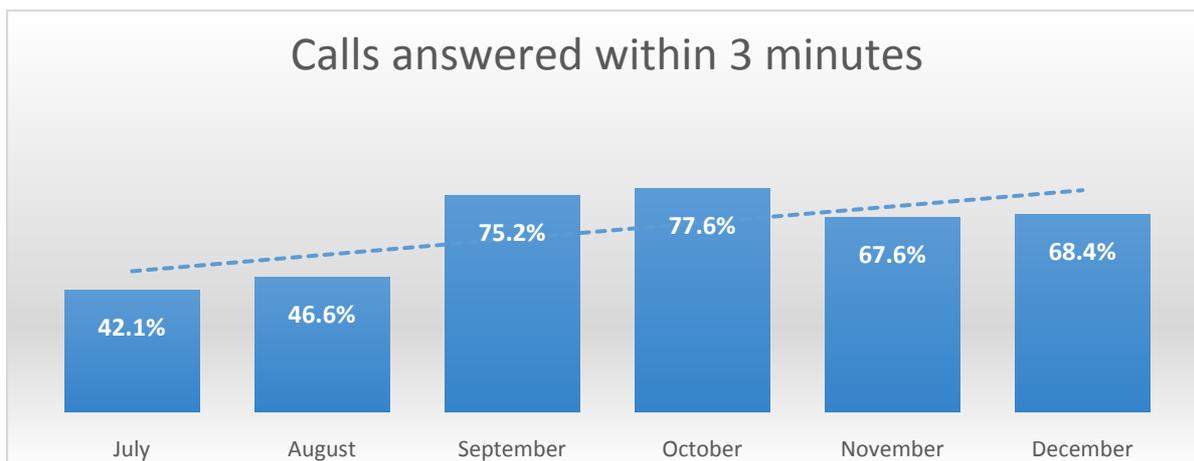
	<b>Target</b>	<b>By when</b>	<b>Benchmark Median</b>
To improve call handling response time	90% calls answered	March 2019	90%
To reduce wait time (3 minutes target derived from residents' feedback).	80% calls answered within 3 minutes	March 2019	N/A

**Are services improving?**

The chart below shows our calls answered performance year to date



The chart below shows our calls answered within 3 minutes from July December 2018



#### Commentary on current performance

Telephone response time is one of the two major areas customers have told us they are concerned about. Therefore we have set high targets for improvement in this area. Not only are we measuring call answering but also the length of time a customer will wait for a call to be answered. As part of the design work for the housing transformation programme residents told us that they felt a wait time of 3 minutes was reasonable. Based on this our target for 2018/19 is that 80% of all calls should be answered within that time.

The average wait time in Q3 was 2.38 minutes; an improvement from 5.44 minutes in Q2. This shows that although our performance was below target at peak times, the average length of time people had to wait to speak to a Customer Service Officer is reducing.

High performance in September and October in the service were due to a combination of fewer calls and a full complement of management and officers in the team. This has raised a question about whether the resource levels are aligned with customer demands. We will review this as part of our planned 6 month review of the new housing structure.

#### Improvement Plan

Project	Deadline	Status
Complete analysis of failure demands and put in place plan to reduce this	30 April 2019	On track
Develop initiatives to drive channel shifting agenda in lieu of the launch of the new Customer Portal	30 April 2019	On track

#### Progress / impact

The recruitment programme linked to the restructure has been completed, but contact centre resources remain an important factor. The contact centre is designed as a launching pad into other areas of the organisation which means there is a high rate of internal movements within the service. A recruitment campaign is underway to backfill these and apprentice roles, which is due to be completed at the end of January.

A number of IT solutions have been developed to help us quantify the sources of

demand on the contact centre, and to design out repeat contact resulting from known failure demand. These include the implementation of the CRM system across the contact centre, integration of the CRM system and telephony system (8x8) and the implementation of the new appointment system being delivered by Wates. These IT investments will ensure we're more responsive in dealing with service requests. It will also enable the Customer Service Officers to provide more wrap around service which will drive more a positive customer experience.

The failure demand analysis planned for March 2019. After which time we will have access to wrap up codes through CRM to provide us with a better understanding of the service issues driving avoidable contact.

The Housing Management website has been revamped and is due to go live in mid-February. The new platform will enable better access to online services and improve accessibility to basic information which will increase residents' ability to self-serve. The new customer portal is due to go-live in April and a promotional campaign is being scoped to increase take up. Enrolment to the customer portal will be a strategic performance indicator and will be reported through future KPI reports.

## COMPLAINT AND MEMBERS CASEWORK

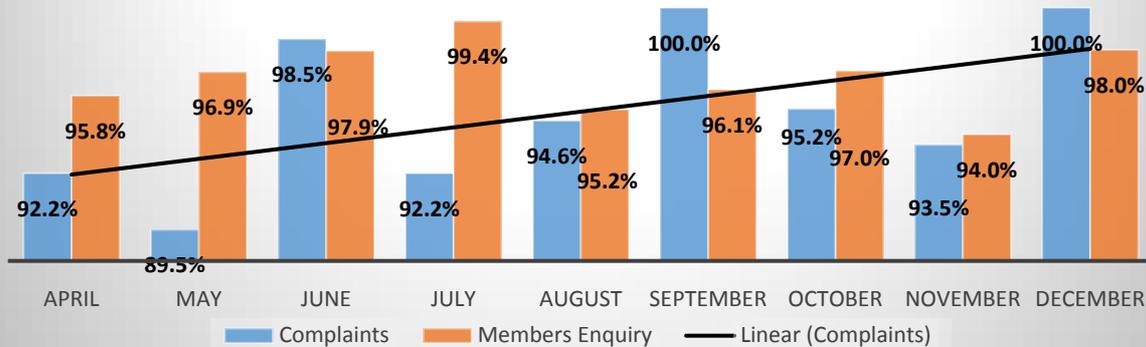
### What are we trying to achieve?

	Target	By when	Benchmark Median
To improve complaint and Members Enquiry response time	100% complaints responded to within 20 working days	March 2019	90%
	100% Members Enquiries responded to within 20 working days	March 2019	N/A
To reduce the number of stage 1 complaint escalating to stage 2	5% reduction in stage 1 complaint escalating to Stage 2	March 2019	N/A

### Are services improving?

The chart below shows the proportion of Complaint and Members casework responded to on time

## Complaint and Members Enquiry Performance April to December 2018



### Commentary on current performance

Performance has improved in Q3 for Complaints and Members Enquiries responses. Stage 1 complaint handling times have reduced from an average of 18.8 days in quarter 1 & 2 to 16.3 days in Q3 (excluding outliers mentioned below). We continue to provide challenge through the weekly complaint and members casework case conferences to improve case handling and responses.

A particular area of focus for the quarter has been getting a handle on property services complaints. A number of long term complaints have been closed by the team in October and November and the caseload administration is now being managed within the property services team. The average turn around for Property Services complaints responses in Q1 and Q2 was 19.4 days, excluding the long term outliers this has reduced to 16.3 days in Q3. The team are now working on improving quality of response and completing actions before sending response rather than making promises in response. This offers a more resolution focussed outcome for complainants. A number of improvement initiatives are also underway based on our learning from complaint over the past quarter. This includes developing a strengthened Access Procedure to accelerate how we are able to deal with leaks affecting residents living in blocks.

### Improvement Plan

Project	Deadline	Status
Establish weekly case conference to review complaint, Members enquiries casework and corrective actions	September 2018	Completed
Develop quality assurance regime to improve the quality of responses and reduce stage 2 escalations	30 November 2018	Completed

### Progress / impact

Heads of Service have carried out a root cause analysis alongside the Corporate Complaints Team, using the outputs to carry out local procedure and operational improvement. The Corporate Complaint performance report provides some examples of some of local improvement work currently underway in response to some of the learning from complaints over recent months.

Heads of Service have also carried out sample quality checks on an ad-hoc basis. This has been used to provide feedback and coaching to individuals where required. The Council is currently working with an external training organisation to provide some training on 'Customer Friendly Writing' this training will improve quality and consistency in way we communicate with customers, particularly in response to complaints.

In addition to this, the newly formed Performance, Insight and Improvement Service within CWB has formalised a process of targeted independent audits to gain a better understanding of the underlying drivers behind complaints so that these can continue to inform policy reviews and service improvement work, as well as ensuring that quality assurance is routinely undertaken.

## VOIDS AND LETTINGS

### What are we trying to achieve?

	Target	By when	Benchmark Median
Improve re-let time	Average re-let time for standard void – 24 days	May 2019	27 days
	Average re-let time for major void – 72 days	May 2019	N/A

### Are services improving?

The chart below show re-let time performance up to the end of December

### Average days taken to re-let minor voids



### Average days taken to re-let major voids



#### Commentary on current performance

Void turnaround target continues to improve with quarterly performance of 42 days for standards voids and 91 days for major voids. Voids is a key area of focus for BHM with high targets set for improvement as the impacts of an empty property are twofold for the business

1. We are not collecting rent on the property
2. We are not able to house a family in need and continue to pay rent on emergency accommodation solutions.

The property services team have been working closely with voids contractors to reduce the time in works and improve the overall void turnaround. The team have improved the works turnaround from an average of 34 days in April to 23 days in December for minor voids and an average of 57 days in April to 27 days in December for major voids.

## Improvement Plan

Project	Deadline	Status
Deliver the improvement contained within the Void Action plan	31 March 2019	On track
<b>Progress / impact</b>		
<p>The new Voids and Lettings Procedure was launched in October. This new procedure brought together input from the various operational teams involved in the process in a more streamlined way.</p> <p>A new void management process was recently launched through the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system platform. This will enable us to develop a more efficient way of managing the key activities associated with the void process. It will also enable us to improve management information to understand the areas of the process performing to optimum levels and those areas requiring further refinement through our continuous improvement programme.</p>		

## RESPONSIVE REPAIRS

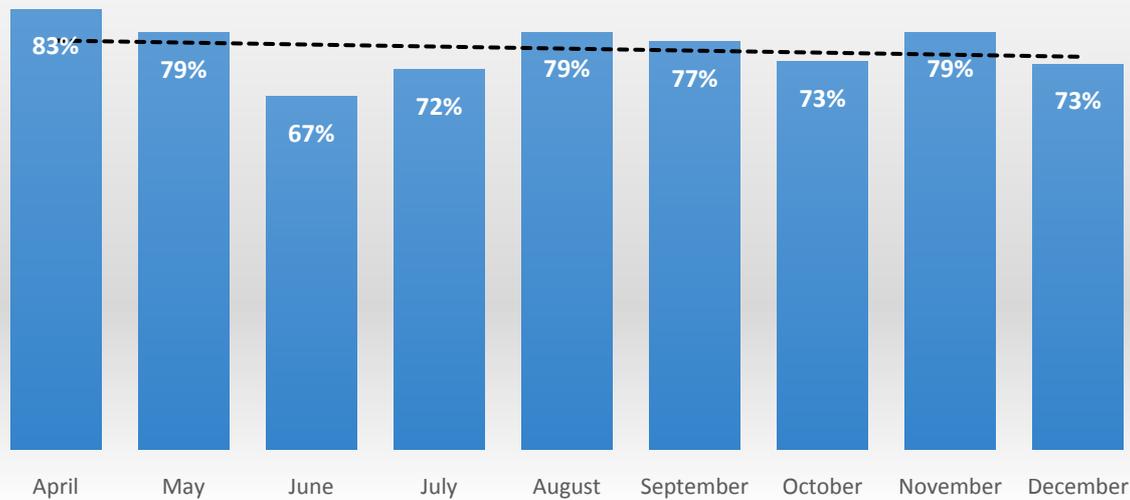
### What are we trying to achieve?

	Target	By when	Benchmark Median
Improve the responsive repairs service	82% of customers satisfied with the repairs service received	March 19	72%
	80% of routine repairs completed within 14 days	March 19	N/A

### Are services improving?

The chart below shows customer satisfaction levels with repairs based on weekly telephone surveys of customer who have recently had a repair completed.

## % customer satisfied with repairs service received



### Commentary on current performance

The median performance for repairs satisfaction gathered by text messaging using a single question surveys is 72% for similar housing organisations, top quartile performance is 78%. Repairs performance is the other major area of concern for our customers and accordingly we have set a target of 82% repairs satisfaction. We are currently achieving a cumulative figure of 75.6% and improvement of 5% on 2017/18 results of 71%.

