



## Audit and Standards Advisory Committee

**Tuesday 5 May 2020 at 6.00 pm**

This will be held as an online virtual meeting

To view this meeting live please click on the following link: [Live Streaming](#)

### Membership:

#### Members

David Ewart (Chair)

#### Councillors:

A Choudry (Vice-Chair)  
Donnelly-Jackson  
Hassan  
Long  
Naheerathan  
Nerva  
Kansagra

#### Substitute Members

#### Councillors:

S Choudhary, Colacicco, Kabir, Lo and Perrin  
Councillors:  
Colwill and Maurice

#### Independent Co-Opted Members

Robert Cawley  
Karen McArthur  
Margaret Bruce

#### Independent Advisor

Vineeta Manchanda

**For further information contact:** James Kinsella, Governance Officer Tel: 020 8937 4041; Email: [james.kinsella@brent.gov.uk](mailto:james.kinsella@brent.gov.uk)

For electronic copies of minutes, reports and agendas, and to be alerted when the minutes of this meeting have been published visit: [www.brent.gov.uk/committees](http://www.brent.gov.uk/committees)

**The press and public are welcome to attend this as an online virtual meeting. The link to attend and view proceedings is available [HERE](#)**

## **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**

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

**2 Declarations of Interest**

Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting, the nature and existence of any relevant disclosable pecuniary or personal interests in the items on this agenda and to specify the item(s) to which they relate.

**3 Deputations (if any)**

To hear any deputations received from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 67.

## Standards Items

Please note there are no standards items to consider at this meeting.

## Audit Items

**4 Emergency Planning response to COVID 19** 1 - 52

The report provides the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee with a summary of the work that has been undertaken since Emergency Planning and GOLD arrangements were stood up in the Council, as a result of the pandemic coronavirus COVID 19. The report also outlines the resource implications of the actions that have been taken by the Council.

**Ward Affected:**  
All Wards

**Contact Officer:** Carolyn Downs, Chief Executive  
Email: [chief.executive@brent.gov.uk](mailto:chief.executive@brent.gov.uk)  
Tel: 020 8937 1007

**5 Annual Governance Statement** 53 - 70

This report presents the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2019/20, as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The AGS is being presented to the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee for consideration, prior to formal approval by the Audit and Standards

Committee.

**Ward Affected:**  
All Wards

**Contact Officer:** Michael Bradley  
Head of Audit and Investigations  
Email: [michael.bradley@brent.gov.uk](mailto:michael.bradley@brent.gov.uk)  
Tel: 020 8937 6526

**6 Forward Plan 2020/21**

71 - 72

To consider and agree the Committee's Forward Plan for 2020/21, which will continue to be reviewed and updated at each meeting.

**7 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: Tuesday 26 May 2020**

 <p><b>Brent</b></p>	<p><b>Cabinet</b> 20 April 2020 <b>Audit and Standards Advisory Committee</b> 5 May 2020</p>
<p><b>Report from the Chief Executive</b></p>	
<p><b>Emergency Planning Response to COVID-19</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>	3 Appendix 1 Schedule of service changes – Decisions Appendix 2 List of critical services Appendix 3 Financial Pressures
<b>Background Papers:</b>	0
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Chief Executive's Office <a href="mailto:Chief.executive@brent.gov.uk">Chief.executive@brent.gov.uk</a> 0208 937 1007

## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To inform Cabinet and the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee and the Audit Committee of the work that has been undertaken since Emergency planning and GOLD arrangements were stood up in the Council as a result of the pandemic flu virus COVID-19.

## 2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 That the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee comment upon the arrangements put in place, assure themselves that the governance is appropriate and that the decisions that are being made are sufficiently responsive.

2.2 That members of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee consider the resource implications of the actions taken by the Council in response to the pandemic COVID-19.

## 3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The Council stood up its GOLD emergency planning response on 16 March 2020. This is covered under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and effectively means that emergency decisions can be made by the Chief Executive pursuant to the following provisions in Part 3 Paragraph 9.3.2. of the Constitution:
- “Exceptionally,.....notwithstanding anything in this Constitution, the Chief Executive shall be authorised to exercise either executive or non-executive functions where the matter is urgent unless this is prohibited by law.”*
- 3.2 The current situation in respect of the Coronavirus: COVID 19 is an exceptional circumstance. The decisions considered urgent in the current circumstances are because they concern actions taken during the current crisis due to extreme urgency and often in response to specific Government direction and guidance.
- 3.3 The meeting of GOLD has met daily throughout the period from that first date to the present. It is attended by all Strategic Directors or their substitute, HR, the Director of Public Health, Communications, Emergency Planning and the Operational Director for Customer Services. It is chaired by the Chief Executive or her deputy if she is working remotely.
- 3.4 Once an Emergency is declared then powers are automatically available to the Chief Executive to make urgent decisions. Officers continue to make decisions under their delegated powers but in view of the urgency of the situation some of these decisions have to be taken at speed and sometimes without the degree of consultation and debate that is usually considered desirable, because it is not currently practicable. A list of all such decisions is attached at Appendix 1 to this report. A process to enable the formal noting and agreeing of these decisions by the Chief Executive pursuant to a published report is under way and should be completed shortly.
- 3.5 The council’s initial response was to follow government guidance with regard to the scientific evidence and whilst services were reduced and increasing numbers of staff were working from home we did not shut down all services until the government instituted the lockdown on 23 March 2020.
- 3.6 Since that point the council has changed its modus operandi to one where staff are based at home working remotely and has retrenched to what we term critical services. The categorisation of critical services is attached at Appendix 2.
- 3.7 Members will see that much ‘Business As Usual’ (BAU) is happening from this list but many services by the nature of the public interface were closed down eg. Libraries and sports centres, recycling centre. Some services have been projected into greater prominence as a result of the shutdown, for example registrations, mortuaries.
- 3.8 The government awarded the council – £9.3m to cover additional expenditure as a result of the virus though there have been some conflicting messages from central government as to whether this was just for social care or for other areas of expenditure. It is clear however that this grant is not ringfenced and accordingly the council has worked on the basis that this covers all additional areas of expenditure. The Director of Finance report to Brent GOLD and Cabinet members on this matter is attached at Appendix 3. An additional £1.6bn

was announced for local councils by the government over the weekend of 18 April, but no specific allocation has been provided to Brent as of yet.

3.9 You will note the serious concern in relation to loss of income as a result of this outbreak which is currently estimated at over £11m and also our inability to

achieve the whole year of savings for 20/21. We do not as yet know whether Government will compensate local authorities fully. We will report regularly to members on this issue through the web cast meetings and Cabinet more broadly.

3.10 The main areas of heightened activity have been:

- Adult Social Care – ensuring hospital discharges happen quickly, supporting care homes and domiciliary care, getting PPE to carers and front line staff, testing of front line staff will be a future challenge;
- Regeneration and Environment – building additional mortuary capacity and working with funeral directors to ensure funerals happen as quickly as possible, enforcement of social distancing in parks and open spaces and high streets along with the effective monitoring of which shops should and should not be open, keeping the bins emptied given much higher levels of domestic waste;
- Customer and Digital Services – including the redeployment of staff to ensure that increased benefits and council tax enquiries are efficiently expedited and all calls answered, contacting all 4000 +NHS shielded residents and others referred to us as vulnerable and providing food and now medicines to those who are in need, Our ICT has coped exceptionally well with so much remote working;
- Finance – working on small grants to businesses and business rates relief and now sorting out how we will get ourselves back onto a sustainable financial footing;
- Assistant Chief Executive - have worked with the voluntary and community sector to provide support and indeed food and transport to foodbanks, to support the VCS in providing advice and support to residents and communications have constantly been responded to media enquiries and ensuring information is given to residents in the Borough through the web and other social media channels;
- Housing – have ensured that rough sleepers have been accommodated and provided additional accommodation for those that are in danger of becoming rough sleepers; emergency repairs have continued;
- Children and Young People have had to work very closely with schools in the borough to support with PPE and provide guidance and help co-ordinate in relation to the childcare commitment for key workers, accordingly schools have remained open in Brent including over the Easter holidays; and
- Human Resources information has constantly needed to be updated and sent to staff and as highlighted elsewhere on the Audit Committee's agenda we have needed to ensure that we are alert to any potential for fraud as a result of monies being distributed in response to COVID-19.

3.11 London wide arrangements have been in place throughout. The London Resilience forum was stood up and a Strategic Co-ordination Group has overseen the response of all our partners, NHS, PHE, Police, Fire, GLA, central

government. The Chair of the SCG was given powers by the government to direct public services throughout this crisis and every day we are duty bound to return a situation report to them outlining the resilience of all our critical services. They have also provided direction in relation to issues such as

shielding, PPE, testing, enforcement of social distancing and we have followed instruction where relevant.

- 3.12 The role of London Local Authority Gold throughout most of this period has been undertaken by Martin Esom, the Chief Executive of Waltham Forest. This has been executed by way of a sub-regional structure with Brent being in the West London sub-region along with Harrow, Hillingdon, Ealing, Hounslow and Hammersmith of Fulham. The sub regional response has been co-ordinated through Brent ie myself. This has ensured that all 6 local authorities have acted as much as possible in unison providing a uniformity of response where appropriate so that residents of different boroughs are not receiving wildly different levels of service. This structure has (in my opinion) worked much better than a whole London co-ordination which can quickly become unwieldy. Much of our response to adult social care has been done through our STP area which includes all 6 authorities along with Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster and has worked very well to date. However, what this governance demonstrates is that decision-making in relation to the emergency is largely taken at a London wide level, in consultation with all partners and government and that this is adapted operationally at an individual London Borough level.
- 3.13 Accordingly we have sought to provide weekly Member web cast briefings with questions and answers. Many Councillors have kept in touch through email and phone additional to the weekly webcast briefings and the very regular email briefings. Since the government changed legislation to enable virtual council meetings we are seeking to restore essential political decision making in this way with the cabinet meeting on 20th April being the first such meeting.
- 3.14 Staff have also been regularly briefed through their own line management, through weekly video messages from myself and last week we undertook a webcast question and answer session with colleagues.

## **4.0 Recovery**

- 4.1 Whilst we know that the lockdown will continue for at least a further three weeks (and for those being shielded for at least another 9 weeks) the council is now operating stably in the "new normal". It is therefore very important that we consider the various options open to the council once a lockdown (either partial or total) takes place. Recovery planning will need to cover both internal i.e. council and external i.e. community recovery and will probably have to be done in a phased way. It will be very important to ensure that all councillors and all staff are involved in this discussion as we move forward. At present we are working on the basis of 'retain', 'reinvent' and 'restore'. It means that there are elements of what has happened in the past two months that we may prefer and wish to retain e.g. even more flexible working that is currently the case, quicker decision making and more generic roles for some officers, less traffic on the road and improved air quality, a stronger sense of communities looking after each other; some other area where we have to put things back in place as



before but that we now know we can do them differently and better so we reinvent and to restore those areas of work that we have to in the way that they were done before.

4.2 Councillors will need to let me know how they wish their involvement in Recovery to be undertaken.

## **5.0 Financial Implications**

5.1 The financial implications to this report are set out within appendix 3.

## **6.0 Legal Implications**

6.1 The Civil Contingencies Act establishes a new legislative framework for civil protection in the United Kingdom. It imposes a clear set of roles and responsibilities on those organisations with a role to play in preparing for and responding to emergencies. Local authorities are a Category 1 responder under the Act, and have a key role to play in respect in discharging their duties in the legislation.

6.2 The Act, and accompanying Regulations and guidance, delivers a single framework for civil protection in the United Kingdom capable of meeting the challenges of the twenty first century. The Act is separated into two parts: local arrangements for civil protection (Part 1) and emergency powers (Part 2).

6.3 Part 1 of the Act, the supporting Regulations and statutory guidance *Emergency Preparedness*, establish a clear set of roles and responsibilities for those involved in emergency preparation and response at the local level. Local responders are divided into two categories, with a different set of duties applying to each.

6.4 Category 1 responders are those organisations at the core of emergency response (e.g. emergency services, local authorities, NHS bodies). Category 1 responders are subject to the full set of civil protection duties. These include:

- assessing the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning in the form of a Community Risk Register;
- Put in place emergency plans;
- Create business continuity plans to ensure that they can continue to exercise critical functions in the event of an emergency;
- Make information available to the public about civil protection matters, and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency;
- Share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination
- Co-operate with other local responders to enhance coordination and efficiency;
- Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management (Local Authorities only).

6.5 Category 2 responders are required to co-operate and share information with other Category 1 and 2 responders to ensure that they are well integrated within wider emergency planning frameworks, and contribute their expertise on risks and essential services in the form of the Local Resilience Forums.

- 6.6 As indicated in the body of the report, the Chief Executive can exercise urgent powers pursuant to the following provisions in Part 3 Paragraph 9.3.2. of the Constitution in an emergency such as the current crisis’.

## **7.0 Equality Implications**

- 7.1 The public sector equality duty, as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a “protected characteristic” and those who do not share that protected characteristic. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 7.2 Having due regard involves the need to enquire into whether and how a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic and the need to consider taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. This includes removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- 7.3 There is no prescribed manner in which the council must exercise its public sector equality duty but having an adequate evidence base for its decision is necessary.
- 7.4 Due to the urgency of the situation, formal assessments were not undertaken, in respect of the decisions in Appendix 2. Such formal assessments are not a requirement of the duty. Importantly, an underlying purpose of the decisions was regard to the protection of those with protected characteristics, i.e. those over 70 and those with underlying health issues by restricting the potential spread of the virus.
- 7.5 It is clear that the suspension of certain services, and deprioritisation of others, will affect other protected groups, e.g. the closure of playgrounds will disproportionately impact on children and young people. However, the Council’s primary consideration of protecting vulnerable groups (based on public health advice and guidance and government directions and guidance) were and are considered to outweigh any other adverse impacts on other protected groups.
- 7.6 Where possible services have identified actions to mitigate the impact of the decisions, e.g. moving to an online service where possible. The equalities impact of the decisions will be kept under review.

## **8.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

- 8.1 There may conceivably be exceptional cases where public consultation becomes possible notwithstanding the COVID-19 crisis. However, it is not considered in the circumstances that non-statutory public consultation is a

viable or reasonable option for the Council in taking the decisions which are the subject of this report, even if at other times it would have considered consultation with the public and / or stakeholders affected by the decision.

8.2 The Council will make reasonable efforts to communicate with and take on board the views of service users affected by decisions and informing residents and stakeholders about decisions as quickly as possible about any changes to service provision. Where appropriate and reasonably practicable, changes to the Council's decisions will be made following responses from service users and others.

**9.0 Human Resources/Property/Environmental Sustainability Implications (if appropriate)**

9.1 Covered within paragraph 3.10 of the report.

**Report sign off:**

**CAROLYN DOWNS**  
Chief Executive

This page is intentionally left blank

## Appendix 1

### Schedule of Service Changes/decisions

Department	Service	Decision to close / reduce: rationale	Decision taken by: officer with delegated authority (including Gold)	Equalities consideration	Consultation undertaken, including with Cabinet member
<b>Legal, HR, Audit &amp; Investigations</b>	All	No decisions made			
<b>Finance</b>	Finance	No decisions made			
<b>Assistant Chief Executive (ACE)</b>	Strategy & Partnerships (Brent Connects)	Decision taken to cancel all Brent Connects events in March/April cycle. This decision may apply for the next cycle of meetings in which case we may need to consider how we continue our work to consult and involve residents in council decision- making.	Assistant Chief Executive	Brent Connects is a key way to connect with residents and provide them with updates on upcoming council priorities. Cancelling events means/ runs the risk of some residents who engage at these events and do not use technology to engage such as the elderly or people with learning disabilities.	Cabinet Member

Page 9

<b>Customer and Digital Services (CDS)</b>	ICT Shared Service	No decisions made			
	Client & Applications	No decisions made			

	Transformation	Closure of community hubs F2F service. Decision taken in conjunction with libraries and customer services in response to govt position and Gold decision to close council buildings.	Director of CDS.	Hubs are continuing to provide a phone service to meet the needs of vulnerable customers.	Consultation with VCS partners. Cabinet member informed.
	Procurement	No decisions made			
	Customer Access	Closure of face-to-face customer services in response to govt position and Gold decision to close council buildings.  Decision to close face to face registration and nationality service in line with changes to government legislation  In response to guidance from GRO and Govt legislation	Director of Customer Access in consultation with the Chief Executive  Gold strategic Group	Customer services staff have been redeployed to contact centre and are handling switchboard and benefits related calls.  All death registration requests now being carried out over the phone	Consultation with Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader

<b>Regeneration and Environment</b>	Burials	Reduced burial slots at other cemeteries to free up staff to relocate to Carpenders Park	Operational Director Environment Services Gold strategic Group	Reduced options for all customers	Consultation with Leader of the Council & with the relevant Cabinet Member
	Grounds Maintenance	Reduction in maintenance operations to allow staff to transfer to Carpenders Park Cemetery for burials work.	Operational Director Environment Services Gold strategic Group	None	Consultation with Leader of the Council & with the relevant Cabinet Member

	Grounds Maintenance	More focused operation, less frequent verge cutting and an increase in KOT for grass length from 100cm to 150cm	Operational Director Environment Services GOLD	None	Lead Member Leader
	Brent Start	Building closed to staff and learners as instructed by government in line with guidance received on schools closures	Operational Director, Regeneration, Growth & Employment	On line learning and support still available	No
	Brent Works	No face to face meetings to avoid contact in line with guidance for all LBB staff	Operational Director, Regeneration, Growth & Employment	Phone and online support still available	No
	Community Safety & Public Protection (CCTV)	Reduction in operating hours in line with staff availability	Operational Director Environment Services Gold strategic Group	None	with the relevant Cabinet Member
	Pest Control	Reduce by supplying customers with DIY kits. Avoids staff contact with customers in own homes. In line with guidance on social distancing.	Operational Director Environment Services	Requires customers to be proficient at administering content of the kit	None
	Highways	Footway renewal operation stopped as deemed non-essential and required close contact gang-work. In line with guidance on social distancing.	Operational Director Environment Services Gold strategic Group	None	Consultation with Leader of the Council & with the relevant Cabinet Member
	Street Lighting	Dimming to British Standard on all residential streets.	Operational Director	Reduced lighting may impact on residents/motorists	Consultation with Leader of the Council & with the

			Environment Services Gold strategic Group		relevant Cabinet Member
	Property & Assets;  (Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)/S106 obligations)	Agreement to 3 month deferred payments for CIL where asked and where construction activity has paused on sites. Review each case at 3 month point. S106 obligations – review on case by case basis and response agreed by Head of Service	Operational Director Environment Services GOLD 07/04/2020	None	Yes (via sitrep) with the relevant Cabinet Member
Page 12	Property & Assets; Environment	Decision to open a Mortuary at Marsh Road pursuant to the The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment)) Order 2020	Operational Director Environment Services & Operational Director Property and Assets	None	with the relevant Cabinet Member
	Public Realm	Harlesden Town Gardens is a small pocket park off Craven Park Avenue, Harlesden. Due to high levels of non-compliance and the aggressive nature of individuals resisting social distancing requirements, the park is requested to be locked altogether to secure public safety	Operational Director Environment Services GOLD 11/04/2020	None	with the relevant Cabinet Member

<b>Children and Young People</b>	Children's Centres	Of the 17 children's centres in Brent, 14 are leased to and run by Barnardo's.  Barnardo's made a decision to close these centres, with a very limited, appointment only midwifery offer remaining available from 3 of	Barnardo's Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> March 2020	Families are being contacted and offered telephone based support and advice and access to the Council's emergency	Cabinet Member informed of Barnardo's decision.
----------------------------------	--------------------	--	---	---	---



		the Barnardo's run centres. The remaining three Brent run centres continue to provide nursery provision, but consolidated on two sites.		assistance programme where necessary	
Short Breaks Centre		Vast majority of families informed the SBC they did not want to take up their respite care offer, based on PHE advice and added vulnerabilities of their children (disabled children). Decision made to close the centre.	Operational Director, CYP in consultation with Strategic Director Date of decision Monday 30th March.	CWD 0-25 service supporting families with additional care packages and co-ordinating support from schools and settings to assist parents in care for their children.	Cabinet Member informed.  Parents were consulted with prior to closure – decision based on majority of parental preference not to use the centre under current advice.
Roundwood Youth Centre		Decision to close taken based on Public Health England (PHE) advice and need for social distancing. Also given that all schools and settings were closed for universal provision it was determined that continuing to open the youth centre, offering universal provision, would run counter to national guidance.	Operational Director, CYP in consultation with Strategic Director Date of decision: Monday 23rd March.	Young Brent Foundation website and the Brent Youth Zone website offer online activities for young people.	Cabinet Member informed.  All service users informed at the point of service closure.
Freeman Family Centre		Barnardo's have made a decision to reduce service, running a very limited appointment only service for the most important contact cases that are court directed.	Barnardo's Date of decision: Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup> April.	Alternative contact is supported through phone and video calls to parents – brokered by the contact service within LAC/Permanency.	Cabinet Member informed.  All families have been contacted and are aware of new arrangements.
Wembley Learning Zone		Decision to close Wembley Stadium made by Wembley Stadium	Wembley Stadium / Football Association Date of decision: 21/3/20		Cabinet Member has been kept informed.