We launched a comprehensive Service Improvement Plan process between October and November 2018 in conjunction with our service provider to establish greater insight into the reasons affecting performance and the implementation of a number of measures to achieve improvements to consistently meet the target of 82% satisfaction

The Improvement plan for raising satisfaction encompasses a number of Brent and supplier team actions under the umbrella of 5 key objectives;

1. Improving survey methodology to gain better insight
2. Dealing with “no access” issues that delay resolution of leaks
3. Managing multi-trades and follow on works
4. Diagnosing faults first time, and scheduling appointments
5. Improving clarity and application of service standards

### Improvement Plan

	Project	Deadline	Status
1	Improving survey methodology to gain better insight	July 2019	On track

**Progress / impact**

- The current survey collection process commissioned by BHP is restrictive and has low levels of returns, and doesn't give us the depth of insight we need to really understand the customer experience.
- Since December "Aftercare cards" are left at the end of all repairs to encourage feedback and resolve any outstanding issues prior to escalation.
- As part of the CRM initiative a customer satisfaction feedback module is being developed with draft prototypes currently in place. Customers will be able to feedback in more timely, comprehensive and proactive way through digital applications
- This involves a series of questions on the repairs service and opportunity for more comprehensive feedback.
- This will provide greater insight to our services, root causes and areas for continuous improvement.

2	Dealing with "no access" issues that delay resolution of leaks	Feb 2019	On track
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**Progress / impact**

No access and leaks is the single biggest cause of repairs complaint and one of the key issues affecting the opportunity to deliver repairs in a timely manner

The improvement plan is addressing

- Coordination from leasehold and tenancy teams
- Review and update access procedures and policy
- A more responsive & firmer approach
- Closer working with Wates

Progress has been made on actions with updated Access Policy and procedure to be agreed by 11 February 2019

3	Managing multi-trades and follow on works	Feb 2019	On track
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**Progress / impact**

Customers have noted that this is one of the key areas of dissatisfaction

Actions to be introduced in February include:

- Customers given an appointment or follow-on appointment at every touchpoint of the repairs process from initial call, surveyor visits and contractor visits.
- Wates are accountable for management of all resources to deliver all necessary works including continuous updating of customers.
- Wates to make follow up appointments themselves while in the property with customers
- Impact of these actions will be monitored at time of launch to track improvements.

4	Diagnosing faults first time, and scheduling appointments	April 2019	On target
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**Progress / impact**

In order to ensure appropriate diagnosis of repairs being raised 3 key actions have been implemented

- Service standards and timescales for "emergency" and repairs by

- appointment have been clarified with the Customer Experience Team.
- This was rolled out in December and has resulted in a 15% drop in emergencies, which has begun to free up resources to deliver repairs by appointment in more manageable timescales
- Through the CRM initiative – the introduction of diagnosis software systems to support Customer Experience Team in accurately diagnosing repairs – is due to be rolled out by end of April

5	Improving clarity and application of service standards	April 2019	On track
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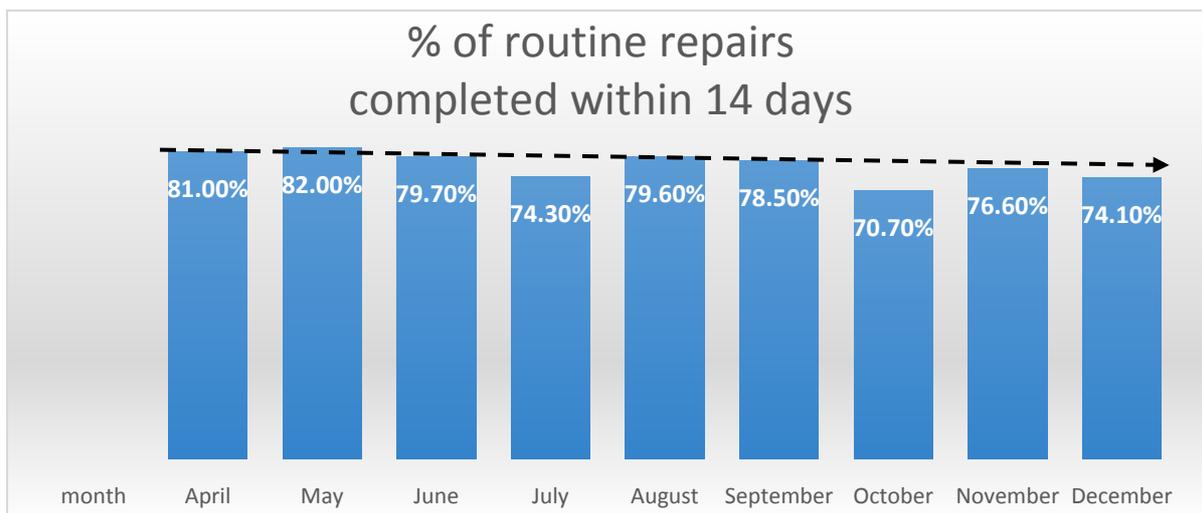
**Progress / impact**

Ambiguity and conflicts within service standards has identified the need to review and refresh our standards taking into account the Housing Promise, tenancy agreements and customer expectations and prevailing contract arrangements with service providers. This includes

- Brent responsibilities
- Customer responsibilities
- Timescales for works

Service standards have been reviewed and drafts produced for consideration. The Housing Promise will be updated by April so that repairs service standards are clear and are applied consistently.

The chart below shows the percentage of routine repairs jobs completed within 14 days. This excludes emergency and communal repairs.



## Commentary on current performance

From April 2018 onwards, in agreement with Wates, we have reduced the target turnaround time for routine repairs from the contractual 28 days, to 14 days to improve the service customers receive.

The 2018/19 target is to deliver 80% of routine repairs within 14 days. The target will be reviewed, and increased during 2019/20.

Q3 and Q4 are seasonally the periods of higher demand on the service and performance has been lower accordingly. Overall we are behind target cumulatively at 76%, action being taken to open up appointment times and diagnosis activities will help us reach this target in the coming months.

## Improvement Plan

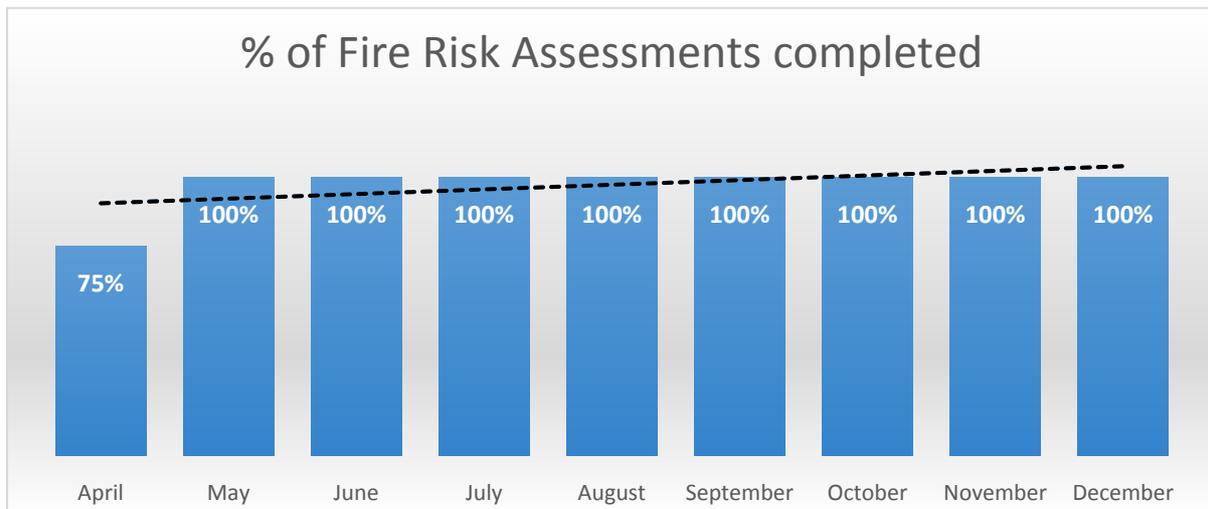
Project	Deadline	Status
Reduce emergency repairs to 10% and free up resources to deliver repairs with 14 days	March 2019	On track
<b>Progress / impact</b>		
<p>Emergency repairs are being reduced (from highs of 38% of repairs raised) by improved call management and diagnosis to free up appropriate trade resources to undertake repairs by appointment.</p> <p>Wates have committed to increasing the number of appointment slots per week to 450, which will allow appointments to be given no earlier than 2 but no later than 4 days after the telephone call.</p> <p>This is being supported by Wates who are rolling out a new operations management software system which will be available to Brent and will offer a transparent view of all activities within the repairs operation.</p>		

## COMPLIANCE

### What are we trying to achieve?

	Target	By when
Satisfy statutory landlord duties	100% of properties with valid gas safety certificate	continuous
	100% of high rise blocks with valid Fire Risk Assessment in line with cyclical re-inspection	continuous

## Are services improving?



### Commentary on current performance

After addressing some short-falls with out of date Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) at the start of the year, these were quickly actioned and from May onwards we have 100% compliance. Each FRA is up to date and available for all blocks. Remedial action on these FRAs are also tracking at 100% completion.

In addition FRA-4 surveys have been undertaken in all blocks over 12 storeys high.

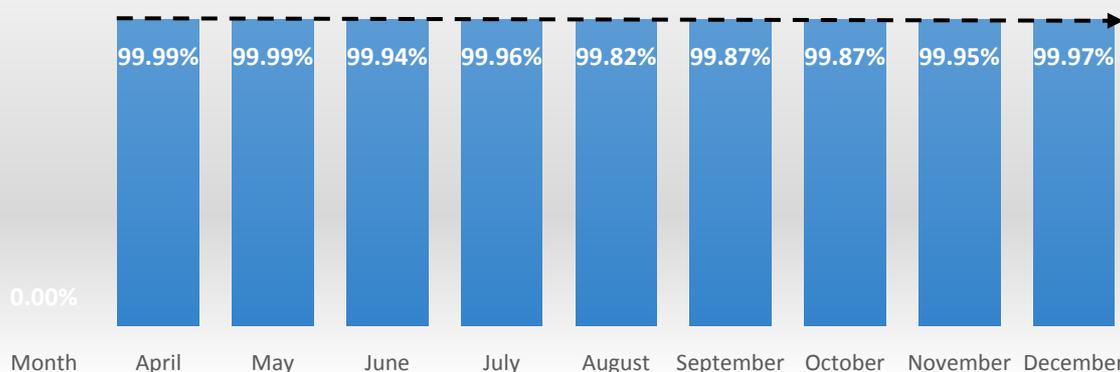
### Improvement Plan

Project	Deadline	Status
Migration of existing spreadsheet and operating records to CRM	July 2019	On track

**Progress / impact**

Property Services teams continue to operate existing systems to ensure compliance and operational management. They are working closely with the CRM project team to capture requirements for migration to forthcoming CRM systems in mid- 2019 onwards.

## % of properties with a valid gas safety certificate



### Commentary on current performance

We consistently maintain valid gas certificates on all stock where gas supplies are present. The very limited exceptions occur where legal action is being carried out to gain access.

In December we had two properties requiring a gas certificate renewal. In these two exceptions access intervention measures have taken place with Warrant to Enter Premises court orders being granted.