	Brent Music Service	Service offer has moved to being predominantly online at the time of school closures.	Operational Director, CYP Date of decision Monday 23/3/20	Consultation with schools has informed the development of an alternative online offer	Decisions on provision informed by consultation with schools.  Cabinet Member has been kept informed
	Gordon Brown Centre	The Gordon Brown Centre is closed for all activities in line with school closures. A leadership rota and staff rota is in place to ensure the care and safety of the animals and livestock on site.	Operational Director, CYP Date of decision: 21/3/20	As a fully traded service, the centre manager has engaged with all schools who have made bookings	Decisions on provision informed by consultation with schools.  Cabinet Member has been kept informed

<b>Community Well-being</b> Page 14	Libraries	Decision to reduce opening hours (all libraries to close at 6pm, only Wembley to open at weekends). Taken 18/3/20 with effect from 19/3/20. Rationale: response to staff absences	Director of Public Health (DPH) in consultation with CE, SD		With Lead Member
		Decision to close all libraries following Prime Minister's announcement Mitigation: extension of loan and reservation period. Expansion of online offer	CE in consultation with Leader Taken 20/03/2020		With Lead Member
	Repairs and heating/hot water breakdowns	Prioritising emergencies and urgent work to limit social contact. Risk assessments and methodologies produced by contractors.	Gold strategic Group	Considering vulnerabilities and how specific repairs might be urgent or emergencies for different members of our community.	Cabinet Member has been kept informed
	Voids and Lettings	Remaining void works being delivered (some materials unavailable) ready for letting when Govt. instruction lifted. Otherwise, Lettings are suspended. Risk assessments and methodologies produced by contractors.  In response to Central Government direction	Operational Director of Housing	None	Cabinet Member has been kept informed

	Repairs and gas surveys	Urgent and emergency issues being attended to only, to limit social contact. Remote inspections via photo and discussions with residents by phone to diagnose and limit contact.  In response to Central Government direction	Gold strategic Group	Considering vulnerabilities and how specific repairs might be urgent or emergency for different members of our community.	Cabinet Member has been kept informed
	Lift, water and fire equipment servicing and repair	All works to proceed with respect to government instruction on social distancing and resident preferences. Risk assessments and methodologies produced by contractors.	Gold strategic Group	None	Cabinet Member has been kept informed
	Fire and gas safety works.	All works to proceed with respect to government instruction on social distancing and resident preferences. . Risk assessments and methodologies produced by contractors.	Gold strategic Group	None	Cabinet Member has been kept informed
Page 15	Housing Management: Evictions	No eviction action will take place during the period of partial lockdown.  In response to Central Government direction	Operational Director of Housing	None	Cabinet Member has been kept informed
	Rent arrears	No arrears letters will be sent to households, phone calls will be made to better understand the individual households circumstances and advice provided based on Government support specific to Covid-19	Operational Director of Housing	None	Cabinet Member has been kept informed
	Estate Caretaking Deep Cleaning and Window Cleaning programme halted	Staffing levels due to sickness and shielding means, we have halted the deep cleaning and window-cleaning programme so that we can create capacity within the service.	Operational Director of Housing	None	Cabinet Member has been kept informed
	Decants	All non-urgent decants have been postponed  Government advice – not to move	Operational Director of Housing	None	Cabinet Member has been kept informed

	Right to Buy process	RTB Process has been impacted as external valuer is not valuing properties. The service is unable to process any new applications but is proceeding with those where valuations have already been carried out.	Operational Director of Housing	None	Cabinet Member has been kept informed
	Estate inspection programme.	Not taking place but there is a significant decrease in communal area related issues due to partial lockdown.	Operational Director of Housing	None	Cabinet Member has been kept informed
	Private Housing Services	As recommended by MHCLG the PRS Enforcement policy has been updated during the C-10 outbreak. It sets out the approach we will take with regards to enforcement that makes sure that tenants are kept safe and landlords are supported wherever possible.  All pro-active inspections have stopped and will now only carry out enforcement in emergencies and cases where there is no other alternative.	Operational Director of Housing	None	Cabinet Member has been kept informed
	Housing Supply & Partnerships (development programme)	A number of building developments have ceased on-site operations at the instigation of the contractor whilst others continue at this time. Current government advice is being followed in relation to construction projects.	Operational Director of Housing	None	Cabinet Member has been kept informed
	Housing Supply & Partnerships (PFI/PPP contracts)	Routine monitoring of the contracts has ceased (site visits) however the Contract Officer continues to maintain contact with the provider and is involved in the resolution of emergencies such as rehousing following fires and other major events etc.	Operational Director of Housing	None	Cabinet Member has been kept informed
	Housing Needs	Threshold reduced on duty to secure emergency accommodation for homeless people. Specifically the Eligibility and Priority Needs Test in homelessness legislation.  Based on Government advice to prevent rough sleeping.	Operational Director of Housing	Positive impact	Cabinet Member has been kept informed

	Housing Needs	Ceased all face-to-face assessments. Homelessness applications are being assessed successfully over the telephone and through CRM. A skeleton staff is present at the Civic Centre on a daily basis to deal with emergency homeless applications, where the household cannot access a computer or telephone	Operational Director of Housing	Positive impact	Cabinet Member has been kept informed
	Housing Needs	Ceased termination of Temporary Accommodation, following a negative decision being upheld on review. To follow the guidance on evictions.	Operational Director of Housing	Positive impact	Cabinet Member has been kept informed
	Housing Needs	Ceased sign ups into social housing. All adverts, shortlisting and viewings have been suspended.	Operational Director of Housing	Positive impact	Cabinet Member has been kept informed
Page 17	Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre (BPCLC)	Decision to close following PM's announcement that gyms would be closed	CE in consultation with Leader Taken 20/03/20		With Lead Member only
	Commissioned substance misuse services	Clinically led, risk assessed and agreed new service model introduced from 16/03/20	Provider		With Lead Member only
	Sexual Health Services	London Sexual Health Programme supported professional bodies (BASHH and FSRH) to produce a consensus statement on prioritisation of sexual health services during COVID.	Provider with regard to BASHH / FSRH consensus statement Agreed 20/03/20	Explicit attention to those with greatest sexual health needs: in terms of protected characteristics this is MSM, some BAME groups and younger people	With Lead Member only
	Sexual health Services	Expansion of on line Sexual Health London (SHL) service to allow more users to test on line and access treatment. To support reduction in clinic capacity 26/03/20	Chair of Strategic Board		With Lead Member only
	0-19 service	Prioritisation of services in line with NHSE requirements. Formal communication 20/03/20	NHSE		Communication with Lead Member

	Adult Social Care	Closure of two council run day centres – one relating to meeting moderate needs relating to social interaction including older people and those with mental health issues and one for persons with high level learning disability and autism needs. Day centres were closed on public health and protection grounds after consideration of Public Health England and Government advice arising from the Covid-19 pandemic that such day centres should be closed during the lockdown period.	Operational Director of Adult Social Care on 27 <sup>th</sup> March	Families are being contacted and offered telephone based support and advice and access to the Council’s emergency assistance programme where necessary. Risk based reviews have been completed for all day centre clients currently at home, and contact is made according to the risk assessment (daily, weekly or monthly as risk demands)	Decision escalated to Gold command for approval prior to being enacted and Cabinet Member has been kept informed
Page 18	Adult Social Care – care provision	Most Care Act assessments are carried out over the telephone. Only urgent face to face Care Act assessments and visits take place following a risk assessment. To date, no policy decisions have been made regarding the easements to the Care Act 2014 following the introduction of the Coronavirus Act 2020 or to streamline services in this regard and at present, decisions under the Care Act regarding the level of service provision to individual service users under the Care Act will be carried out on a case by case basis. At present, the changes made are to how the service is provided regarding changes in the level of service provided.	Operational Director of Adult Social Care	This affects all client groups. Assessments are still being carried out, though mostly not face to face but by telephone and consideration of documentation.	Cabinet Member has been kept informed
	Adult Social Care – mental capacity	Most of the assessments relating to mental capacity (Mental Capacity Act 2005) and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS) are taking place over the telephone and other media, including consideration of documentation, without a face to face assessment. Only urgent face to face	Operation Director of Adult Social Care	This affects all client groups. Assessments are still being carried out, though mostly not face to face but by telephone and consideration of documentation.	Cabinet Member has been kept informed

		assessments and visits take place following a risk assessment. Government guidance has been issued regarding assessments of mental capacity and DOLS as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic though the legislation has not changed. At present, the changes made are to how the service is provided regarding changes in the level.			
	Adult Social Care – mental health	Assessments relating to mental health (Mental Health Act 1983 – “MHA”) are taking place in person as any MHA is urgent. Assessments take place following a risk assessment, but this is standard practice, and most MHA are undertaken out of hours. The Coronavirus Act 2020 has made some temporary modifications and easements to the Mental Health Act 1983. At present, there have been no changes made to the provision of MHA services.	Operation Director of Adult Social Care	This affects all client groups. Assessments are still being carried out as it is not possible to undertake the majority of MHA without a face to face assessment.	Cabinet Member has been kept informed

This page is intentionally left blank



## Appendix 2

### Critical Services

As part of businesses continuity planning for COVID-19, services delivered by the council have been assessed to identify those that are most important to continue to delivered, based on the Government Guidance and service statutory requirements, in order to maintain service delivery to vulnerable groups, and maintain the general welfare and health of Brent's communities.

Services have been assessed by reference to the following, which are listed in order of priority:

- a. Impact on People (communities, partners and Council staff)
- b. Legal duties
- c. Financial requirements
- d. The delivery of Council objectives

**Priority One Critical Services** – will be those that the Council will not accept the risk that these services cannot be provided and its resources will be prioritised on their delivery.

**Priority Two Essential Services** - will be those in respect of which it would be unacceptable to accept any risk of failure, except where this was necessary to protect the delivery of Category 1 services

**Priority Three Important Services** - will be those in respect of which it would be unacceptable to accept any risk of failure, except where this was necessary to protect the delivery of Category 1 or 2 services

**Priority Four Non-Essential/Critical Services** – services that may be reduced or closed or from which resource may be diverted to higher priority service without unacceptable risk.

The outcome of this process is set out below.

Service	Impact on People (communities partners and staff) rating 1-4	Legal duties rating 1-4	Financial requirements rating 1-4	Delivery of Council objectives rating 1-4	Comments	Current RAG	Overall rating 1-4
---------	--	-------------------------	-----------------------------------	---	----------	-------------	--------------------

**Priority One Critical Services:**

<b>Chief Executive's Department</b>							
Legal Services – Children's Social Care Team	1	1	1	1	Child care law and the Council's duties under the Children Act 1989 have not been changed or relaxed under the Coronavirus Act 2020. The Council will require legal advice regarding whether the risk threshold has been met and where necessary, to issue legal proceedings and obtain appropriate care orders and other orders from the court.	Green	1
Transactional Services	1	1	1	1	Both in normal and extraordinary times finance has a key role to play in the delivery of services and in meeting the council's statutory obligations. The services provided are wide ranging including (but is not limited to): budget setting management (all budgets across the council), payroll, payment of suppliers, overseeing collection and allocation of council tax and business rates, overseeing insurance policies and processing insurance claims.	Green	1
Capital, Treasury & Commercial	1	1	1	1		Green	1

Service	Impact on People (communities partners and staff) rating 1-4	Legal duties rating 1-4	Financial requirements rating 1-4	Delivery of Council objectives rating 1-4	Comments	Current RAG	Overall rating 1-4
---------	--	-------------------------	-----------------------------------	---	----------	-------------	--------------------

Chief Accountant	1	1	1	1	<p>Pension administration. Put simply, it would not be possible for the council to function without the retention of a core finance service.</p> <p>Added to this the finance service is at the forefront of the response to COVID-19. Leading on the arrangements for distributing the council's share of the £1.6 bn COVID-19 emergency fund and implementing procedures to pay suppliers quicker to protect the continuity of services for our residents.</p> <p>Finally, there remains a number of statutory duties that must be fulfilled such that are contained within the LGA and the ACA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the requirement to set an annual budget and council tax (Local Government Finance Act 1992 Section 29)</li> <li>- To keep, prepare and certify accounts (Audit Commission Act 1998 Section 27)</li> <li>- To maintain a system of internal audit and internal control (Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003, SI 2003/533 Regulation 6)</li> <li>- As custodian of large sums of</li> </ul>	Green	1
Finance - Children & Young People	1	1	1	1		Green	1
Finance - Corporate	1	1	1	1		Green	1
Finance - Regeneration & Environment	1	1	1	1		Green	1

Service	Impact on People (communities partners and staff) rating 1-4	Legal duties rating 1-4	Financial requirements rating 1-4	Delivery of Council objectives rating 1-4	Comments	Current RAG	Overall rating 1-4
---------	--	-------------------------	-----------------------------------	---	----------	-------------	--------------------

Finance - Housing & Community Wellbeing	1	1	1	1	money the council must manage treasury risk in accordance with the regulations specified in the (Local Government Act 2003 and the CIPFA Prudential Code)	Green	1
Corporate Communications	1	2	3	1	Effective Covid 19 communications is vital to the objectives of Gold Group	Green	1
<b>Regeneration &amp; Environment</b>							
Mortuary	1	1	1	1	First point of storage as deceased numbers increase	Amber	1
Funerals and Cemeteries	1	1	1	1	Effective operation necessary to maintain capacity at mortuary storage	Amber	1
Community Safety / ASB	1	2	2	1	Collaborating with the police to resolve local crime and disorder issues.	Green	1
Environmental Enforcement	1	1	2	1	Responds to matter so environmental concern so neighbourhoods are kept clean and safe	Green	1
Parks	1	3	3	1		Green	1
Trading Standards	1	1	3	1	Ensures compliance with latest lockdown regulations	Green	1
Food Health and Safety	1	1	2	1	Ensures proper business practice and regulation	Green	1

Service	Impact on People (communities partners and staff) rating 1-4	Legal duties rating 1-4	Financial requirements rating 1-4	Delivery of Council objectives rating 1-4	Comments	Current RAG	Overall rating 1-4
---------	--	-------------------------	-----------------------------------	---	----------	-------------	--------------------

Environmental Health Monitoring / Enforcement	1	1	2	1	Ensures proper business practice and regulation	Green	1
Public Safety	2	1	2	1	Ensures matter relating to public safety are resolved quickly to mitigate risks	Green	1
Marsh Road Centre Operation	1	1	1	1	New mortuary facility critical in ensure capacity to deal with excess deaths	Amber	1
Dangerous Structures	1	1	2	1	Maintain health and safety of public	Amber	1
Emergency Planning	1	1	2	1	Essential to coordinating the Council's response to this emergency situation and liaising with key regional partners	Amber	1

#### **Children and Young People**

Localities – Brent Family Front Door	1	1	1	1		Green	1
Localities – Children with Disabilities	1	1	1	1		Green	1
Localities – social work teams.	1	1	1	1	Children in Need, Child Protection and No Recourse to Public Funds	Green	1
Looked After Children and Permanency – Looked After Children	1	1	1	1		Green	1

Service	Impact on People (communities partners and staff) rating 1-4	Legal duties rating 1-4	Financial requirements rating 1-4	Delivery of Council objectives rating 1-4	Comments	Current RAG	Overall rating 1-4
---------	--	-------------------------	-----------------------------------	---	----------	-------------	--------------------

Looked After Children and Permanency – Care Leavers	1	1	1	1		Green	1
Looked After Children and Permanency - Fostering	1	1	1	1		Green	1
Inclusion – SEND and SENAS	1	1	1	1	Includes Special Education Needs Assessment, Hearing Impairment and Visual Impairment and support for children with autism	Green	1
Inclusion – Virtual School	1	1	1	1		Green	1
Early Help – Accelerated Support Team	1	1	1	1		Green	1
Early Help – Youth Offending Service	1	1	1	1		Green	1
Forward Planning, Performance and Partnerships - Placement Commissioning	1	1	1	1		Green	1
Safeguarding and Quality Assurance – Child Protection	1	1	1	1		Green	1

Service	Impact on People (communities partners and staff) rating 1-4	Legal duties rating 1-4	Financial requirements rating 1-4	Delivery of Council objectives rating 1-4	Comments	Current RAG	Overall rating 1-4
---------	--	-------------------------	-----------------------------------	---	----------	-------------	--------------------

Advisers including LADO							
<b>Community Wellbeing</b>							
Homelessness services	1	1	2	1	This is a statutory service and even more important as people need to be accommodated during this pandemic.	Green	1
Repairs & Maintenance	2	1	2	1	Ensuring rented homes are kept in good repair, is a statutory requirement for landlords. More so, there are specific repair types identified as urgent and must be attended to within a specified timescale. Additionally, this service is known to be the most important service from the view of our tenants.	Green	1
Fire & Gas Safety Works	1	1	1	1	The Council, as a landlord, has a statutory responsibility to ensure all its dwellings comply with health & safety regulations.	Green	1
Community Learning Disabilities	1	1	1	1	Statutory service to support people with disabilities	Green	1
Mental Health	1	1	1	1	Integrated Team within CNWL to support assessment and ongoing support for people with MH issues	Green	1
Adult Mental Health Professionals (AMHPs)	1	1	1	1	Qualified AMHPs warranted by Brent Council to complete Mental Health Act Assessments.	Green	1

Service	Impact on People (communities partners and staff) rating 1-4	Legal duties rating 1-4	Financial requirements rating 1-4	Delivery of Council objectives rating 1-4	Comments	Current RAG	Overall rating 1-4
---------	--	-------------------------	-----------------------------------	---	----------	-------------	--------------------

Safeguarding	1	1	1	1	Core statutory duty	Green	1
Occupational Therapy	1	1	1	1	Core statutory duty	Green	1
Community Review	1	1	1	1	Core statutory duty	Green	1
Older People and Physical Disability - North and South Teams	1	1	1	1	Core statutory duty	Green	1
ASC Duty	1	1	1	1	Core statutory duty	Green	1
Emergency Duty Team	1	1	1	1	Core statutory duty	Green	1
Residential and Nursing	1	1	1	1	Core statutory duty	Green	1
Community and Prevention	1	1	1	1	Core statutory duty	Green	1
Supported Living	1	1	1	1	Core statutory duty	Green	1
Hospital Discharge Team (HDT)	1	1	1	1	Core statutory duty	Green	1
Rehab and Reablement	1	1	1	1	Core statutory duty	Green	1
Direct Services (Tudor Gardens)	1	1	1	1	Residential care home for LD clients	Green	1

**Priority Two - Essential Services**



Service	Impact on People (communities partners and staff) rating 1-4	Legal duties rating 1-4	Financial requirements rating 1-4	Delivery of Council objectives rating 1-4	Comments	Current RAG	Overall rating 1-4
---------	--	-------------------------	-----------------------------------	---	----------	-------------	--------------------

Chief Executive's Department							
Legal Services Adult social care	1	2	2	2	- A number of the Council's duties under the Care Act 2014 have been relaxed and been replaced by powers under the Coronavirus Act 2020 for the Council to act within its discretion. This could increase the scope of an increase in legal challenges. The Council will require legal advice to deal with any challenges as to how the Council is exercising its powers under the Care Act, as temporarily amended by the Coronavirus Act 2020. - Issuing and defending Applications to the Court of Protection regarding the care of vulnerable people	Green	2
Legal Services – homelessness advice	2	2	2	2	The Council's homelessness related duties under the Housing Act 1996 as amended have not been changed by the Coronavirus Act 2020. Council will require legal advice to advise on any challenges which the Council faces in seeking to comply with the homelessness legislation.	Green	2
Legal Services Governance	2	2	3	3	Advice on governance and lawful decision-making during COVID -19 crisis	Green	2

Service	Impact on People (communities partners and staff) rating 1-4	Legal duties rating 1-4	Financial requirements rating 1-4	Delivery of Council objectives rating 1-4	Comments	Current RAG	Overall rating 1-4
---------	--	-------------------------	-----------------------------------	---	----------	-------------	--------------------

Legal Services – Contracts (support on procurement and grants for COVID-19 response)	2	2	2	3	Advice on legal compliance and risk issues in relation to procurement, contract management and grants for COVID-19 response and arising from the COVID-19 crisis	Green	2
Fraud Investigation and guidance	2	2	2	3	Urgent decision making and payment arrangements create a significant challenge to internal controls and a risk of fraud.	Green	2
HR Support to Schools	2	2	2	4	The team liaise with the DCS and Head teachers providing advice on a range of matter.	Green	2
Recruitment - For critical and key workers	2	2	3	4		Green	2
Occupational Health	1	2	4	4	Focus has shifted to providing advice only related to COVID -19 with regular interaction with DPH.	Green	2
CE's support	2	2	2	2		Amber	2
Executive support team	2	2	2	2	Team supporting the referrals helpline, Members enquiries and ensuring that, eg, Zoom licences are purchased	Amber	2
Governance	2	2	2	2	Governance support for emergency decision and other decision making essential	Amber	2
Third Sector/ Voluntary and	1	4	2	1	Working with VCS organisations to protect vulnerable residents.	Green	2

Service	Impact on People (communities partners and staff) rating 1-4	Legal duties rating 1-4	Financial requirements rating 1-4	Delivery of Council objectives rating 1-4	Comments	Current RAG	Overall rating 1-4
---------	--	-------------------------	-----------------------------------	---	----------	-------------	--------------------

Community sector liaison					Also providing grants to organisations which we need to continue administering.		
Prevent	2	4	4	1-2	A community engagement event was scheduled that had to be cancelled in March. Continuing to engage with communities is a vital part of protecting Brent's residents against extremism.	Amber	2-3

<b>Regeneration &amp; Environment</b>							
Pest Control	2	2	2	2	Essential to maintain clean and safe living conditions within the community	Amber	2
CCTV Control Room	1	2	3	1	Supports surveillance, particularly around crime, disorder and compliance with Government's lockdown requirements	Amber	2
Nuisance Control	2	3	3	2	Provides the community with reassurance and support in difficult local situations.	Amber	2
Neighbourhood Management	2	2	2	1	Maintains a regular monitoring of the condition of the local public realm so issues are identified and resolved	Green	2
Neighbourhood Patrols	2	2	2	1	Provides a visible council presence in local neighbourhoods. Reassurance for residents and a response to issues.	Green	2
Highways – Inspectors and	2	2	3	2	Maintains a working road network to minimise disruption to local residents	Green	2

Service	Impact on People (communities partners and staff) rating 1-4	Legal duties rating 1-4	Financial requirements rating 1-4	Delivery of Council objectives rating 1-4	Comments	Current RAG	Overall rating 1-4
---------	--	-------------------------	-----------------------------------	---	----------	-------------	--------------------

Network Engineers							
Licensing	2	1	2	2	Ensure proper business practice	Amber	2
Parking Contract Management	2	2	1	2	Ensures orderly parking arrangements are maintained to the convenience of local residents and to keep roads free of congestion	Amber	2
ES&E (business support)	2	4	3	2	Active role supporting business through COVID	Amber	2
ES&E (Brent Works)	2	4	3	2	Active role supporting unemployed	Amber	2
Facilities Management (including AV)	1	2	2	1	Essential to keeping the Civic Centre open, secure and operational, as well as maintaining other Council sites across the Borough that are open / closed.	Amber	2
Health & Safety	2	1	3	2	Essential to coordinating the Council's response to the H&S aspects of this emergency situation and liaising with key partners	Amber	2
Capital Projects – Schools	2	2	2	2	Team dealing with Schools building projects. Projects are starting to be delayed, as contractors cannot get staff to sites.	Amber	2
Capital Projects – Housing	2	2	2	2	Team dealing with Housing building projects. Projects are starting to be	Amber	2