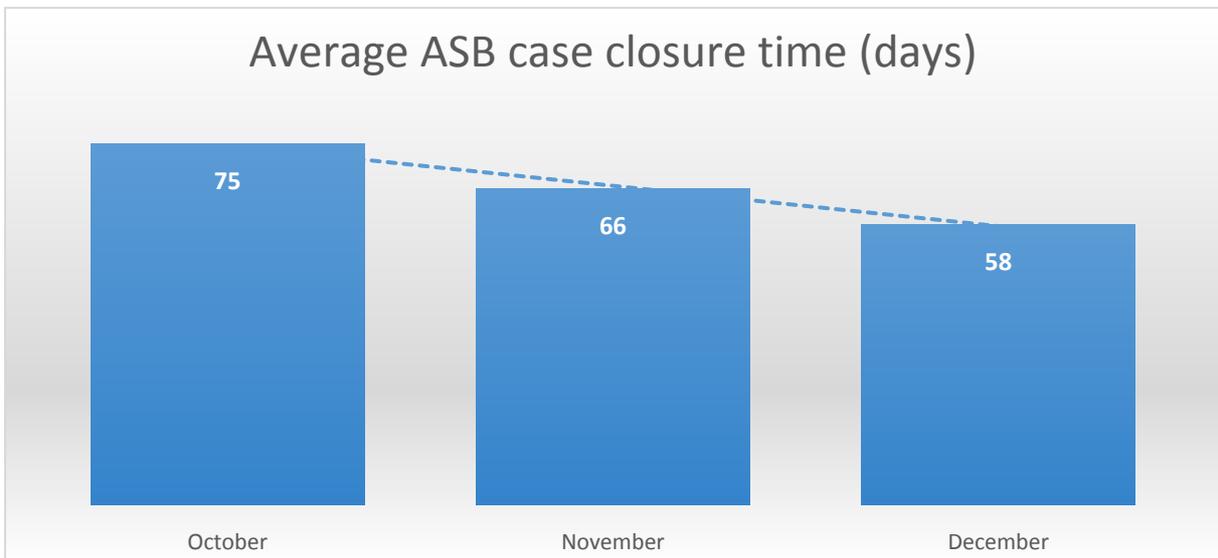
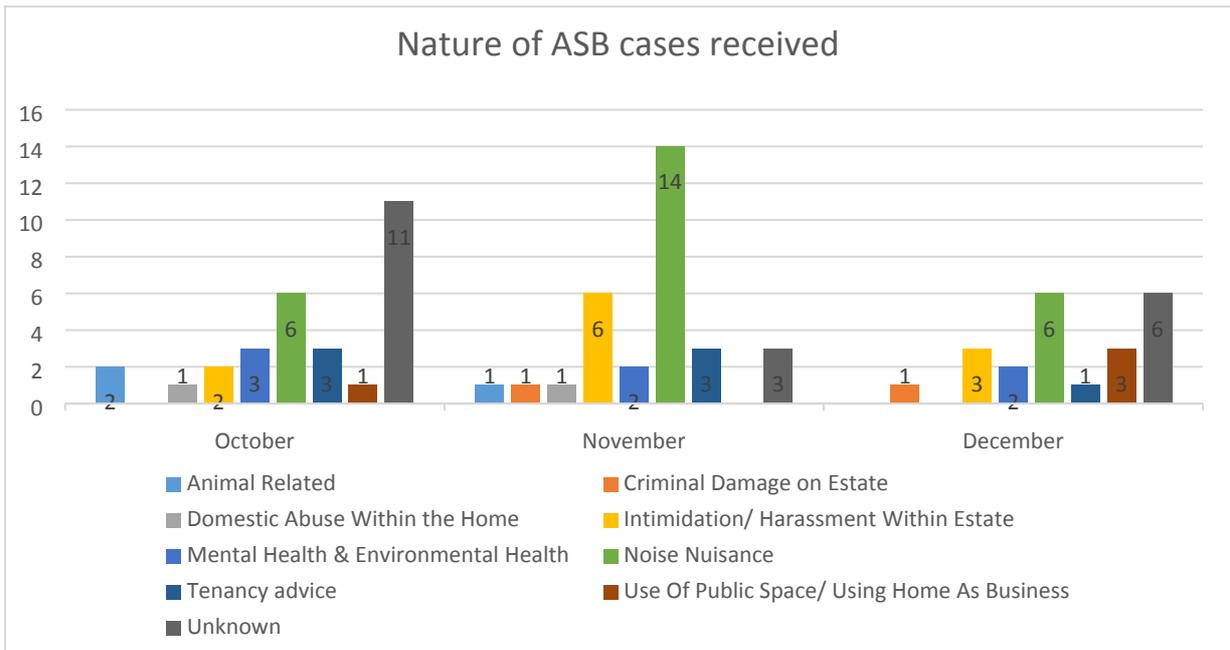
### Improvement Plan

Project	Deadline	Status
Migration of existing compliance database and operating records to CRM	July 2019	On track
<b>Progress / impact</b>		
Property Services teams continue to operate existing software data-base systems to ensure compliance and operational management. They are working closely with the CRM project team to capture requirements for migration to forthcoming CRM systems in mid- 2019 onwards.		

## TENANCY AND ESTATE

### What are we trying to achieve?

	Target	By when	Benchmark Median
Improve estate standard	80% estate meeting a 'excellent or good rating	June 2019	N/A
Improve satisfaction with ASB	61% ASB complainants satisfied with how the Council handle their ASB complaint	June 2019	82%



#### Commentary on current performance

23 ASB complaints were reported over the last month. The highest ASB complaint type continues to be noise nuisance, followed by Intimidation/ Harassment within the estate. A large proportion of the cases received were from the Kilburn Brent Connect area and the Homes and Communities Team are working with the Community Safety Team (support and enforcement practitioners across the borough) to identify key hotspots and tactical initiatives to address these ASB issues.

The average time to close a case in the last three months is 68.7 days against an SLA of 90 days, with the timeframe reducing month on month as the Housing Officers become more comfortable with the case management procedures. Further management information is being developed in the Power BI reporting system.

We have introduced a new estate inspection solution that went live in December. 85 estate inspections have been completed under this new system to date and we are currently refining our management reporting to provide our assessments against defined standards.

### Improvement Plan

Project	Deadline	Status
Deliver the ASB action plan	May 2019	On track
Complete the review of the estate cleaning service	31 October 2019	On track

### Progress / impact

A new ASB case management system was rolled over the last few months which has improved our operational processes and management information associated with our ASB case activities.

The Homes and Communities team are working on a number of initiatives alongside the council Community Safety Team, these include:

- The service has engaged Ealing Mediation Services to support on non-legal interventions to ASB issues. The team had a bite sized training session with the service on 15 January and are now able to make referrals where required.
- Working closely with the Noise Abatement service team in Environmental Services to support on the noise nuisance complaints.
- Developing a quality check template to be used across the services to ensure consistency in response and approach.
- Preparing for the launch of the Online Watch Link (OWL) which is a revamped neighbourhood watch initiative. This launches for Brent Council alongside the revamped website offer for BHM and Community Safety Team in February.

Cabinet agreed the proposal to bring the estate cleaning service back in house. A programme of activities is now being established as part of the mobilisation of the new service. The new cleansing service will go live on 15 September 2019. The initiatives include:

- Completing a resident engagement plan to ensure residents are in the driving seat to shape the specification and standards of the new service.
- Recently started a roll out of the Power Apps tech solution to enable improved monitoring of estate cleaning standards. This includes Wettons cleaning operatives taking before and after photos in the app to evidence the service.
- Continue to work on the Wettons joint improvement plan which addresses fundamental issues with operative activities to ensure that the service is addressed until the end of the contract.

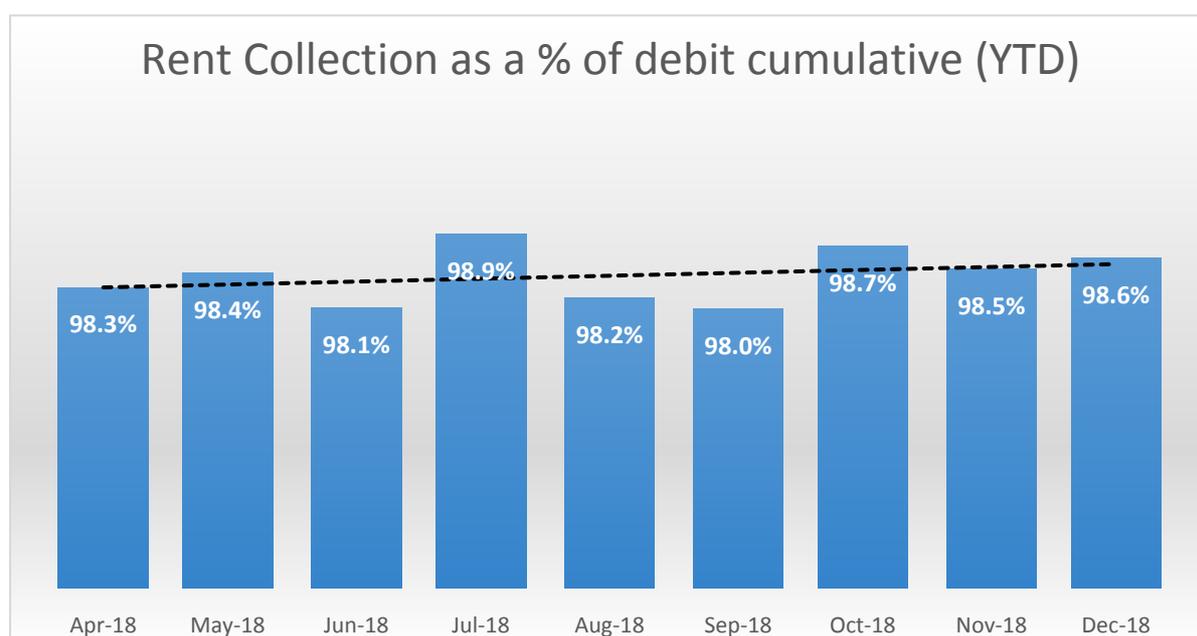
## INCOME AND SUSTAINMENT

### What are we trying to achieve?

	Target	By when	Benchmark Median
Increase rental income collection	99.5% rent collected	31 March 2019	99.64%

### Are services improving?

The chart below shows the rent collected as a percentage of rent due on all social housing homes managed by the Council.



### Commentary on current performance

Performance for Q3 was 99.7% an improvement from 98.1% in Q1 and 98.0% in Q2. Year to date performance is 98.6%, 1% off target. Q4 is historically the best quarter for rent collections with 99.75% collected in 2017/18 and 100.1% in 2016/17.

The team are currently targeting arrears collections by making evening calls to engage residents who don't always get access to during core hours. These will enable us to discuss rent arrears and provide support where required.

The SMART income collection feature of CRM went live for the income team on 21 January which prompts officers to make early interventions based on arrears risk factors. For example officers now received data on Direct Debit payments that bounce in real time, they can then get in touch with the resident and make a positive intervention in a timely manner.

There are currently 193 tenants enrolled on Universal Credit a high proportion of which are in arrears based on the payment cycle. The lead time for the first UC payment is between 5-6 weeks on average. We've developed a robust monitoring process to ensure we're able to mitigate the risk associated with this cohort of tenants. We're also making application for Alternative Payment Arrangements (APA) for tenants deemed as vulnerable together with those who owe more eight weeks arrears.

### Improvement Plan

Project	Deadline	Status
Develop a Housing Income Collection Strategy	30 November 2018	Completed
Deliver the action plan specific to the roll out of the Universal Credit change	30 September 2019	On track

### Progress / impact

An Income Collection Strategy has been established to support the Council maximizing the level of rental income received from residents living in Council homes, whilst also keeping our resident debts to a minimum. Brent Housing Management aims to provide a high performing, efficient and effective income management service. The strategy has already started delivering a number of improvements including:

- Launch of the new income collection case management system through our new customers relationship management technology.
- Review of the income management procedure to incorporate some of the considerations linked to Universal Credit
- Deliver welfare benefit training to core income collection staff
- Straightening the sign up process to embed the rent payment culture
- Trialing an initiative to change behavior towards rent payments, using different communication style

A number of operational processes has been put in place to help embed the introduction of the Universal Credit across the Council Housing stock. This include revising our rent collection arrears procedure, strengthening the sign up procedure to reinforce rent payment culture and nudging residents to sign up to direct debit. Brent Housing Management has been given 'Trusted Partner' status by the DWP, which enable access to the landlord portal to fast track the verification process and application for alternative payment agreements

The Financial Inclusion Team continues to provide support to residents who need it, basic debt advice and/or signposting to the other agencies including CAB and other financial advice organisation. The Council has renewed its commitment to funding the Employment and Skills scheme to assist residents get back into work.

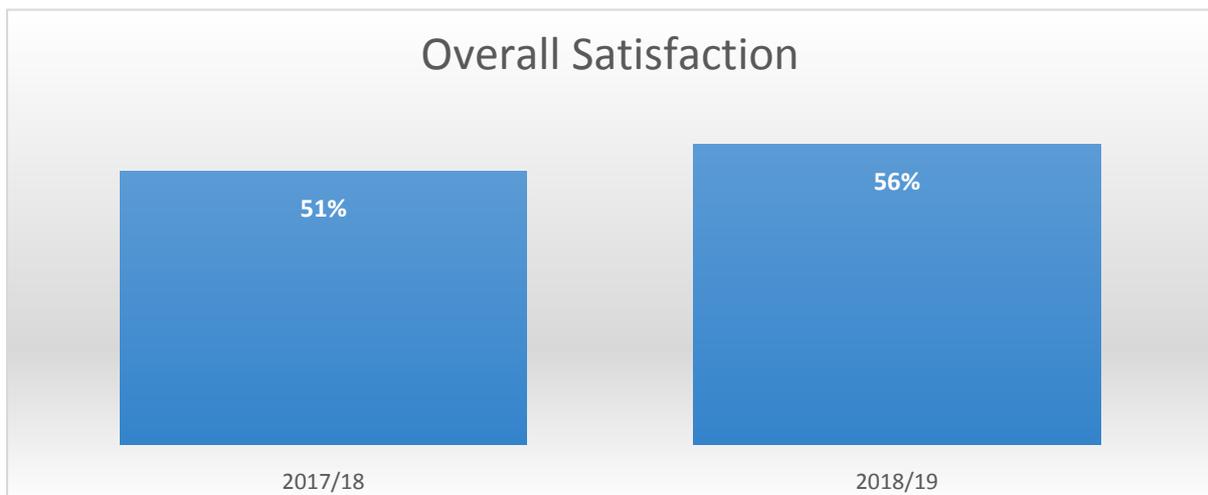
## OVERALL SATISFACTION

### What are we trying to achieve?

	Target	By when	Benchmark Median
Improve overall satisfaction with landlord services	65%	September 2019	75%

### Are services improving?

The chart below relates to overall satisfaction result for the past two years



### Commentary on current performance

We are using a nationally benchmarked “Survey of Tenants and Residents” (STAR) format to measure perception of the service. Two annual surveys have been carried out by BMG Research Ltd an independent survey company.