Service	Impact on People (communities partners and staff) rating 1-4	Legal duties rating 1-4	Financial requirements rating 1-4	Delivery of Council objectives rating 1-4	Comments	Current RAG	Overall rating 1-4
---------	--	-------------------------	-----------------------------------	---	----------	-------------	--------------------

					delayed, as contractors cannot get staff to sites.		
<b>Children &amp; Young People</b>							
Inclusion Support	2	2	2	2		Green	2
Early Help – children’s centres	2	2	2	2		Green	2
Forward Planning, Performance and Partnerships - Admissions and Performance Teams	2	2	2	2	Coordination of school admissions; statutory performance reporting; providing information on vulnerable children	Green	2
Setting and School Effectiveness	2	2	2	2	Support to schools and settings	Green	2
Safeguarding and Quality Assurance – Learning and Development and Participation	2	2	2	2		Green	2

**Priority Three Important Services**

<b>Chief Executive’s Department</b>
-------------------------------------

Service	Impact on People (communities partners and staff) rating 1-4	Legal duties rating 1-4	Financial requirements rating 1-4	Delivery of Council objectives rating 1-4	Comments	Current RAG	Overall rating 1-4
---------	--	-------------------------	-----------------------------------	---	----------	-------------	--------------------

Legal Services – Prosecutions (Closure Orders and enforcement of COVID-19 compliance)	3	3	3	3	Regulations have been issued under the Coronavirus Act 2020 regarding health protection and businesses. There are powers in relation to health protection to issue prohibition notices to close businesses, issue fixed penalty notices and issue prosecution proceedings regarding which legal advice and assistance will be required in relation to the exercise of those powers.	Green	3
Legal Services – Contracts (other)	3	3	3	3		Green	3
HR advice to managers	3	3	3	3	There is a range of BAU issues that are still the main focus of SHRAs as well as a number of COVID-19 matters	Green	3
Agency supply	3	3	3	3	Responding to staff shortage. Presently working with the P&V sector to supply care home staff cover.	Green	3
Legal Services – Employment	3	3	4	3	Advice relating to specific COVID related staffing issues	Green	3
Leader & Member Support	3	3	3	3		Green	3
Political group support	3	3	3	3		Green	3
Statutory Boards and Committees	3-4	1-2	4	2	We initially postponed meetings of the below but may need to explore virtual meetings:	Amber	3

Service	Impact on People (communities partners and staff) rating 1-4	Legal duties rating 1-4	Financial requirements rating 1-4	Delivery of Council objectives rating 1-4	Comments	Current RAG	Overall rating 1-4
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Scrutiny committees</li> <li>- Health and Wellbeing Board</li> <li>- Safeguarding Adults Board</li> <li>- Multiagency safeguarding Children Forum and Executive Group</li> </ul>		
<b>Customers&amp; Digital</b>							
Transformation (inc. Hubs and website)	3	4	4	2	Higher ratings relate to community hubs service and council website. Other transformation work is non-essential. Some resource has already been diverted e.g. digital transformation to new systems for covid.	Green	3
Customer Access Face to face contact and registrations	3	4	4	2	Face to face contact centre.  Registration and nationality	Green	3
Digital Infrastructure	3	3	4	3	Supporting shielding	green	3
ICT Shared Service	3	3	4	3	Network robust and allowing 2000 plus staff work from home	green	3

Service	Impact on People (communities partners and staff) rating 1-4	Legal duties rating 1-4	Financial requirements rating 1-4	Delivery of Council objectives rating 1-4	Comments	Current RAG	Overall rating 1-4
---------	--	-------------------------	-----------------------------------	---	----------	-------------	--------------------

Client & Applications	3	3	4	3	Supporting all critical back office systems	green	3
Procurement	4	4	4	3		green	3

<b>Regeneration &amp; Environment</b>							
NRSWA Team	3	3	3	3	Maintains a working road network to minimise disruption to local residents	Green	3
Highways – Accident Claims	3	3	3	3	Ensures redress for claimants in accident situations	Green	3
Trees Maintenance	3	3	3	3	Ensures dangerous trees are maintained to protect local residents.	Amber	3
Lighting	3	3	3	3	Effective lighting helps ensure a safe neighbourhood environment	Amber	3
Planning – applications (statutory)	3	3	3	3	Important to support development industry, and the local economy post pandemic	Amber	3
Estates Regeneration	2	4	3	2	On site delivery work has ceased; preparation work continuing	Green	3
ES&E (Brent Start)	2	4	3	3	Building closed but can deliver some remotely	Amber	3
Commercial Property	2	4	1	3	Team dealing with all aspects of the Council's commercial property matters. The key issue here is the rent abatements and the liaison with our tenants.	Green	3



Service	Impact on People (communities partners and staff) rating 1-4	Legal duties rating 1-4	Financial requirements rating 1-4	Delivery of Council objectives rating 1-4	Comments	Current RAG	Overall rating 1-4
---------	--	-------------------------	-----------------------------------	---	----------	-------------	--------------------

Residential Property & Acquisitions	2	4	1	3	Team dealing with all the residential acquisitions for; HRA, I4B and the regen schemes. The market has effectively "closed" for a period, so there will be an impact here.	Green	3
Planning Enforcement	3	4	3	2	Protects residential amenity, but long slow process anyway	Green	3
Enforcement in Private Rented Housing	3	2	4	1	The Council has a regulatory responsibility over the private rented sector, and this comes with power to enforce actions that the Council deems necessary to ensure a tenant is living in a safe environment.	Green	3
<b>Children and Young People</b>							
Early Help – Education Welfare	3	3	3	3		Green	3

#### Priority Four Non-Essential/Critical Services

<b>Chief Executive's Department</b>							
Legal Services – Prosecutions (Other than Closure Orders and enforcement of COVID-19 compliance)	4	4	4	4		Green	4

Service	Impact on People (communities partners and staff) rating 1-4	Legal duties rating 1-4	Financial requirements rating 1-4	Delivery of Council objectives rating 1-4	Comments	Current RAG	Overall rating 1-4
---------	--	-------------------------	-----------------------------------	---	----------	-------------	--------------------

Legal Services – Financial Litigation	4	4	3	4		Green	4
Legal Services – Property and Planning	3	4	3	4		Green	4
Legal Services – Housing and Civil Litigation	4	4	4	4		Green	4
Internal Audit	4	3	4	3		Green	4
Non-fraud Investigations	4	4	4	4		Green	4
Recruitment - other	4	4	4	4		Green	4
L&D	4	4	4	4		Green	4
Apprenticeships	4	4	4	3	New recruitment suspended until further notice.	Amber	4
Conference & Events	3	4	4	4	The conference & events team can be redeployed to appropriate roles as necessary. Income is being severely hit though	Green	4
Electoral services team	4	4	4	4	All elections suspended until 2021	Green	4
Complaints & Fol	4	4	4	4	Have communicated that response times may be extended.	Amber	4
<b>Regeneration and Environment</b>							

Service	Impact on People (communities partners and staff) rating 1-4	Legal duties rating 1-4	Financial requirements rating 1-4	Delivery of Council objectives rating 1-4	Comments	Current RAG	Overall rating 1-4
---------	--	-------------------------	-----------------------------------	---	----------	-------------	--------------------

Plan-making (statutory)	4	4	4	4	Imposed delay from lack of an examination date. Work on SPDs can be delayed	Green	4
Land Charges (Statutory)	4	3	4	4	Demand expected to significantly reduce; if backlog builds, this is acceptable risk	Green	4
Regeneration team	4	4	4	4	Long term project work	Green	4
<b>Community Wellbeing</b>							
Direct Services (Day centres)	2	4	4	3	Services closed on government advice	Red	4

This page is intentionally left blank

## Appendix 3

### April 2020 COVID-19 Finance Update

#### 1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report brings together the councils initial estimate of the financial impact, based on current information, of the COVID-19 outbreak. The estimates within this paper are based on a baseline assumption that the lockdown protocols will last three months and a further three months will be required to return to a form of normality.
- 1.2 In response to the outbreak, the government has been making daily announcements and more understanding of the potential impact of COVID-19 on local government finances is emerging. In addition, a COVID-19 tracker is being maintained of all additional expenditure, as well as loss of income and the impact on the delivery of savings, across the Council.

#### 2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 For the Audit and Standards Committee to note the information within this appendix.

#### 3.0 COVID-19 Emergency Funding

- 3.1 The table below summaries the measures announced as of 14 April 2020, based on current information.
- 3.2 An additional £1.6bn was announced for local councils by the government over the weekend of 18 April, but no specific allocation has been provided to Brent as of yet.

Table 1

Measure announced	Amount for Brent (£m)	Further detail
<b>Additional Funding</b>		
Share of £500m Hardship fund	£3.9	It is not clear if this grant will be subject to clawback, however the Government's expectation is that all recipients of working age council tax support will receive a further reduction of £150. Currently there are 18,280 recipients and this is expected to increase as applications of Universal Credit increase nationally.

		Currently awaiting further government guidance before re-billing can occur.
Share of £1.6b allocated from £5b Coronavirus Response fund	£9.3	This grant is not ring fenced and is intended to help address the pressures across all the services the council provides.
<b>Business Rates Additional Discounts</b>		
100% Expanded Business Rates Retail Relief regardless of rateable value	£53.6m	Brent, like all Local Authorities, will be fully compensated for these reliefs.
<b>Grants to Businesses</b>		
£10k for small businesses	£64.4	£12.3b was paid out nationally on 1 April 2020. There are no workings provided for the amount received and it is a payment on account, i.e. as authorities will be funded on outturn costs, to be confirmed in the future, with weekly monitoring required to pick up additional funding needs. Payment of grants commenced on 3 April 2020.
£25k for retail, hospitality, leisure, estate agents, lettings agencies and bingo halls		

#### 4.0 Summary of key financial challenges

- 4.1 As a result of these extraordinary circumstances, it is expected that departments, in particular Regeneration & Environment, will experience income and expenditure pressures over and above that which their current budgets are based upon, which were agreed by Council in February 2020. The magnitude of these expenditure pressures will depend on the severity of the pandemic and how long the pandemic lasts.
- 4.2 A tracker has been created to record these additional pressures, which includes additional expenditure pressures, loss of income, impact on savings and capital programmes and treasury management issues. The table below provides a summary of the expected loss of income and costs to the council as a result of COVID-19, assuming that the current social distancing measures are in place for three months and that the financial impact is experienced for an additional three months to 30 September 2020. This is a first round of data gathering and there are significant uncertainties and some gaps in the estimates. Therefore, figures are likely to change over time as data is refreshed.