The results show that overall satisfaction has improved by 5% since the ALMO has come in house. The main factors of improvement were:

- Satisfaction with the cleaning of internal cleaning – 68% (10% up on last year)
- Satisfaction with quality of home - 65% (3% up on last year)
- Satisfaction with VFM (rent) - 76% (1% up on last year)
- Satisfaction at with VFM (service charge) - 54% (3% up on last year)
- Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance - 56% (4% up on last year)
- Satisfaction with neighbourhood - 73% (2% up on last year)

It is known that overall satisfaction as a measure is slow to change, and can be driven by perception of a service, rather than experience. As a result we are in the process of reviewing the methodology by which we carry out the STAR survey, and are looking to supplement this with a suite of measures that will capture satisfaction with individual transactions, such as us carrying out a repair, managing an anti-social behaviour case, or letting a property, to give us richer,

more useable insight in real-time that can be used to drive service improvement.

### Improvement Plan

	Project	Deadline	Status
	Develop action plan arising from the STAR customer satisfaction survey results	April 2019	On track

### Progress / impact

The new Housing Promise sets out clearly the service standards our customers can expect from us. These standards if delivered consistently will create the right experience for our customers. Our performance management framework has been aligned to enable to track progress against the standards and to react to ensure areas requiring improvement.

Analysis tells us that the key driver behind overall satisfaction is communication, which is being addressed through a wide variety of changes delivered by the Transformation Programme, and through design of the customer portal which will improve access to real time information.

 <b>Brent</b>	<b>Housing Scrutiny Committee</b> 6 February 2019
	<b>Report from the Director of Performance, Policy &amp; Partnerships</b>
<b>Complaints Annual Report 2017 – 2018</b>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Key
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appendix A – Overview of Complaints Performance in the Housing directorate</li> <li>Appendix B – 2017/18 Complaints Root Cause Summary &amp; Improvement Actions (Housing Directorate)</li> </ul>
<b>Background Papers:</b>	N/A
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Peter Gadsdon, Director - Performance, Policy and Partnerships <a href="mailto:Peter.Gadsdon@brent.gov.uk">Peter.Gadsdon@brent.gov.uk</a> Tel. 0208 937 1400  Irene Bremang, Head of Performance & Improvement <a href="mailto:Irene.Bremang@brent.gov.uk">Irene.Bremang@brent.gov.uk</a> Tel. 0208 937 1822

## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The 2017/18 Complaints Annual Report was presented to Cabinet on 10 December 2018 and will also be presented to the Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee in January 2019 and Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee in February 2019.
- 1.2 This version of the 2017/18 Complaints Annual report focuses on complaints performance in the Housing directorate.

- 1.3 An overview report on complaints performance in the Housing directorate is provided in **Appendix A**. The supplement covers the period from April 2017 to March 2018 and comparative data going back to 2015/16 has been provided where available.
- 1.4 A summary of the root cause of complaints and improvement actions in the Housing Directorate in 2017/18 is provided in **Appendix B**.
- 1.5 Examples of compliments received for the Housing Directorate have been supplied in **Appendix A**.

## **2.0 Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 Housing Scrutiny Committee is asked to note that Cabinet approved the 2017-18 Complaint Annual Report which included the progress update on the Improvement Action Plan. The Action Plan was developed from the eight recommendations in the 2016-17 Complaints Annual Report.
- 2.2 Housing Scrutiny Committee is asked to note and consider the Housing directorate performance in managing and resolving complaints and to advise Cabinet of any further remedial action required.

## **3.0 Detail**

### ***Council's Complaint Framework***

- 3.1 The Council operates a 2-stage corporate complaints process, 2-part Adult statutory complaints process and a 3-stage Children's statutory complaints process. The stages and timescales for handling both corporate and statutory complaints is set out in Appendix A.

### ***Complaint Performance – Key Headlines***

- 3.2 The Housing directorate comprises the following services: Housing Management Services (HMS) formerly known as Brent Housing Partnership (BHP); Housing Needs; Private Housing Services (PHS) and Housing Partnerships. The Housing Partnerships directorate only receives one or two complaints a year, so the key headlines from the rest of the directorate's complaints performance in 2017/18 are detailed below:

#### ***Brent Housing Partnership (BHP)/ Housing Management Service (HMS)***

- 3.3 The Housing Management Service is split over two core functions, Housing Management Customer Service and Housing Management Property Service. Both service areas manage high volumes of operational activities generated by customers and as part of the Council general landlord function. In particular, the responsive repairs service deals with over 30,000 repairs each year, which makes up approximately 70% of demands from our customers. The Council is dependent on a number of contractors to fulfil its landlord obligations and has established partnership arrangements in place to ensure core service standards are delivered. There are a number of improvement initiatives underway as part of the large-scale improvement programme across the service.

- 3.4 The key headlines from the BHP/HMS service' corporate complaints performance in 2017/18 were as follows:
- The volume of BHP/HMS Stage 1 and Stage 2 corporate cases has increased since 2015/16 (↑)
  - 1 in 7 corporate cases was escalated to Stage 2 (↑)
  - The top three complaint themes were Customer care/service delivery, repairs/building services and communication.
  - The number of Housing Ombudsman cases received by the Council has been increasing but the percentage of cases upheld has decreased over the past 3 years. (↓)
  - Stage 1 and Stage 2 upheld/partly upheld rate has increased over the past 3 years (↑)
  - The number of cases awarded compensation has decreased over the past 3 years. (↓)
  - The timeliness of Stage 1 corporate complaints has improved since 2015/16 (↑)

### Housing Needs

- 3.5 The Housing Needs Service is responsible for securing suitable accommodation for homeless households. Due to the lack of supply of affordable accommodation, both social housing and in the private rented sector, the service is dependent on using "Temporary Accommodation", including emergency bed and breakfast properties to house homeless households. This type of accommodation generates a large proportion of complaints, often related to households having to live in properties with shared facilities. There was a significant increase in upheld/partly upheld complaints in 2017/18 at Stage 2, mainly caused by officers not dealing with all concerns raised at stage 1.
- 3.6 The key headlines from the Housing Needs service' corporate complaints performance in 2017/18 were as follows:
- The volume of Stage 1 complaints has decreased by 28% or 54 cases since 2015/16. This is also reflected in the decrease in escalation of Stage 2 complaints in 2017/18 (↓)
  - 1 in 5 cases was escalated to Stage 2 in 2017/18 (↑)
  - The top three complaint themes were communication, temporary accommodation/bed and breakfast and assessments
  - One third of upheld decisions made by the LGO were from the Housing Needs service (↑)
  - The rate of cases upheld/partly upheld has increased with 41% upheld/partly upheld in 2017/18 at Stage 2 (↑)
  - The total amount of compensation awarded tripled from 2015/16 to 2017/18 (↑)
  - Housing Needs have maintained a high standard of timeliness in completing casework with 98% of Stage 1 complaints completed on time in 2017/18 (↑)

## Private Housing Services (PHS)

- 3.7 PHS predominantly has two key functions, one being regulating and enforcing standards within the private rented sector (PRS) and the other assisting disabled and vulnerable residents by facilitating and providing aids, adaptations and repairs in their homes. In the past year PHS has received in the region of 4,500 PRS property licence applications, over 800 request for service from PRS tenants who believe they need repairs to their homes and in the region of 1,000 referrals or requests for service for aids, adaptations and/or repairs. In many cases, and in particular with regards to aids and adaptations, the issues that customers have are of a very complex nature and these are very often borne out in their complaints.
- 3.8 The key headlines from the PHS service' complaints performance in 2017/18 are as follows:
- The overall number of Stage 1 complaints is very low (less than 2% of all Brent cases in 2017/18) (✓)
  - The escalation rate to Stage 2 is high with 1 in 3 cases escalated in 2017/18 (↑)
  - The top two complaint themes were PHS Grants (50%) and PHS Enforcement (50%)
  - There were 21 LGO cases upheld in 2017/18, only 2 of these were from PHS (↓)
  - The rate of Stage 2 cases upheld/partly upheld within PHS were minimal in 2017/18 with only 14% upheld/partly upheld (↓)
  - The total amount of compensation for 2017/18 amounted to £1,020 for 3 cases. This equals to an average of £340 per case, which compared to the previous year (2016/17) is a decrease of £582 per case (↓)
  - The performance figures for PHS in 2017/18 have improved from the previous year by 16% points with 92% of cases in Stage 1 completed on time (↑)

### ***Improvements Resulting from Complaint Investigations***

- 3.9 Service-specific improvements resulting from the learning from complaints for Housing directorate have been highlighted in Appendix B.
- 3.10 Cabinet agreed 8 recommendations in the 2016/17 Annual Complaints report which was developed into an action plan by the Complaints Service team. A progress update is provided below on the 8 recommendations

<b>Recommendation/Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>
1. Work with Service area and departmental management teams to review key service delay/failure hotspots and develop improvement plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quarterly hotspots report introduced and discussed with the Corporate Management Team (CMT), departmental management teams (DMTs) and shared with senior managers</li><li>• The Complaints Service team have focussed on supporting HMS with improving service delivery based on identified complaints hotspots.</li></ul>

Recommendation/Action	Progress
<p>2. Develop a tailored training plan on communication and staff behaviours to be implemented for priority service areas across the Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hotspots analysis showed that HMS had received a significant amount of complaints regarding communication and staff behaviours. Other areas across the Council had low levels of this type of complaints.</li> <li>HMS have introduced a number of measures to address staff and communication issues including: further analysis of customer care complaints to identify and address patterns; the rollout of Mary Guber customer service and feedback on learning points given to individuals and teams.</li> <li>Other service areas have discussed the learning points from complaints with staff members and team meetings.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Support new Housing Management Service during the redesign of the repairs process in order to feed in the lessons learned from complaints.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Redesign of repairs process was part of the wider Housing Transformation Programme.</li> <li>The Complaints Service team have also provided training and guidance to HMS staff and managers on effective complaints handling.</li> <li><b>Action closed</b></li> </ul>
<p>4. Review LGO referrals and identify any future opportunities for early resolution and to help minimise premature LGO referrals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Complaints Service team proactively works with complainants to minimise complaints being escalated to the Council's final review stage and to the Ombudsman stage. However, there are cases where the complainant chooses to bypass the Council's complaints process and lodges a complaint directly with the Ombudsman.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Review our internal approach to complaint decisions, corrective actions and compensation in light of LGO outcomes in 2016/17</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All LGO upheld cases were reviewed by the Complaints Service team to identify learning points and service areas put in place the appropriate remedial actions.</li> </ul>
<p>6. Continue to improve internal processes and working arrangements with service managers to increase the timeliness of Stage 2 responses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly open case tracker sent to staff and managers and reminders sent by the Chief Executive and Complaints Service team to maintain the focus on timescales.</li> </ul>
<p>7. Work closely with the Housing Management Service management team to establish a new and effective complaints process and implement improved working arrangements to manage Stage 2 complaints.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complaints Service team has been working closely with the HMS senior management team and staff to introduce improved complaints handling processes within the directorate. Regular feedback is provided on live issues and practical solutions agreed.</li> </ul>

Recommendation/Action	Progress
<p>8. Implement a weekly Corrective Actions Tracker for all departments to monitor the timely completion of agreed remedial actions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corrective Actions Tracker sent to relevant staff twice a month. Although completion of corrective actions has improved to some extent, this still needs ongoing attention to ensure that we can keep our promises as a council and follow through on remedial actions completely and in a timely manner.</li> </ul>

#### 4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Instead, the details provided on compensation payments reflect the monetary impact of not getting things right first time as an organisation and the need to improve the customer experience and therefore minimise the financial penalties incurred by the Council.

#### 5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 Complaints concerning the Adult Social Care and Children and Young People departments come under separate statutory complaint procedures. It is a legal requirement to produce annual reports for these areas and these documents were included in the appendices to the main Cabinet Report.

#### 6.0 Equality Implications

6.1 None

#### 7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

7.1 None

#### 8.0 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

8.1 None

**Report sign off:**

**PETER GADSDON**

Director of Performance, Policy & Partnerships

## APPENDIX A – OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE IN THE HOUSING DIRECTORATE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This supplementary report provides a summary of corporate complaints performance in Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) and Housing Management Services (HMS) as a joint entity, Housing Needs and Private Housing Services (PHS) within Brent Council in 2017/18. The report covers the period from April 2017 to March 2018 and comparative data going back to 2015/16 has been provided where available. Commentary on wider council complaints performance is also provided for context.
- 1.2 The Housing Partnerships service receive very few complaints each year, therefore they have not been represented in the data tables within this appendix. Where appropriate commentary has been added to give a perspective of the numbers.

### 2. BRENT COUNCIL’S COMPLAINT FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 The Council operates a 2-stage corporate complaints process, 2-part Adult statutory complaints process and a 3-stage Children’s statutory complaints process.