Table 2

Directorate	19/20 Impact (£m)	20/21 One-off/3 month lockdown impact to 30 Jun 20 (£m)	20/21 Additional cost if extended till 30 Sep 20 (£m)	Total impact (£m)
<b>General fund</b>				
Assistant Chief Executive	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.5
Children and Young People	0.0	1.4	1.6	3.1
Community and Wellbeing	0.3	3.7	3.5	7.5
Customer and Digital Services	0.0	6.1	2.3	8.4
Regeneration and Environment	0.1	6.4	5.5	12.1
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>18.1</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>31.7</b>
<b>DSG</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>HRA</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>3.4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>19.9</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>35.4</b>

4.3 Total additional spend to date (17<sup>th</sup> April) on Covid -19 response stands at £1.568m with a forecast of this increasing to £2.204m by the end of April. This The monthly ongoing costs at £0.982m with are current level of intervention.

Item	Spend to 17th April £m's	Forecast to end of April £m's	Additional Month cost £m's
Purchase of PPE for providers and staff	0.5	0.7	0.3
Equipping Peel Road step down facility for clients discharged from hospital and care contract for operating company	0.03	0.04	0.07
Paying for Agency staff to assist Homecare providers	0.007	0.014	0.028
Emergency Accommodation for Rough Sleepers and Homeless	0.175	0.288	0.229
Overflow mortuary	0.32	0.54	0.22
Veolia (Additional agency costs)	0.067	0.112	0.09
Additional staffing hours - Customer Access	0.013	0.018	0.01
Other IT related expenditure for Distance working	0.44	0.45	0
Shielding	0.016	0.042	0.035
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.568</b>	<b>2.204</b>	<b>0.982</b>

## **5.0 Impact on 2020/21 savings and MTFS**

- 5.1 The budget agreed by Council in February 2020 included savings of £7.4m in 2020/21, in order to deliver a balanced budget. Assuming the baseline assumption that the lockdown protocols will last three months and a further three months will be required to return to a form of normality, the impact on the savings planned for delivery in 2020/21 have been reviewed.
- 5.2 Overall, the analysis above shows that of the £7.4m planned savings in 20/21, £1.6m have already been delivered (either delivered early or not affected by the impact of COVID-19), £2.9m are at risk of not being delivered and £2.9m will not be delivered in 20/21.
- 5.3 Further analysis will need to be conducted to understand whether (i) the savings at risk will not be delivered at all, (ii) the savings at risk will be delivered but there may be some degree of slippage and/or (iii) mitigating actions can be implemented in the short term. An initial analysis is described in the following paragraphs.

### **Community Wellbeing**

- 5.4 A total of £4.2m savings were planned from the CWB department budgets, but £2m of these relate to the ongoing NAIL programme and were already re-profiled to the 2021/22 financial year, with reserves being used in 2020/21. In terms of those savings at risk, COVID-19 has impacted some of the budgeted measures as officers have delayed recommissioning of homecare and day care provision in order to focus on the emergency response. The opening of the Family Wellbeing centres is delayed to December 2020 so the public health recommissioning savings are also rated at risk. No significant financial savings are expected from these measures in 2020/21, creating a pressure of £0.8m.

### **Children & Young People**

- 5.6 There are two savings targets to be delivered by the CYP department in 2020/21 and due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, there will be slippage in delivery of these savings. The targets include £1.49m to develop family hubs from children's centres renamed Family Wellbeing Centres (FWC). It was expected that this savings target will slip, as the existing contracts supporting the current arrangement in place were due to expire in August 2020 with a go live date of September 2020 for the new FWCs. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the contracts will be extended for a further three months with the expectation of a revised go-live date of December 2020.
- 5.7 The other savings target in CYP of £0.1m relates to developing a shared fostering service with three other West London Alliance (WLA) boroughs, resulting in staffing efficiencies. In 2019/20, a grant of £0.1m seed funding was awarded to the WLA with Brent being the lead authority to create a West London fostering agency. A business case was developed for submission to



the DfE for further seed funding allowing creation of the joint fostering service but due to the pandemic, the DfE has suspended activity on this until further notice.

### **Regeneration & Environment**

- 5.8 A total of £0.8m in savings was expected to be delivered by the R&E department in 2020/21. Of the five savings identified, two are still on track to be delivered and are rated green. The service is still able to deliver £0.5m of savings by dimming street lights and achieving staffing efficiencies. These savings are not impacted as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak as the Council is still able to adjust LED lighting output to reduce energy costs and carbon emissions.
- 5.9 The remaining three savings amounting to £0.3m relate to income generation and have been rated at risk as the ability to achieve them has been affected by the government's social distancing measures. Both, commercial rental income and building control income generation is expected to be severely affected due to this. In addition, activity in Wembley is unlikely to increase which will have a negative impact on the ability to attain a rise in licencing income due to the same reason.

### **Customer & Digital Services and Assistant Chief Executive**

- 5.10 At this stage, it is assumed that all of the savings in CDS and ACE will be delivered.

### **Summary**

- 5.11 Further analysis will be conducted and reported alongside the existing budget monitoring regime, which is due to begin in May 2020. However, an initial analysis suggests that most of the savings at risk will be subject to some degree of slippage, rather than not being delivered at all. As mentioned in section five of this report, where there is delay in the delivery of 2020/21 savings and mitigating actions are not sufficient to cover the balance required, the subsequent overspend will have to be funded from the reserves identified to manage the impact of COVID-19.
- 5.12 This short term measure is a reasonable approach that will ensure the financial position of the Council is sound for 2020/21. However, the extent to which savings will not be delivered at all, without sufficient mitigating actions, will have a longer term impact on the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Based on current budget assumptions, savings of £6.1m are required between 2021/22 and 2022/23. Therefore, the total value of savings not delivered in 2020/21 will increase the savings target in those future years.
- 5.13 The current MTFS contains a number of assumptions, the most significant being assumptions on inflation (contract inflation and demographic growth) and government funding. The MTFS position is subject to change as assumptions are reviewed as part of the budget setting process and when announcements

are made by government as part of, for example, the spending review. To date no announcements have been made by government on the future of local government finance, for example the Fair Funding Review and the reform to the business rates regime.

## **6.0 Funding Options**

- 6.1 Table 2 shows that based on current estimates, the net cost of COVID-19 is expected to be £35.4m, which is considerably more than the £9.3m funding recently announced (£3.9m Hardship funding and associated expenditure is not recorded in the table). That being said, the Government have consistently said that it is committed to supporting local authorities to play their part in the national effort and, to do so effectively, they have implemented a monthly data collection form to record how funding is being used, any changes to income and expenditure and emerging pressures.
- 6.2 The first MHCLG data collection return was issued on 8 April 2020, with a deadline of 15 April 2020.
- 6.3 The cost estimates set out in this report are considerable and the Council is working to the assumption (based on assertions made by Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak) that these costs will be fully reimbursed. In the event that there is a shortfall, as a last resort there are some alternative options that could be implemented as “one off” measures in order to keep the council on a sound financial footing.

## **Annex 1 - Summary of financial pressures**

### **1.0 Community Wellbeing**

- 1.1 In 2019/20, Covid-19 costs to date have mainly been incurred by Adult Social Care. £0.15m has been spent on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to equip social care providers.
- 1.2 £0.1m has been spent on equipping the Peel Road property as a step down facility for patients discharged from hospital who need to continue to self-isolate due to Covid-19.
- 1.3 In 2020/21 further purchases of PPE will be made for Adult Social Care, it is estimated that the equipment purchased so far will last for 6 weeks, so a further £0.4m is forecast to be spent in the next 6 months.
- 1.4 Sickness and self-isolation will impact staffing levels across Adult Social Care. The Council is asking homecare providers to recruit additional staff so that they can be redeployed to nursing homes. The homecare providers will invoice the Council for these costs. An indicative £0.12m is included here as a marker for the next 6 months.
- 1.5 Supporting vulnerable social clients who cannot access supplies with shopping calls because of Covid-19 may cost the Council up to £50k.
- 1.6 It is likely that there will be additional social care packages because of Covid-19 which cannot be reclaimed through NHS funding, this is currently unquantified, but an indicative cost of £0.12m has been estimated.
- 1.7 Accommodation for homeless individuals to enable social distancing has been sourced at approximately £45 a night. With 74 individuals identified so far, and work ongoing it is estimated 100 people will be accommodated. This will cost £0.14m a month, £0.8m for 6 months.
- 1.8 Negotiations are continuing on providing financial support to Leisure centre contractors and Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre to maintain the centres whilst closed to the public will cost the Council £60k a month, so £0.18m for 3 months.
- 1.9 Private Housing Service income will be reduced with landlord applications anticipated to reduce, less promotion of the service, and less enforcement activity possible given the lockdown restrictions. If activity is minimal for the first 6 months of 2020/21, then the lost income will amount to £0.8m.
- 1.10 Delays to the capital programme will impact the rental income in the HRA as new properties do not come on scheme as planned. Reprofiling expected income means that these delays will cost £0.14m in Q1 of 2020/21, and £0.3m in Q2.

- 1.11 Income collection rates in the HRA are anticipated to fall in 2020/21 as the economy worsens and unemployment increases. A 10% reduction in cash collection for rents could cost £3m in lost or uncollectable income across the year.
- 1.12 Increase in void properties in the HRA; increased voids in the last weeks of 2019/20 show lost income of £2k per week. The impact of voids at this increased level would be £50k for 6 months.

## **2.0 Children & Young People**

- 2.1 The overall pressure estimated at this stage for CYP is £3.1m based on a six-month assumption. This consists of £1.8m estimated cost pressures and £1.3m potential loss of income. The table above splits the pressures assuming an initial three-month's impact, estimated at £1.4m and if services do not return to business as usual for a further three months, the pressure is then estimated to increase to £3.1m.
- 2.2 The immediate costs incurred against the general fund in 2019/20 because of COVID-19 are minimal at £4k. These costs incurred include: purchase of additional cleaning products, cost of providing catering for one of the Council's Nurseries, and providing emergency supplies for children in care and care leavers eg travel costs, food supplies. Including overtime costs for staff supporting the Emergency Duty Team in 2020/21, these costs may increase to £63k.
- 2.3 There has been a reduction in the number of referrals in the last two weeks because of partial closure of schools and reduction in other partner services. However, the risk remains that there will be a surge in the number of referrals received by the department as restrictions continue.
- 2.4 There have been estimates calculated for additional costs, which may affect the social care budgets in 2020/21. These pressures to a total of £1.7m are as follows:
- 2.5 £0.7m - In the event a child needs to enter the care system, and be placed in a setting such as foster care, residential or semi-independent accommodation because of the impact of Covid 19 related issues, such as a rise in domestic abuse incidents or cases of family breakdown. Estimated costs for an additional 10 young people for 6 months.
- 2.6 £0.5m – Should the partial closure of schools continue for a prolonged period of time it is likely that higher numbers of requests will be made from families with children with complex needs for holiday play schemes equivalents (1:1 activity). Every summer approximately 110 children receive holiday play scheme support – equivalent to one week of activity per child. This estimate is based on providing additional support, equivalent to the holiday play scheme for 110 young people for up to 10 weeks, over the course of 6 months.