Complaint Type	Stages	Timescales (Written Response)
<b>Corporate</b>	2 stages + Ombudsman	Stage 1 - 20 working days Stage 2 - 30 working days
<b>Adults (Statutory)</b>	1 stage (provision/final stage) + Ombudsman	Stage 1 - 20 working days (extension up to 6 months in complex cases)
<b>Children (Statutory)</b>	3 stages + Ombudsman	Stage 1 - 10 working days (extension to 20 working days in complex cases)  Stage 2 - 25 days (extension to 65 working days in complex cases)  Stage 3 - 45 working days
<b>Service Requests</b>	N/A	10 working days

- 2.2 Initial acknowledgements should be sent within 5 working days for all of the complaint types shown above, with the exception of Stage 3 Children Statutory complaints where acknowledgements should be sent within 2 working days.
- 2.3 Service areas are responsible for the management and resolution of all corporate and statutory Stage 1 complaints. The corporate Complaints Service team manages final review/Stage 2 corporate complaints on behalf of the Chief Executive. Children’s statutory complaints are reviewed by an independent investigator and independent person at Stage 2 and by an independent panel at Stage 3.
- 2.4 The outcome of a complaint is decided in one of these ways:
- **“Upheld”** – this is where the Council has accepted responsibility for the matter arising. The complaint response will offer an apology, clarify what happened

and the remedy to the problem. We will also identify actions to prevent this from happening again.

- **“Partially Upheld”** – this is where the Council accepts some responsibility for part of the complaint. We will send a complaint response as above also highlighting our reason for not accepting the whole complaint.
- **“Not Upheld”** – this means the investigation into the complaint has not found the Council at fault. The complaint response will explain our reasons for this decision.

### 3. DATA CAVEATS

- 3.1 The data in this report has been produced from the iCasework complaints system and reflects the information captured on the system by council officers. The quality and consistency of the data has improved over the years and system changes have been made to improve the quality of management information. For example, the broad root cause categories were revised during 2016. The ‘Other’ category was removed and the ‘Disagreement with Policy’ category was added to help improve the high level analysis of the root causes of complaints. The service-specific categories of complaints have been updated on an ongoing basis to provide a more granular understanding of the root cause of complaints. This more detailed analysis of the root cause of complaints has been provided in Appendix B for the Housing directorate.
- 3.2 Complaints data for 2017/18 is based on the current departmental/service area structure. The composition of the Housing directorate expanded when the new Housing Management Service (HMS) was brought in-house in October 2017. All Brent Housing Partnership (BHP)/HMS complaint cases in the transitional 2017/18 year and previous years has been collectively reported.
- 3.3 PHS receive a low number of complaints so it should be noted that small changes in numbers can show as large percentages and should be considered in context with other data provided in the report.

### 4. HOUSING DIRECTORATE – COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE

- 4.1 This section of the report sets out the Housing directorate complaints performance for 2017/18 and the previous 2 years where available.
- 4.2 Complaints performance for the Council and for Housing directorate have been analysed and reported across four broad aspects – complaint volumes, nature of complaints, outcomes and timeliness. Appendix B also includes detailed root cause analysis improvements from complaints.

## Volume of Complaints

### Stage 1 & Stage 2 - Corporate Complaint Volumes

4.3 The tables below show the volume of new Stage 1 and Stage 2 Corporate complaints received.

- **All Brent**
  - Over the past 3 years, Stage 1 corporate complaints have fallen by 14% and Stage 2 complaints have fluctuated between 187 and 197 cases.
  - In 2017/18, 1 in 7 cases were escalated to Stage 2 across Brent.
- **BHP/HMS**
  - The volume of BHP/HMS Stage 1 corporate cases compared to the rest of Brent is quite high. BHP/HMS account for over 40% of corporate complaints received.
  - Stage 1 complaints have increased significantly since 2015/16, Stage 2 case volumes have also followed the same pattern of increase. The increase in first stage complaints is mainly due to improved logging of all casework in HMS.
  - In 2017/18, 1 in 6 BHP/HMS corporate cases were escalated to Stage 2.
- **Housing Needs**
  - The overall number of Stage 1 complaints received accounts for less than 10% of all Brent cases in 2017/18.
  - The volume of Stage 1 complaints has decreased by 28% or 54 cases since 2015/16.
  - 1 in 4 cases were escalated to Stage 2 in 2017/18.
- **PHS**
  - The overall number of Stage 1 complaints is very low (less than 2% of all Brent cases in 2017/18).
  - The volume of Stage 1 complaints has remained low.
  - Stage 1 complaints have fluctuated between 24 and 26 cases over the past 3 years.
  - The volume of Stage 2 complaints has remained low, with less than 10 cases per year.
- **Housing Partnership**
  - There was only one Stage 1 corporate complaint received in 2015/16 and one Stage 1 corporate complaint received in 2016/17 for Housing Partnership. There were no Stage 1 complaints received in 2017/18.
  - There were two Stage 2 complaints received in 2017/18, one of which was escalated from the previous year and another that bypassed Stage 1.

Stage 1 – Corporate Complaints Received				
Year	All Brent	BHP/HMS	Housing Needs	PHS
2015 - 2016	1,696	451	191	24
2016 - 2017	1,521	618	128	38
2017 - 2018	1,475	605	137	26

Housing partnership received two Stage 1 cases, one in 2015/16 and one in 2016/17.

Stage 2 – Corporate Complaints Received				
Year	All Brent	BHP/HMS	Housing Needs	PHS
2015 - 2016	187	51	35	3
2016 - 2017	213	79	21	9
2017 - 2018	197	91	28	8

Housing Partnership received two Stage 2 complaints in 2017/18.

### Nature of Complaints

- 4.4 The broad root cause categories are sometimes used interchangeably by staff (e.g. Service Failure and Communication) and only provides us with a limited understanding of complaint themes. Service-specific root causes of complaints gives us a better understanding of complaint themes.
- 4.5 Appendix B lists the root cause of complaints in the Housing directorate and also includes the improvement actions taken to address complaint themes.
- 4.6 The table below summarises the top 3 service-specific complaint themes in 2017/18:

Top 3 Complaint Themes in 2017/18			
All Brent	BHP/HMS	Housing Needs	PHS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer care (17%)</li> <li>• Repairs (8%)</li> <li>• Parking enforcement (6%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer care/service delivery (39%)</li> <li>• Repairs/building services (23%)</li> <li>• Communication (17%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication (24%)</li> <li>• Temporary Accommodation/ Bed and Breakfast (16%)</li> <li>• Assessments (15%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHS Grants (50%)</li> <li>• PHS Enforcement (50%)</li> </ul>

### Complaint Outcomes

#### Stage 1 & Stage 2 - Corporate Complaint Outcomes

- 4.7 The tables below show the proportion of corporate complaints upheld/partly upheld at the first and second stage:
- *All Brent*
    - Over the past 3 years the volume of new cases has decreased, however the proportion of cases upheld/partly upheld has increased at the first stage to 50%.
    - The upheld/partly upheld rate has gradually decreased to 40% at the second stage in 2017/18.

- **BHP/HMS**
  - The volume of BHP/HMS corporate Stage 1 complaints upheld/partly upheld has increased significantly over the past 3 years, a rise of 27% points since 2015/16.
  - The Stage 2 upheld/partly upheld cases have increased at a slower rate, however it still remains high when compared to the rate across Brent with 66% of cases upheld/partly upheld in 2017/18.
- **Housing Needs**
  - The volume of Stage 1 complaints have remained almost the same when comparing 2015/16 to 2017/18.
  - The rate of cases upheld/partly upheld has increased with 41% upheld/partly upheld in 2017/18 at Stage 2.
- **PHS**
  - The volume of Stage 1 complaints in 2017/18 has decreased by 14% from the previous year.
  - 2015/16 saw a 100% upheld/partly upheld rate, however this was based on a total of 2 cases.
  - The rate of Stage 2 cases upheld/partly upheld within PHS were minimal in 2017/18 with only 14% upheld/partly upheld.
- **Housing Partnership**
  - Over the 3 year period, only two Stage 1 cases were received, both cases were not upheld.
  - There were two Stage 2 cases received in 2017/18. None of these cases were upheld/partly upheld.

<b>Stage 1 – Corporate Complaint Outcomes - % Upheld/Partially Upheld</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>All Brent</b>	<b>BHP/HMS</b>	<b>Housing Needs</b>	<b>PHS</b>
<b>2015 - 2016</b>	40%	53%	35%	29%
<b>2016 - 2017</b>	54%	71%	21%	39%
<b>2017 - 2018</b>	50%	80%	37%	25%

Housing partnership received two Stage 1 cases over the 3 year period, none of which were upheld/partly upheld.

<b>Stage 2 – Corporate Complaints Outcomes - % Upheld/Partially Upheld</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>All Brent</b>	<b>BHP/HMS</b>	<b>Housing Needs</b>	<b>PHS</b>
<b>2015 - 2016</b>	43%	49%	21%	100%
<b>2016 - 2017</b>	38%	63%	44%	13%
<b>2017 - 2018</b>	40%	66%	41%	14%

Housing Partnership received two Stage 2 complaints in 2017/18. Both of these cases were not upheld.

### Housing Ombudsman – Decisions

- 4.8 The Housing Ombudsman (HO) does not provide annual reports and data in the same way the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) does. The data provided in the table below on HO cases is taken from the information recorded on Brent’s iCasework system. It should also be noted that the HO has been clearing a backlog of cases and therefore there has been an increase in the number of cases decided during 2017/18.
- 4.9 Brent Council figures on Housing Ombudsman cases below do not include Housing Needs and PHS as those cases are investigated separately by the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 4.10 The table below shows the number of Housing Ombudsman (HO) cases upheld against Brent Council (we do not have data available on the number of cases referred yearly to the HO).

The increase in the number of cases upheld against Brent from 4 cases in 2015/16 to 8 cases in 2017/18 reflects the increased number of cases investigated by the HO.

<b>Housing Ombudsman Decisions</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Closed after initial enquiries</b>	<b>Not Upheld</b>	<b>Upheld/Partly Upheld</b>
<b>2015 - 2016</b>	1	3	4
<b>2016 - 2017</b>	1	4	7
<b>2017 - 2018</b>	4	8	8

### Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) – Number of Referrals

- 4.11 The table below shows the number of referrals made to the LGO about Brent Council and how many of these were categorised as “Housing Services” by the LGO.

<b>Number of referrals made to the LGO</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Brent Council</b>	<b>Housing Services</b>
<b>2015 - 2016</b>	195	43
<b>2016 - 2017</b>	168	49
<b>2017 - 2018</b>	162	49

## LGO – Upheld Cases

- 4.12 The table below shows the number of LGO cases upheld against Brent Council:
- 4.13 The number of cases upheld by the LGO against Brent Council in the past 3 years has decreased, however the cases upheld against Housing Services has remained more or less the same.

<b>LGO Upheld Cases</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Brent Council</b>	<b>Housing Services</b>
<b>2015 - 2016</b>	26	8
<b>2016 - 2017</b>	17	8
<b>2017 - 2018</b>	21	9

- 4.14 The 21 cases upheld against Brent Council in 2017/18 were in the following services:
- Housing (Housing Needs) – 7
  - Housing (Private Housing Services) - 2
  - Adult Care Services – 5
  - Benefits & Council Tax – 3
  - Concessionary Travel – 2
  - Education & Children Services – 2
- 4.15 In most of these upheld cases the complainant or their family member was a vulnerable person and the LGO prescribed specific remedies according to individual needs. Additionally the LGO recommended reviews or reconsiderations of our policies, practices and communication/interactions with (vulnerable) service users.
- 4.16 In Housing Services, the 9 upheld cases concerned the suitability of temporary accommodation and assessment of eligibility. The LGO awarded compensation totalling £9.3k in 5 out of the 9 upheld cases. Significant compensation payments of nearly £6k and £2k awarded in two of these cases reflect the seriousness of the impact on the health and lives of the families placed in temporary accommodation.
- 4.17 The table below shows compensation paid at all stages including Ombudsmen cases for corporate cases:
- **All Brent**
    - Just over £73k was awarded in 135 cases in 2017/18. The average amount of compensation awarded was £546 per case.
  - **BHP/HMS**
    - There was a spike in the number of cases awarded compensation in 2016/17, but in 2017/18 the amount of compensation payments and cases were lower than the 2015/16 levels.
    - In 2017/18, compensation averaged £461 per case (lower than the Brent average)
  - **Housing Needs**
    - The number of cases that received compensation has increased over the past 3 years.
    - The total amount of compensation awarded tripled from 2015/16 to 2017/18.
    - In 2017/18 the average compensation awarded per case equated to £1,107.

- *PHS*
  - PHS had very few cases that were awarded compensation.
  - In 2017/18 there were 3 cases awarded compensation which totalled £1,020 and an average of £340 per case.
- *Housing Partnership*
  - In 2017/18 Housing Partnership offered £50 of compensation in one case that involved a Housing association.

<b>Compensation – No. of Cases &amp; Total Awarded</b>					
<b>Year</b>		<b>All Brent</b>	<b>BHP/HMS</b>	<b>Housing Needs</b>	<b>PHS</b>
<b>2015/16</b>	Cases	170	75	15	4
	Total (£)	<b>£62,765</b>	<b>£27,809</b>	<b>£7,800</b>	<b>£526</b>
<b>2016/17</b>	Cases	204	117	9	2
	Total (£)	<b>£77,602</b>	<b>£42,248</b>	<b>£5,460</b>	<b>£1,845</b>
<b>2017/18</b>	Cases	135	58	19	3
	Total (£)	<b>£73,794</b>	<b>£26,777</b>	<b>£21,035</b>	<b>£1,020</b>

Housing Partnership received one case in 2017/18 of which £50 of compensation was awarded.

### ***Timeliness of Complaints***

#### Stage 1 & Stage 2 – Timeliness of Corporate Complaints

- 4.18 The table below shows the percentage of corporate complaints closed on time at the first and second stage:
- *All Brent*
    - The timeliness of All Brent Stage 1 corporate complaints has significantly improved over the past 3 years. The timeliness of Stage 2 complaints has remained consistent over the 3 year period. 90% of Stage 1 cases and 81% of Stage 2 cases were completed on time in 2017/18.
  - *BHP/HMS*
    - In 2017/18 BHP/HMS completed 83% of their cases on time. This is a slight improvement from 2015/16.
    - 2016/17 figures were over reported therefore cannot be used for comparison.
  - *Housing Needs*
    - Housing Needs have significantly improved timeliness performance over the past 3 years. Housing Needs have maintained a high standard of timeliness in completing casework with 98% of Stage 1 complaints completed on time in 2017/18. The timeliness of Stage 2 complaints has remained consistent over the past 3 years with 73% of Stage 2 complaints completed on time.
  - *PHS*
    - The performance figures for PHS in 2017/18 has improved from the previous year by 16% points with 92% of cases in Stage 1 completed on time.
    - There were 8 Stage 2 cases for PHS in 2017/18 with 75% of cases completed on time.

- **Housing Partnership**
  - There were two Stage 1 cases and two Stage 2 cases received in Housing Partnership over the 3 year period. All of the cases received were completed on time.

<b>Stage 1 – Corporate Complaint Timeliness (%)</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>All Brent</b>	<b>BHP/HMS</b>	<b>Housing Needs</b>	<b>PHS</b>
<b>2015 - 2016</b>	88%	82%	95%	88%
<b>2016 - 2017</b>	95%	99%	91%	76%
<b>2017 - 2018</b>	90%	83%	98%	92%

Housing partnership timeliness rate for Stage 1 complaints was 100% for 2015/16 and 100% in 2016/17.

<b>Stage 2 – Corporate Complaint Timeliness (%)</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>All Brent</b>	<b>BHP/HMS</b>	<b>Housing Needs</b>	<b>PHS</b>
<b>2015 - 2016</b>	88%	90%	89%	67%
<b>2016 - 2017</b>	82%	81%	71%	88%
<b>2017 - 2018</b>	81%	76%	73%	75%

Housing partnership timeliness rate for Stage 2 complaints was 100% for 2017/18.

### **Compliments**

- 4.19 There were 126 compliments for Brent Council departments recorded on iCasework in 2017/18 compared with 22 compliments logged in 2016/17. Although this is a significant improvement from the previous year, there is still an under-recording of compliments on the system and staff are reminded to record this information on iCasework to give a more balanced picture of complaints as well as compliments.
- 4.20 The table below shows the number of compliments received in the Housing directorate. Some BHP/HMS examples are included below:

<b>2017/18</b>	<b>All Brent</b>	<b>BHP/HMS</b>	<b>Housing Needs</b>	<b>PHS</b>
Compliments received	126	7	0	0

- 4.21 Three examples of compliments received by BHP/HMS are as follows:

#### Compliment 1:

*“I would like to thank you and your colleagues for your support with the issues we had for my Mother-in-Law, and for your understanding and prompt responses. We thank you all very much we are very grateful.”*

Compliment 2:

*“The tenant has told our Surveyor that she wants to pass on here thanks to the guys who did they job, she said they did a good job, and she is very happy. Thanks. “*

*“Hi, i can say Troy Francis was fabulous dealing with out of hours after I sent email to all concerned and has been in contact Saturday, Sunday as well as this morning. “*

Compliment 3:

*“I would like to thank you for your speed and attention to detail in the matter of Parking Issues In ..... Your response was well within 24 hours of my complaint being raised.*

*I would also like to add and express my gratitude for the speed at which you have dealt with the above pending matter at hand.*

*In closing I would also like to thank you and your department for ..... who has shown nothing more than outstanding professionalism in his approach to tackling this matter which has been worrying me for a period of time. The speed of his response from inception by this gentleman is a credit to the service, the manner by which he has performed his duty and the angle of his approach explaining the situation has been nothing short of admirable. He addressed my concerns and issues immediately with a face to face meeting that was extremely unexpected yet warmly appreciated. His meticulous approach to detail was refreshing and he has truly reinstated my confidence. In Brent Councils Housing Management approach to such matters.”*

## Appendix B – 2017/18 Complaints Root Cause Summary & Improvement Actions – Housing Directorate

### BHP and HMS combined (582 cases)

Root Cause	Improvement Actions
<p><b>Customer Care/Service Delivery – 227 cases; 172 upheld/partly upheld</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service failure/delay – 82</li> <li>Service not provided/up to standard – 113</li> <li>Third party service failure – 27</li> <li>Behaviour - 1</li> </ul> <p><b>Repairs/Building Services – 136 cases; 113 upheld/partly upheld</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delays in job completion – 81</li> <li>Service not provided/up to standard – 26</li> <li>Unfinished works/repairs – 16</li> <li>Delay in jobs being raised – 10</li> <li>Contractor missed appointments - 3</li> </ul> <p><b>Communication – 99 cases; 60 upheld/partly upheld</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delay in contacting customer – 28</li> <li>Inaccurate information provided / recorded – 28</li> <li>Emails/phone calls – 19</li> <li>Third party communication failure - 15</li> <li>Face to face customer care – 9</li> </ul>	<p><b>HMS - Customer Service</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HMS - Customer Service manages over 8,000 tenants and leaseholders in Brent.</li> <li>Service improvements include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Customer Care complaints analysed to identify any themes/issues with Brent staff or contractors;</li> <li>- customer service training for staff;</li> <li>- new CRM system to improve case management and performance monitoring/management oversight;</li> <li>- Service Charge Dispute Resolution process;</li> <li>- duty officer system implemented;</li> <li>- Housing Service Promise and Customer Experience Panel launched.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Disagreement with policy or procedure – 72 cases; 24 upheld/partly upheld**

- General Enquiry – 23
- Customer Care – 21
- Accommodation – 17
- Building services/repairs – 13
- Rents - 2

**Leasehold Services – 21 cases; 8 upheld/partly upheld**

- Repairs – 6
- Section 20 notice – 4
- Tenants/Leaseholders – 4
- Service charges -3
- Right to buy – 2
- Anti-Social Behaviour -1
- Communal upkeep -1

**Neighbourhood Services – 20 cases; 14 upheld/partly upheld**

- Anti-Social Behaviour – 8
- Cleaning – 5
- Environment – 3
- Tenancy - 3

**Rents Arrears – 3 cases; 2 upheld**

**Tenancy Management – 4 cases; 3 upheld/partly upheld**

**HMS – Property Services**

- HMS - Property Services carries out over 30,000 repairs a year.
- The service has introduced the following measures to help improve service delivery:
  - Integrated Assessment Management Contact Improvement plan focused on rectifying service issues identified in customer satisfaction surveys;
  - Access policy covering access to council and leaseholder properties to fix leaks and other repairs;
  - Scaffolding protocol for all scaffolding contracts and weekly management of scaffolding arrangements (Wates ceased using two scaffolding sub-contractors because of poor performance).
- Customer service training rolled out for service staff from October 2018.

**Housing Needs Service (182 cases)**

Root Cause	Improvement Actions
<p><b>Communication – 43 cases; 17 upheld/partly upheld</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emails/phone calls – 13</li> <li>• Delay in contacting customer - 11</li> <li>• Face to face customer care – 11</li> <li>• Inaccurate information provided / recorded - 8</li> </ul> <p><b>Temporary Accommodation/ Bed and Breakfast – 29 cases; 13 upheld/partly upheld</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Length of time in TA/B&amp;B – 11</li> <li>• Disrepair – 10</li> <li>• Location – 3</li> <li>• Overcrowding - 3</li> <li>• Affordability – 2</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessments – 28 cases; 16 upheld/partly upheld</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Band/medical – 11</li> <li>• Start Plus referrals - 8</li> <li>• Assessment delays - 3</li> <li>• Overcrowding - 2</li> <li>• Property condition - 2</li> <li>• Band assessment – 1</li> <li>• Enforcement – 1</li> </ul> <p><b>Disagreement with policy or procedure – 25 cases; 1 upheld</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Options - 15</li> <li>• Accommodation Services – 9</li> <li>• Care and Support – 1</li> </ul>	<p><b>Housing Needs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Housing Needs received over 5,000 homelessness approaches in 2017/18.</li> <li>▪ An Outcome Based Review of Domestic Abuse support was carried out during the year and as a result a specialist post was created. A second specialist officer is being recruited because of the increasing level of demand for specialist advice and support.</li> <li>▪ Other service improvements include: individuals and households provided with a tailored housing plan (statutory requirement of the new Homeless Reduction Act); trainees attending a central government HRA Training Academy; service managers supported and given increased responsibility for managing service requests and complaints.</li> <li>▪ Planned improvements include the introduction of CRM case management and customer service training for staff.</li> </ul>

**Delay in processing application – 20 cases; 11 upheld/partly upheld**

- Service delay/standard - 14
- Communication delay/inaccurate information - 4
- Third party failure – 2

**Service Delivery – 24 cases; 11 upheld/partly upheld**

- Delayed or not provided - 9
- Standard of service - 9
- Third party failure - 6

**Application review/progress – 6 cases; 2 upheld**

- Service standard – 4
- Communication - 2

**Start Plus/Provider issue – 4 cases; 2 upheld**

**Locata bids – 3 cases; 1 partly upheld**

**PHS Service (36 cases)**

Root Cause	Improvement Actions
<p><b>PHS Grants – 18 cases; 9 upheld/partly upheld</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delay of service – 6</li> <li>• Scope of work – 5</li> <li>• Quality of work/ service standard – 3</li> <li>• Grant level/ contribution - 2</li> <li>• Customer service – 1</li> <li>• Housing advice – 1</li> </ul> <p><b>PHS Enforcement – 18 cases; 2 partly upheld</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing standards – 5</li> <li>• HMO safety inspections – 5</li> <li>• Disagreement with policy or procedure – 3</li> <li>• Service delay/standard - 3</li> <li>• Private tenants - advice and support – 2</li> </ul>	<p><b>Private Housing Services (PHS)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Private Housing Services (PHS) manages 8,000 licenced properties, carries out 1,500 enforcement inspections annually, and carries out approximately 450 Small Works Grants (SWG) jobs and 300 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) jobs each year</li> <li>▪ Feedback from customer satisfaction surveys is used to improve service delivery.</li> <li>▪ The service has ISO 9000 quality system accreditation and complaints are discussed regularly with individuals and at team meetings.</li> </ul>

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## Housing Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2018-19

Thursday 12 July 2018

Agenda Rank	Item	Objectives for Scrutiny	Cabinet Member/Chair	Attendees
1.	Capital Programme Overruns	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To improve the committee's understanding of why overruns occur in the Capital Programme</li> <li>2. To assess the impact of overruns for the council and residents</li> <li>3. To scrutinise the ongoing work to reduce these</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phil Porter, Strategic Director Community Wellbeing;</li> <li>2. Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director Housing;</li> <li>3. Minesh Patel, Head of Finance</li> </ol>
2.	Resident Engagement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To improve the committee's understanding of the resident engagement approach</li> <li>2. To assess performance to date in this area and areas for further improvement</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phil Porter, Strategic Director Community Wellbeing;</li> <li>2. Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director Housing;</li> <li>3. Troy Francis, Head of Housing Management Services;</li> <li>4. Minesh Patel, Head of Finance</li> </ol>

3.	Estate Parking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To review the current position on estate parking</li> <li>2. To scrutinise future changes and the potential impact for residents and the borough</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phil Porter, Strategic Director Community Wellbeing;</li> <li>2. Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director Housing;</li> <li>3. Minesh Patel, Head of Finance</li> </ol>
4.	Scrutiny 2017/18 Annual Report and Work Programme 2018-19	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Committee to review the 2017-18 annual report and the work programme for 2018-19</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	N/A
5.	Forward Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Committee to review the Forward Plan (housing element).</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	N/A