- 2.7 £0.3m – Estimate for new demand that may emerge from families with children with complex needs for care at home and/or direct payments, resulting from continued partial school closures. There are 2,300 children with Education Health and Care Plans, with 500 of these children currently receiving either direct payments or care at home support. The estimate is based on an additional 75 young people being provided with support for 6 months.
- 2.8 £0.2m – for families with children in need (s17 Children Act 1989) who may need emergency payments for food, utilities or other hardship issues due to the impact of COVID-19. The estimate is based on up to 25% of open children in need cases being provided with the equivalent of £20 per week in support for 6 months.
- 2.9 The impact of the potential loss of income in 2020/21 totals £1.3m from traded services with schools with the largest losses being Brent Music Service (£360k), the Gordon Brown Centre (£693k) due to the uncertainty surrounding the date of the re-opening of schools.
- 2.10 In 2020/21, it is estimated that there may be pressures of up to £0.3m against the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funded budgets. These pressures include the need for additional tutoring costs whilst Looked After Children (LAC) are out of school an estimate of agency supply staff to cover absences and ensuring children with additional needs eg visual and hearing impairment have the necessary equipment and infrastructure in their home to enable them to continue to follow a home teaching and learning schedule.

### **3.0 Regeneration & Environment**

- 3.1 The recent Covid-19 pandemic will create significant pressure to R&E budgets. The full picture of this is still emerging. There is initially likely to be a circa £1.2m cost of the establishment of an overflow mortuary, although it is expected that a large proportion of this will be recharged to neighbouring local authorities. In addition, additional costs of circa £240k per month are anticipated relating to the public realm Veolia contract (due to acceptance of liability for increased residual tonnage and agreement to pay Veolia agency staffing costs).
- 3.2 The additional pressures within R&E are likely to come from reduced income due to the government's social distancing measures. The largest of these is parking income (£1m per month) due to reduced motoring activity and reduced penalty charge issuance as a result of Serco staff shortages. The largest other impacts include:
  - 3.3 Loss of garden waste and bulky waste income if services are stopped (£100k per month)
  - 3.4 Bad debt as a result of businesses unable to pay commercial rent
  - 3.5 Loss of income relating to permits and monitoring of highway costs (£56k per month)

3.6 Environmental enforcement income from Fixed Penalty Notices, since issuing Fixed Penalty Notices has been suspended (£50k per month)

3.7 Planning are likely to face a pressure of £42k a month due to reduced fee income.

#### **4.0 Customer & Digital Services**

4.1 The forecast pressures in 2020/21 are expected to come from the Customer Services department, primarily as a result of implementing the Government's recently announced measures to support businesses and those in receipt of the Council Tax support.

4.2 With the impact of COVID-19 unknown at this stage, financial modelling has been undertaken to understand the impact of an increase in CTS claims generally, excluding the £150 hardship fund. Based on current caseloads and costs, it is estimated that a 2% increase in the cost of CTS would lead to a loss of £4.1m.

4.3 Benefits processing might be delayed (LA error) due to an increase in the volume of claims. The current range for LA error for Brent over the last few years is £0.4m - £1.4m (based on c£350m of expenditure). If caseloads increase, the upper LA error threshold could be hit, and possibly be higher, if benefits are not processed in the usual 10 days deadline. This additional cost has been estimated at £1.4m

4.4 The current discretionary housing pot for Brent is £2.7m. For some claimants claiming Universal Credit and Housing Benefit for the first time, the process can be overly bureaucratic and late claims can result in large rent arrears. An estimate based on 10% of 23,000 caseloads at £868 per caseload in 26 weeks has been included at £1.5m.

4.5 The Customer Services team has seen an increase in number of calls for Local Welfare Assistance and in the number of awards it has made due to COVID-19 in the last two weeks. An estimated additional £0.25m is envisaged to increase the current level of reserves from £0.1m to £0.35m in order to fund the increase in demand.

4.6 Overtime for call centre staff has been estimated at £0.5m for 30 staff members working additional hours over a six month period.

4.7 Whilst there have been a few cancelled ceremonies within the Registration and Nationalities service area, these have not been significant enough to have an impact on the 2019/20 budget. However, based on the income generated in the last financial year, a projected loss of £0.5m income from bookings could materialise for the first 6 months of 2020/21.


4.8 Within Digital Services, £0.1m of additional expenditure is expected to be incurred on equipment, licenses and service desk engineers.

## **5.0 Assistant Chief Executive**

- 5.1 Conference and Events: Loss of fees and charges income due to cancellation of events, meetings and conferences in the Drum. This is estimated to represent a loss of income of £0.2m from cancelled events alone. There is likely to be a further impact due to a reduction in new bookings.
- 5.2 Communications: Loss of commercial advertising income on outdoor sites and a reduction of paid for advertising in Your Brent Magazine. Additionally, there is expected to be a loss of income from film productions using council sites and parking services. Total estimated loss of £0.1m is expected in the first quarter of 2020/21. If the lockdown and social distancing measures are extended a further loss of income could materialise.
- 5.3 The Strategy and Partnerships service is considering developing additional capacity to support voluntary sector organisations. At this stage it is estimated that this will incur a one off cost of approximately £44k.

This page is intentionally left blank



 <b>Brent</b>	<b>Audit and Standards Advisory Committee</b> 5 May 2020 <b>Audit and Standards Committee</b> 5 May 2020
<b>Report from the Director of Legal HR Audit and Investigations</b>	
<b>Annual Governance Statement 2019/20</b>	

<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>	One Appendix 1: Draft Annual Governance Statement 2019/20
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Michael Bradley Head of Audit and Investigations Tel: 07920 581620 Email: <a href="mailto:Michael.bradley@brent.gov.uk">Michael.bradley@brent.gov.uk</a>

## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. This report sets out the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2019/20 as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

## 2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Audit and Standards Advisory Committee consider the AGS as set out in Appendix 1, prior to formal approval by the Audit & Standards Committee.

## 3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The council is required to prepare an Annual Governance Statement and have it approved by the relevant Committee. The statement must be signed prior to the signing of the accounts. The statement must be signed by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council.

- 3.2 CIPFA produced a refreshed framework document in 2016 setting out how local authorities could comply with the requirements to conduct a review and produce the Annual Governance Statement.
- 3.3 The guidance determines that the Annual Governance Statement should “provide a meaningful but brief communication regarding the review of governance that has taken place, including the role of governance structures involved. It should be high level, strategic and written in an open and readable style.”
- 3.4 The seven core governance principles, applicable from 2016/17, are as follows:
- A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law;
  - B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement;
  - C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits;
  - D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes;
  - E. Developing the entity’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it;
  - F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management, and
  - G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.
- 3.5 The review of effectiveness is an ongoing process involving officers responsible for key elements of the governance framework as well as members of the Corporate Governance Group, who throughout the year have oversight of governance related issues.
- 3.6 The final part of the statement covers significant governance issues relating to 2019/20 as well as updates on any from prior years. There is one item that has been identified that arose towards the end of this reporting year. No prior issues remain open.
- 3.7 The following factors should be considered in determining significant issues:
- The issue has seriously prejudiced or prevented the achievement of a principal objective;
  - The need to seek additional funding or divert funding to resolve the issue;
  - The issue has had a material impact on the accounts;
  - The issue has attracted significant public interest or has damaged the reputation of the organisation, or
  - The issue has resulted in formal action being taken by a Statutory Officer.

**4.0 Financial Implications**

4.1 None

**5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the council to prepare an annual governance statement and have this reviewed by a committee.

**6.0 Equality Implications**

6.1 None

**7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

7.1 None

Report sign off:

***Debra Norman***  
**Director of Legal HR Audit and Investigations**

This page is intentionally left blank

## Appendix 1

### Brent Council Annual Governance Statement 2019/20

#### **1. Scope of Responsibility**

- 1.1 Brent Council ('The Council') is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Council is responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of governance (incorporating the system of internal control).
- 1.2 In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3 The Council has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector. The statement is included in the annual review of the Constitution undertaken each year by the Director of Legal HR Audit & Investigations. A copy of the Council's code is contained in part 5 of the Council's Constitution and can be found on our website:  
  
<https://www.brent.gov.uk/search?q=constitution>
- 1.4 This statement explains how the Council has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, regulation 6(1b), which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an annual governance statement. To ensure all statutory requirements have been met the statement has been produced in accordance with the CIPFA Delivering Good Governance Framework 2016.

#### **2. The Purpose of the Governance Framework**

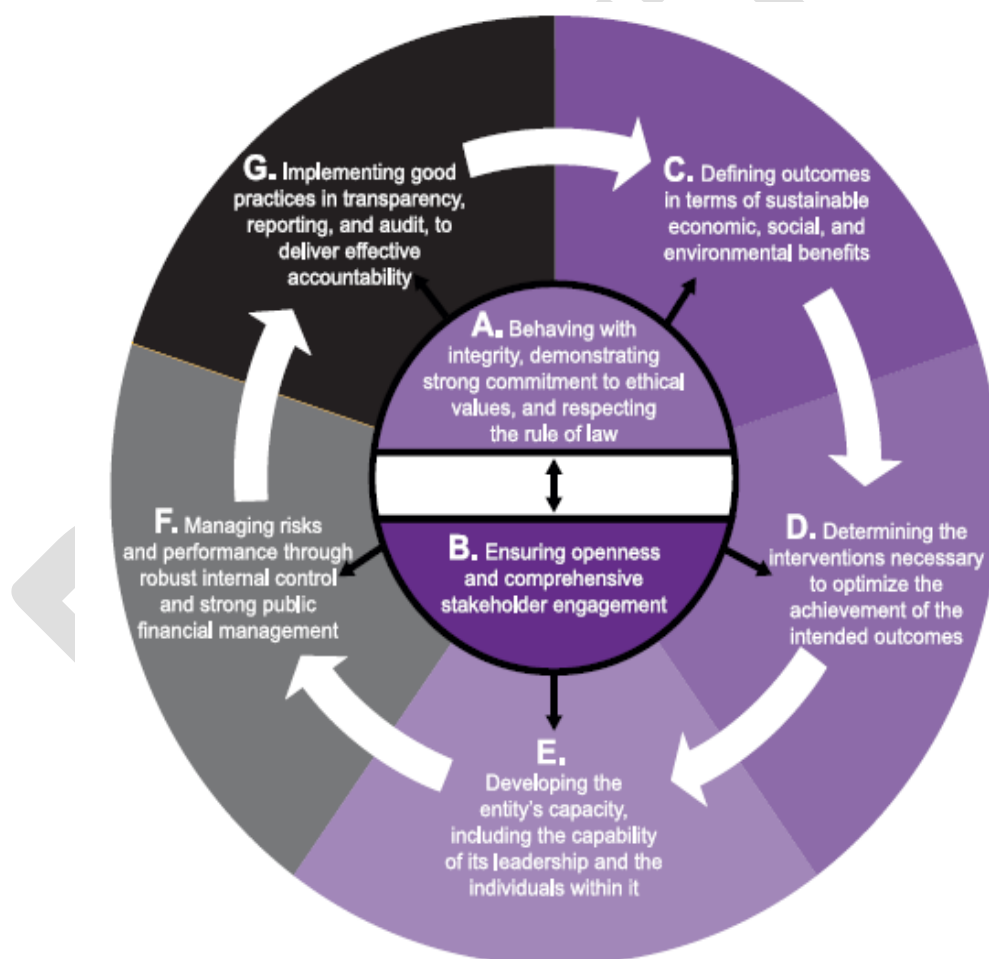
- 2.1 The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values by which the authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads its communities. It enables the authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate services and value for money. The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood and potential impact of those risks being realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

2.2 The governance framework has been in place for the year ended 31 March 2020 and up to the date of approval of the statement of accounts.