Thursday 13 September 2018

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Agenda	Item	Objectives for Scrutiny	Cabinet Member/Member	Attendees
1.	Allocations Policy (including for Care Leavers)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To scrutinise the allocations policy</li> <li>2. To gain an understanding of how the policy works in practice – including for Care Leavers</li> <li>3. To review performance</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phil Porter, Strategic Director Community Wellbeing;</li> <li>2. Hakeem Osinaike - Operational Director Housing;</li> <li>3. Laurence Coaker, Head of Housing Needs;</li> <li>4. Minesh Patel, Head of Finance</li> </ol>
2.	Grounds Maintenance (Estates)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scrutinise the approach to Grounds Maintenance on Estates</li> <li>2. Review contract management</li> <li>3. Gain an overview of current challenges and work underway to address these</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phil Porter, Strategic Director Community Wellbeing;</li> <li>2. Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director Housing;</li> <li>3. Troy Francis - Head of Housing Management</li> </ol>

				Services 4. Minesh Patel, Head of Finance
3.	Landlord Licensing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To review the objectives and performance of the landlord licensing scheme</li> <li>2. To review enforcement action undertaken</li> <li>3. To understand future plans for this area</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phil Porter, Strategic Director, Community Wellbeing;</li> <li>2. Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director Housing;</li> <li>3. Spencer Randolph, Head of Private Housing Services;</li> <li>4. Minesh Patel, Head of Finance</li> </ol>
4.	Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme 2018-19	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The report updates Members on the Committee's Work Programme for 2018-19</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	N/A
5.	Forward Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Committee to review the Forward Plan (housing element).</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead	N/A

			Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	
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Agenda	Item	Objectives for Scrutiny	Cabinet Member/Member	Attendees
1.	Asset Management Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scrutinise use of existing assets</li> <li>2. Explore the future strategy for Brent</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phil Porter, Strategic Director Community Wellbeing;</li> <li>2. Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director Housing;</li> <li>3. Sean Gallagher, Head of Property Services;</li> <li>4. Minesh Patel, Head of Finance</li> </ol>
2.	Fire Safety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evaluate progress on recommendations from the Task and Finish Group (17/18)</li> <li>2. Improved awareness of the mitigation measures in place for civil emergencies;</li> <li>3. Responding to wider public interest</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phil Porter, Strategic Director Community Wellbeing;</li> <li>2. Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director Housing;</li> <li>3. John Magness, Head of Housing Supply and Partnerships;</li> <li>4. Minesh Patel, Head of Finance</li> </ol>

3.	Housing Revenue Account (alignment and rent setting)	1. Pre-scrutiny of decision	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phil Porter, Strategic Director, Community and Wellbeing;</li> <li>2. Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director Housing;</li> <li>3. Minesh Patel, Head of Finance</li> </ol>
4.	Terms of Reference - Task Group Service Provision on Housing Estates	1. Terms of Reference to be discussed and agreed	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phil Porter, Strategic Director, Community and Wellbeing;</li> <li>2. Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director Housing;</li> <li>3. Minesh Patel, Head of Finance</li> </ol>
5.	Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme 2018-19	1. The report updates Members on the Committee's Work Programme for 2018-19	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	N/A

6.	Forward Plan	1. The Committee to review the Forward Plan (housing element).	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	N/A
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Thursday 6 February 2019

Agenda	Item	Objectives for Scrutiny	Cabinet Member/Member	Attendees
1.  Page 71	Brent based Registered Providers (RP) delivery of social housing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gain an overview of the performance of Registered Providers based on the priorities of the service</li> <li>2. Scrutinise welfare issues addressed by RP (methods, means, and areas of collaboration with LBB)</li> <li>3. Review performance measures</li> <li>4. Review conversions from social to affordable housing</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phil Porter, Strategic Director Community Wellbeing;</li> <li>2. Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director Housing;</li> <li>3. Laurence Coaker, Head of Housing Needs;</li> <li>4. Minesh Patel, Head of Finance</li> </ol>
2.	Welfare Reform and Homelessness (including the Homelessness Reduction Act)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scrutinise the impact of Welfare Reform on Homelessness in the borough</li> <li>2. Scrutinise the Council's readiness for the challenges presented</li> <li>3. Scrutinise implementation and impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act in Brent</li> <li>4. Review the Supported People</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of Housing Scrutiny Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phil Porter, Strategic Director Community Wellbeing;</li> <li>2. Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director Housing</li> <li>3. Minesh Patel, Head of Finance</li> </ol>

		budget		
3.	Performance Update	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scrutinise performance across the service</li> <li>2. Review strengths and areas for further improvement</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of Housing Scrutiny Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phil Porter, Strategic Director Community Wellbeing;</li> <li>2. Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director Housing</li> <li>3. Minesh Patel, Head of Finance</li> </ol>
Page 72	Housing Complaints	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To scrutinise complaints relating to the Housing Service</li> <li>2. To understand the strengths and gaps</li> <li>3. To gain an overview of the work that is underway to close the gaps</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phil Porter, Strategic Director, Community and Wellbeing;</li> <li>2. Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director Housing;</li> <li>3. Troy Francis, Head of Housing Management Services;</li> <li>4. Minesh Patel, Head of Finance</li> </ol>
5	Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme 2018-19	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The report updates Members on the Committee's Work Programme for 2018-19</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	N/A
6.	Forward Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Committee to review the Forward Plan (housing element).</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing	N/A

			and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	
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27 March 2019

Agenda	Item	Objectives for Scrutiny	Cabinet Member/Member	Attendees
1.	Disabled Facilities and Small Works Grants Distribution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To scrutinise approach and outcomes delivered</li> <li>2. To review how performance in this area is measured</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phil Porter, Strategic Director Community Wellbeing;</li> <li>2. Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director Housing;</li> <li>3. Minesh Patel, Head of Finance</li> </ol>
2.	New CRM System	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scrutinise management and usage of the new CRM system</li> <li>2. Review performance and customer feedback</li> <li>3. Scrutinise links with the wider Housing Service</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phil Porter, Strategic Director, Community Wellbeing;</li> <li>2. Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director Housing;</li> <li>3. Troy Francis, Head of Housing Management Services</li> <li>4. Minesh Patel, Head of Finance</li> </ol>

3. Page 75	I4B & FWH	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scrutinise impact on housing</li> <li>2. Review locations and quality of housing</li> <li>3. Review the impact on the waiting list</li> </ol>	<p>Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phil Porter, Strategic Director, Community Wellbeing;</li> <li>2. Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director Housing;</li> <li>3. Laurence Coaker, Head of Housing Needs</li> <li>4. Minesh Patel, Head of Finance</li> </ol>
4.	Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme 2018-19	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The report updates Members on the Committee's Work Programme for 2018-19</li> </ol>	<p>Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee</p>	N/A
5.	Forward Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Committee to review the Forward Plan (housing element).</li> </ol>	<p>Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing</p>	N/A

			and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	
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25 April 2019

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Agenda	Item	Objectives for Scrutiny	Cabinet Member/Member	Attendees
1.	Tackling ASB	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scrutinise approach to tackling ASB on Estates</li> <li>2. Review links to wider ASB challenges in the borough</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phil Porter, Strategic Director Community Wellbeing;</li> <li>2. Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director Housing;</li> <li>3. Rep from Public Protection (tbc);</li> <li>4. Minesh Patel, Head of Finance.</li> </ol>
2.	Rent Arrears (including Registered Providers)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scrutinise the level of rent arrears</li> <li>2. Review location and trends</li> <li>3. Explore actions in place to tackle these arrears</li> <li>4. Explore approach to evictions</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phil Porter, Strategic Director Community Wellbeing;</li> <li>2. Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director Housing;</li> <li>3. Minesh Patel, Head of Finance;</li> <li>4. One Registered Provider (tbc).</li> </ol>
3.	Fire Safety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evaluate fire safety in council housing</li> <li>2. Improved awareness of the mitigation measures in place for civil emergencies</li> </ol>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phil Porter, Strategic Director Community Wellbeing;</li> <li>2. Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director Housing;</li> <li>3. Minesh Patel, Head of Finance</li> </ol>

4	Service Provision on Housing Estates Task Group	1. Scrutinise the findings and recommendations from the scrutiny task group – Service Provision on Housing Estates	Cllr Eleanor Southwood/ Cllr Janice Long – Chair of Housing Scrutiny Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phil Porter, Strategic Director Community Wellbeing;</li> <li>2. Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director Housing;</li> <li>3. Minesh Patel, Head of Finance</li> </ol>
5	Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme 2018-19	1. The report updates Members on the Committee's Work Programme for 2018-19	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	N/A
6.	Forward Plan	1. The Committee to review the Forward Plan (housing element).	Cllr Eleanor Southwood – Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform/Cllr Janice Long – Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	N/A

# LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

## FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

for the period 15 February 2019 to 30 April 2019



The Forward Plan is a list of forthcoming decisions and provides at least **28 days'** notice of the following:

- all decisions to be taken by the Cabinet and Cabinet Committees; and
- key decisions taken by Council Officers and the West London Economic Prosperity Board.

A key decision is defined by regulations as a decision which relates to an executive function and which is likely:

- a. to result in the local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are significant, having regard to the local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- b. to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the local authority.

All decisions taken by the Cabinet and Cabinet Committees and key decisions taken by Council Officers can be called-in by Councillors before they are implemented. If a decision is called-in, a Scrutiny Committee made up non-Cabinet Members will meet to consider the decision within 15 working days of the decision being made. The original decision-maker will then take into account the recommendations of this Scrutiny Committee before choosing to either implement or change the decision. The exact date when the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee are to be re-considered by the Cabinet, Cabinet Committee or Officer (as the case may be) can be obtained from Governance Services.

Members of the public are entitled to see the reports that will be relied on when a decision is taken unless they contain confidential or exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972. Reports will be published on the Council's website at least five clear working days before the date the decision is due to be taken. Paper copies can also be obtained from Governance Services, Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 0FJ, telephone 020 8937 2063/1355 or via e-mail to [committee@brent.gov.uk](mailto:committee@brent.gov.uk).

Should you wish to make representations regarding any matter listed or want to request that an exempt report should be considered in public, please email Governance Services at [committee@brent.gov.uk](mailto:committee@brent.gov.uk) or telephone 020 8937 2063/1355 at least one week before the decision is to be taken. Your representations and the Council's response will be published on the Council's website at least 5 working days before the Cabinet/ Cabinet Committee meeting or date of the scheduled Officer decision.

The current membership of the Cabinet is as follows:

[Cllr Butt](#) (Leader)

[Cllr McLennan](#) (Deputy Leader)

[Cllr Hirani](#) (Public Health, Culture & Leisure)

[Cllr Farah](#) (Adult Social Care)

[Cllr Southwood](#) (Housing and Welfare Reform)

[Cllr Tatler](#) (Regeneration, Highways & Planning)

[Cllr M Patel](#) (Children's Safeguarding, Early Help and Social Care)

[Cllr Krupa Sheth](#) (Environment)

[Cllr Agha](#) (Schools, Employment & Skills)

[Cllr Miller](#) (Community Safety)

**Publication Date: January 2019**

email: [committee@brent.gov.uk](mailto:committee@brent.gov.uk)  
Tel: 020 8937 2063/1355



Details of the decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant report from	Lead Member	Expected date of decision	Any representations must be made to the following officer at least 1 week before the decision is to be made
<b>January</b>					
<p><b>Award of a Contract for Microsoft Licences for the London Borough of Southwark</b>            To approve the award of the contract for the provision of Microsoft Software Licences for the London Borough of Southwark. The award and contracting are delegated to the London Borough of Brent under the terms of the ICT Shared Service Inter Authority Agreement.</p> <p><b>KEY</b>            Report: <b>Part exempt</b></p>	Strategic Director, Resources	Strategic Director, Resources	Deputy Leader (Councillor Margaret McLennan)	Not before 14 Jan 2019	Senior Category Manager, Procurement Tel: 0208 937 1733 philippa.brewin@brent.gov.uk
<p><b>Award contract for lifts</b>  <i>Issue withdrawn at officers' request.</i></p> <p><b>KEY</b>            Report: <b>Part exempt</b></p>	Strategic Director, Community Well-being	Strategic Director, Community Well-being	Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform (Councillor Eleanor Southwood)	Not before 14 Jan 2019	Head of Service - Housing Management Property, Housing and Culture Tel: 0208 937 1147 sean.gallagher@brent.gov.uk

Details of the decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant report from	Lead Member	Expected date of decision	Any representations must be made to the following officer at least 1 week before the decision is to be made
<p><b>Gateway to Support Services</b> To provide authority:</p> <p>A) To procure a contract for a “Gateway to Support Services” Hub. The Hub will provide a focal point of access to all advocacy services, carers support service and Social Isolation Preventative service. It will also deliver information, advice, guidance and more specialist interventions.</p> <p>B) To Award contract at a later stage after evaluation process</p> <p><b>KEY</b></p> <p>Report: <b>Part exempt</b></p>	Strategic Director, Community Well-being	Strategic Director, Community Well-being	Lead Member for Adult Social Care (Councillor Harbi Farah)	Not before 14 Jan 2019	Operational Director, Adult Social Care Tel: 020 8937 6168 helen.woodland@brent.gov.uk
<p><b>Authority to award contract for Street Lighting Maintenance</b> Report seeks authority to award contract for the street lighting maintenance contract due to commence on 01/04/19</p> <p><b>KEY</b></p> <p>Report: <b>Part exempt</b></p>	Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment	Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment	Lead Member for Environment (Councillor Krupa Sheth)	Not before 14 Jan 2019	Parking Projects Manager, Parking and Lighting Tel: 020 8937 5300 mark.fairchild@brent.gov.uk

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Details of the decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant report from	Lead Member	Expected date of decision	Any representations must be made to the following officer at least 1 week before the decision is to be made
<p><b>Wembley Transport Improvements - Wembley Industrial Estate Two-way working</b> To award contract to successful supplier to deliver Phase 1 of Two-way working in Wembley Industrial Estate</p> <p><b>KEY</b></p> <p>Report: <b>Part exempt</b></p>	Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment	Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment	Lead Member for Regeneration, Highways, Planning (Councillor Shama Tatler)	Not before 28 Jan 2019	Strategic Director Regeneration and Environment Tel: 0208 937 1516 Amar.Dave@brent.gov.uk
<b>February</b>					
<p><b>Budget and Council Tax 2019/20 – 2020/21</b> The purpose of this report is to set out the Council's budget proposals for 2019/20 and 2020/21. It also sets out the results of the consultation and scrutiny processes. Subject to discussion at the Cabinet meeting these will form the basis of the budget to be agreed at the Full Council meeting of 25 February 2019.</p> <p><b>KEY</b></p> <p>Report: <b>Open</b></p>	Cabinet	Chief Finance Officer	Deputy Leader (Councillor Margaret McLennan)	11 Feb 2019	Chief Finance Officer Tel: 020 8937 6528 conrad.hall@brent.gov.uk, Head of Finance Tel: 0208 937 1487 ravinder.jassar@brent.gov.uk

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Details of the decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant report from	Lead Member	Expected date of decision	Any representations must be made to the following officer at least 1 week before the decision is to be made
<p><b>Authority to award stage two contract for the redevelopment of Knowles House London NW10 3UN</b>            To award a building contract for the redevelopment of Knowles House, Longstone Avenue, NW10 3UN</p> <p><i>Please note that this decision has originally been scheduled to made by the Strategic Director of Resources.</i></p> <p><b>Reason for deferring this decision to Cabinet meeting in February:</b> To allow officers to report changes since previous Cabinet approval.</p> <p><b>KEY</b></p> <p>Report: <b>Part exempt</b></p>	Cabinet	Strategic Director, Resources	Deputy Leader (Councillor Margaret McLennan)	11 Feb 2019	Project Manager, Property Tel: 020 8937 1739 gordon.cooper@brent.gov.uk
<p><b>Council Tax – Empty Homes premium</b>            To agree to increase the council tax premium for domestic homes that have been empty for more than 2 years from 50% to 100% form 1/4/2019</p> <p><b>KEY</b></p> <p>Report: <b>Open</b></p>	Cabinet	Strategic Director, Resources	Deputy Leader (Councillor Margaret McLennan)	11 Feb 2019	Director of Brent Customer Services Tel: 020 8937 1521 margaret.read@brent.gov.uk

Details of the decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant report from	Lead Member	Expected date of decision	Any representations must be made to the following officer at least 1 week before the decision is to be made
<p><b>Contingency planning for the Council Tax Service: Authorisation of Third Parties to Make Decisions for Council Tax Functions</b> To authorise a third party service provider to make decisions relating to Council Tax matters.</p> <p>To delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Resources in consultation with the Lead Member to authorise a third party service provider to make decisions relating to Council Tax matters for any other specific and ad-hoc purposes that may arise.</p> <p>Report: <b>Open</b></p>	Cabinet	Strategic Director, Resources	Deputy Leader (Councillor Margaret McLennan)	11 Feb 2019	Director of Brent Customer Services Tel: 020 8937 1521 margaret.read@brent.gov.uk
<p><b>National Non Domestic Rates – to approve discretionary rate relief schemes for 2019/20</b> To approve the scheme for revaluation support for 2019/20 and the scheme for retail rate relief as announced in the October budget and as detailed in the report</p> <p><b>KEY</b></p> <p>Report: <b>Open</b></p>	Cabinet	Strategic Director, Resources	Deputy Leader (Councillor Margaret McLennan)	11 Feb 2019	Director of Brent Customer Services Tel: 020 8937 1521 margaret.read@brent.gov.uk

Details of the decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant report from	Lead Member	Expected date of decision	Any representations must be made to the following officer at least 1 week before the decision is to be made
<p><b>Business Rates Relief Scheme for businesses accredited with the Living Wage Foundation</b> To approve the continuation of the discretionary NNDR discount scheme for businesses accredited with the Living Wage Foundation until March 2023.</p> <p><b>KEY</b></p> <p>Report: <b>Open</b></p>	Cabinet	Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment	Lead Member for Regeneration, Highways, Planning (Councillor Shama Tatler)	11 Feb 2019	Economic Development Manager, Employment, Skills and Enterprise Tel: 020 8937 6673 kaya.chatterji@brent.gov.uk
<p><b>Establishment of Operational Director Post</b> To seek approval to establishment of an Operational Director post.</p> <p>Report: <b>Open</b></p>	Cabinet	Chief Executive	Deputy Leader (Councillor Margaret McLennan)	11 Feb 2019	Senior HR Transformation Lead Tel: 020 8937 3209 Martin.Williams@brent.gov.uk
<p><b>Six-Sheet Advertising Concession Contract</b> Approval to award the Contract.</p> <p><b>Reason for deferral from January to February Cabinet meeting:</b> To allow officers to undertake further work.</p> <p><b>KEY</b></p> <p>Report: <b>Part exempt</b></p>	Cabinet	Director, Performance, Policy and Partnerships	Deputy Leader (Councillor Margaret McLennan)	11 Feb 2019	Senior Category Manager Tel: 020 8937 3924 jonathan.heyas@brent.gov.uk

Details of the decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant report from	Lead Member	Expected date of decision	Any representations must be made to the following officer at least 1 week before the decision is to be made
<p><b>Borough Plan 2019-2023</b> To consider the Borough Plan 2019-2023</p> <p><b>KEY</b></p> <p>Report: <b>Open</b></p>	Cabinet	Director, Performance, Policy and Partnerships	Leader (Councillor Muhammed Butt)	11 Feb 2019	Director, Performance, Policy and Partnerships Tel: 020 8937 1400 peter.gadsdon@brent.gov.uk
<p><b>First Wave Housing Business Plan 2019/20</b> To present First Wave Housing Ltd Business Plan for 2019/20 to Cabinet for Shareholder approval.</p> <p><b>KEY</b></p> <p>Report: <b>Part exempt</b></p>	Cabinet	Director, Performance, Policy and Partnerships	Deputy Leader (Councillor Margaret McLennan)	11 Feb 2019	Head of Transformation Tel: 020 8937 1507 sadie.east@brent.gov.uk
<p><b>i4B Business Plan 2019/20</b> To present i4B Holdings Ltd Business Plan for 2019/20 to Cabinet for Shareholder approval</p> <p><b>KEY</b></p> <p>Report: <b>Part exempt</b></p>	Cabinet	Director, Performance, Policy and Partnerships	Deputy Leader (Councillor Margaret McLennan)	11 Feb 2019	Head of Transformation Tel: 020 8937 1507 sadie.east@brent.gov.uk

Details of the decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant report from	Lead Member	Expected date of decision	Any representations must be made to the following officer at least 1 week before the decision is to be made
<p><b>Bridge Park New Leisure Centre (NLC) Mixed Development</b></p> <p>The purpose of this report is to seek Member approval for the enhancements made to the leisure provision incorporating additional community facilities, enterprise space and New Accommodation for Independent Living (NAIL) and delegated authority to enter into a revised Conditional Land Sale Agreement (CLSA) to reflect the enhanced provision.</p>	Cabinet	Strategic Director, Community Well-being	Lead Member for Public Health, Culture and Leisure (Councillor Krupesh Hirani)	11 Feb 2019	Strategic Director, Community Well-being Tel: 020 8937 5937 phil.porter@brent.gov.uk

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Report: **Part exempt**

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Details of the decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant report from	Lead Member	Expected date of decision	Any representations must be made to the following officer at least 1 week before the decision is to be made
<p><b>Award of Contract for a Targeted Service to Promote Education, Employment and Training for Young People (Connexions)</b>            To approve the award of contract for the provision of a Targeted Service to Promote Education, Employment and Training for Young People (Connexions).</p> <p><b>Reason decision date deferred from January to February:</b> A decision on contract award will be made following Full Council decision regarding the Council's budget at the February 2019 Cabinet meeting.</p> <p>Report: <b>Part exempt</b></p>	Strategic Director, Children and Young People	Strategic Director, Children and Young People	Lead Member for Children's Safeguarding, Early Help and Social Care (Councillor Mili Patel)	Not before 11 Feb 2019	Operational Director Integration & Improved Outcomes Tel: 020 8937 4456 nigel.chapman@brent.gov.uk

Details of the decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant report from	Lead Member	Expected date of decision	Any representations must be made to the following officer at least 1 week before the decision is to be made
<b>March</b>					
<p><b>Regionalisation of adoption</b> To agree the arrangements of Regionalisation of adoption services.</p> <p><b>Reason for deferral:</b> Item deferred to allow officers to undertake further work on the business case with other local authority partners.</p> <p>Report: <b>Open</b></p>	Cabinet	Strategic Director, Children and Young People	Lead Member for Children's Safeguarding, Early Help and Social Care (Councillor Mili Patel)	11 Mar 2019	Operational Director Integration & Improved Outcomes Tel: 020 8937 4456 nigel.chapman@brent.gov.uk
<p><b>Future use of Roundwood Centre for alternative education/ youth provision</b> To discuss potential options for future use of Roundwood Centre for alternative education/ youth provision.</p> <p>Report: <b>Open</b></p>	Cabinet	Strategic Director, Children and Young People	Lead Member for Children's Safeguarding, Early Help and Social Care (Councillor Mili Patel)	11 Mar 2019	Operational Director Integration & Improved Outcomes Tel: 020 8937 4456 nigel.chapman@brent.gov.uk

Details of the decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant report from	Lead Member	Expected date of decision	Any representations must be made to the following officer at least 1 week before the decision is to be made
<p><b>Performance Report, Q3</b> This is the performance report for the third quarter of 2018/2019.</p> <p><b>KEY</b></p> <p>Report: <b>Open</b></p>	Cabinet	Director, Performance, Policy and Partnerships	Leader (Councillor Muhammed Butt)	11 Mar 2019	Head of Performance & Improvement Tel: 020 8937 1822 irene.bremang@brent.gov.uk
<p><b>Authority to tender contract for CCTV Maintenance</b> Authority to progress the tender contract for CCTV Maintenance</p> <p><b>Reason for deferral from February to March 2019:</b> To allow officers to undertake further work on the report.</p> <p><b>KEY</b></p> <p>Report: <b>Open</b></p>	Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment	Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment	Lead Member for Community Safety (Councillor Tom Miller)	Not before 11 Mar 2019	Head of Community Protection Tel: 020 8937 5067 Karina.Wane@brent.gov.uk
<p><b>Wembley Transport Improvements - North End Road Connection</b> To award contract to successful supplier to deliver the North End Road Connection</p> <p><b>KEY</b></p> <p>Report: <b>Part exempt</b></p>	Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment	Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment	Lead Member for Regeneration, Highways, Planning (Councillor Shama Tatler)	Before 1 Mar 2019	Transportation Planning Manager Tel: 020 8937 5289 rachel.best@brent.gov.uk

Details of the decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant report from	Lead Member	Expected date of decision	Any representations must be made to the following officer at least 1 week before the decision is to be made
<b>April</b>					
<p><b>Governance arrangements for Brent's network of Community Hubs</b>  This report sets out proposals for the governance and management arrangements of Brent's network of community hubs.</p> <p><b>Reason for Deferral:</b> Decision Deferred from 11 February 2019 to 11 March 2019 to allow further work to be done to develop the proposal and engage key stakeholders.</p> <p><b>KEY</b>  Report: <b>Open</b></p>	Cabinet	Director, Performance, Policy and Partnerships	Councillor Eleanor Southwood	15 Apr 2019	Head of Transformation Tel: 020 8937 1507 sadie.east@brent.gov.uk