### 3. The Governance Framework

3.1 The key elements of the systems and processes that comprise the Council's governance arrangements are based on the seven core principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Governance Framework.

3.2 The arrangements for reviewing the effectiveness of the governance framework are detailed in section 4 of this statement.



#### 3.3 **Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law**

3.3.1 The Constitution sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the policies which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. The Constitution comprises six parts which set out the basic rules for governing the Council's business, as well as detailed procedures and codes of practice.

3.3.2 The Constitution is regularly reviewed and was last updated in February 2020. The Constitution sets out the responsibilities of both members and officers. In particular, the Council has identified the following six statutory posts:

Legislation	Statutory Post	Officer
S4 Local Government and Housing Act 1989	Head of Paid Service	Chief Executive
Section 151 Local Government Act 1972	Section 151	Director of Finance
S5 Local Government and Housing Act 1989	Monitoring Officer	Director of Legal, HR , Audit & Investigations
S18 Children Act 2004	Director of Children's Services	Strategic Director Children and Young People
S6 Local Authority Social Services Act 1972	Director of Adult Social Services	Strategic Director Community and Wellbeing
Health and Director of Public Health Social Care Act 2012	Health and Director of Public Health Social Care	Director of Public Health

3.3.3 A Scheme of Delegation sets out the powers delegated to officers as part of the Constitution. The Financial Regulations are also part of the Constitution, together with the Code of Corporate Governance and the Contract Standing Orders. Changes to the Constitution (other than minor changes which can be approved by the Director of Legal, HR, Audit & Investigations) are approved by the full Council and published on the external website.

3.3.4 The Member Code of Conduct is set out in the Constitution, together with other codes. These are included in the annual constitutional review.

3.3.5 A register of member interests and gifts and hospitality is maintained.

3.3.6 All Councillors receive training on the requirements of the Code of Conduct and related issues. Monitoring Officer Advice Notes give advice to members on decision making and standards of conduct.

3.3.7 All staff, in particular managers, are responsible for ensuring that laws and regulations are complied with and that the authority's policies are implemented in practice. Strategic Directors, Operational Directors and Heads of Service are responsible for monitoring implementation of the Council's policies.

3.3.8 The Council has a number of key governance related policies. Officers are made aware of their responsibilities through general communications, such as Weekly Round Up, manager briefings, staff events and via the induction process.

**3.4 Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement**

- 3.4.1 The Strategy and Partnerships service area is responsible for supporting statutory local partnership arrangements (Health and Wellbeing Board, Safeguarding Adults and Children Boards and Children's Trust) and some non-statutory partnerships such as Partners for Brent and Safer Brent. The Strategic Partnerships team co-ordinates a broad range of collaborative activities, which stem from the Council's engagement with local public, private and voluntary sector organisations.
- 3.4.2 Partners for Brent is an advisory body which facilitates wider involvement and engagement in the delivery of public services. The Partners for Brent Strategic Forum is made up of eight organisations including the Metropolitan Police, NHS partners and the Council for Voluntary Services (CVS).
- 3.4.3 At a service area level, the objectives of partnerships are documented in the Service Plans and within contract documentation. They are then reflected in staff's individual objectives.
- 3.4.4 Regard to equality, diversity and human rights duties is embedded in the budget setting and business planning process, and templates for each require that officers and members take into consideration in an appropriate manner the equality and diversity impacts of proposed decisions. The Council's approach is to embed equality and diversity within all of its work so that equality considerations are part of day-to-day management.
- 3.4.5 Consultation and engagement with residents, stakeholders and the wider community is integral to the Council's decision-making approach and processes, ensuring that a wide and diverse range of views are heard. A range of methods and techniques are utilised including the Council's Consultation Portal, quarterly Brent Connects public forum and a series of 'Time to Talk' events.
- 3.5 **Principle: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits**
- 3.5.1 The Council has a Borough Plan for the period of 2019 to April 2023 agreed by the Cabinet and Full Council. This document includes the corporate objectives of the Council and our shared partnerships priorities with other public agencies. Key performance indicators which relate to the targets in the plan are monitored on an annual basis and reported to CMT and the Cabinet. The Borough Plan references other key relevant documents, such as the Community Engagement Strategy and the Digital Strategy.
- 3.5.2 The Borough Plan is available on the staff intranet and will be regularly promoted via Brent Magazine, its website, press releases and targeted campaigns. All new strategies and plans will be underpinned by the Borough Plan's themes and annual priorities – which are consulted on with users and other relevant stakeholders. Departmental Service Plans are discussed annually with Lead Members prior to finalisation.
- 3.6 **Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes**
- 3.6.1 The Borough Plan is focused on Building a Better Brent. It sets out the Council's vision for 2023, which is to make Brent a borough of culture, empathy and shared prosperity. It is underpinned by an annual Delivery Plan which identifies the key tasks from which team plans and individual objectives are set.



3.6.2 The vision sets out how the Council will build on the successes achieved to-date while developing a much sharper focus on services designed around the individual and creating better outcomes for those residents with complex circumstances. The plan highlights the need to concentrate resources on the things that matter the most, and use resources in the most effective way. Borough Plan priorities are aligned to both the demographic and economic needs profile of the borough and the findings from the community engagement activities. A programme of activity is in place to support delivery of this vision with reports on progress provided regularly to CMT and elected Councillors.

The Cabinet consider risks as part of their decision making role on corporate policies, including the annual budget setting processes, major policy decisions and major projects. The Council Management Team reviews corporate risks through regular monitoring reports. Risks are identified within Service Plans and considered on a regular basis within departmental management teams and key operational risks are reported through to the Corporate Management Team. A recent review of the effectiveness of the Risk Management approach established that risk is well understood across all levels of management.

**3.7 Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it**

3.7.1 A full member learning and development programme is in place and there is a comprehensive induction programme for all Councillors within the first few weeks of their election to office. Training on the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors is compulsory. The Council has adopted specific codes of conduct for Councillors involved in planning or licensing decision-making and these Councillors receive additional training in these areas as a pre-condition of their participation. Entitlement to special responsibility allowances for some posts is dependent on mandatory training being attended. A bespoke annual learning and development programme is provided for Councillors appointed as Members or Substitutes on the Scrutiny, Planning and Alcohol and Entertainment Licensing Committees.

3.7.2 We have a comprehensive e-learning offer for knowledge, skills and personal development and various internal training courses. Key initiatives for the next year include a further Middle Manager Development programme cohort, further work to embed succession planning and leadership development. There is a corporate induction programme in place for staff, which is a combination of e-learning and face-to-face activities. Key information and policies are highlighted to new staff and managers and held on the intranet. Regular communication through annual roadshow events and other channels are maintained to advise staff of new learning opportunities. Additionally, our bi-annual 'Forward Together' events, provide an opportunity for staff to come together to engage with issues and opportunities facing the Council as a whole and to understand how their work fits with Council priorities

3.7.3 Departments also design and deliver development programmes specific to their individual needs. For example, in CWB, development exists on three levels. Staff take part in the corporate training and development programme, including mandatory courses. CWB also delivers three programmes: mentoring - available to staff at all levels; a 'Making Every Contact Counts' training programme designed to support professionals to provide holistic support to their customers, and 'Leadership for Making

Every Contact Counts' for first line managers to embed the MECC approach into all teams. Finally, all areas also focus on service-specific professional training.

3.7.4 In November 2019 the Cabinet agreed and investment of £12.5M in its Digital Strategy – 2019 to 2023. The Digital Strategy underpins the Borough Plan supporting the Council and the people of Brent to be digitally confident. From delivering an innovative customer platform where residents can interact with the council to a complete end to end transformation of the Council's housing services the Digital strategy and is ensuring the council remains at the cutting edge of technology and how it's used.

### **3.8 Principle E: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management**

3.8.1 Decision making arrangements are set out in the Constitution. The Council operates a Leader and Cabinet model of decision making. Although some decisions are reserved for Full Council, most are made by the Cabinet or by Committees, sub-Committees or officers. Since September 2018 individual member decision-making has been introduced in a limited number of areas, supported by a governance process similar to that for Cabinet decisions. Cabinet members received a briefing about their new responsibilities and the related processes.

3.8.2 All forthcoming Key decisions by Cabinet, Executive Committees or officers are published in the Council's Forward plan published every month on the Council's website.

3.8.3 Reports and minutes of meetings are also published on the Council's website and are available through the Libraries. This includes urgent decisions, which are reported to the next formal meeting of Council.

3.8.4 The Council has an Audit and Standards Advisory Committee which meets at least four times during the year, with clear terms of reference and an annual work programme for internal audit, investigations and risk management. The Committee has an independent chair, a co-opted (independent) member in relation to member conduct standards issues and an independent adviser to help ensure it is effective in performing its duties.

3.8.5 In order to enhance the effectiveness of the Committee, it was re-constituted as an advisory Committee for most of its activities. This has enabled the independent Members to be equal voting members of the Committee.

3.8.6 The Council maintains an Internal Audit service that operates in accordance with the published internal audit standards expected of a local authority in the United Kingdom. The Head of Internal Audit reports to the council's Monitoring Officer, and has direct access to the Chief Executive, the Section 151 Officer and the Chair of the Audit Committee and now the Chair of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee.

3.8.7 Robust business continuity management arrangements exist within the Council, with all critical services having business continuity plans in place.

3.8.8 The Council has a three-year Medium Term Financial Strategy, which is reviewed and updated annually as part of the budget setting process to support the achievement of the Council's corporate priorities. The budget and policy framework outlines the process and timetable to be followed each year when setting the Council's budget. The financial management framework includes regular budget monitoring reports to departmental management teams, Council Management Team and Cabinet.

- 3.8.9 The Council has two wholly owned subsidiary companies – i4B Holdings Limited (i4B) and First Wave Housing Limited (FWH). The work of the companies is agreed by the Cabinet through the annual business plan. Progress against delivery is reported to the Council as shareholder/guarantor via a bi-annual meeting and there are also regular reports to the Council’s Audit and Standards Advisory Committee. In addition, the work of the companies in delivering Council objectives has been reviewed via the scrutiny process.
- 3.8.10 FWH is limited by guarantee without share capital. The Board of the Company is chaired by an independent voting Director. The Company has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Council to support the Company’s operations. Under the SLA, the Council provides corporate services such as: governance services, financial services, and legal services.
- 3.8.11 I4B is limited by shares, providing affordable homes for households who might otherwise be housed in temporary accommodation. The Board of the Company is chaired by an independent voting Director. The Company has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Brent to provide a range of services to support the Company’s operations such as corporate and financial services; property purchasing and refurbishment and housing management.
- 3.8.12 The Council also has a Shared ICT Service (SICTS) covering three Councils (Brent, Lewisham and Southwark). A Joint Committee has been established to discharge executive functions on behalf of the three boroughs, in so far as they relate to joint activities or areas of common concern in relation to the provision of ICT infrastructure and related supporting services. An officer management board is also in place.
- 3.9 **Principle F: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability**
- 3.9.1 The statutory Forward Plan is published monthly on the internet, and details all key decisions proposed to be made by the Council during the relevant period. Any key decision which is not on the Forward Plan may not be taken within that period, unless the report author is able to demonstrate to the Monitoring Officer and relevant members that urgency procedure requirements are met and, where required under Standing Orders, appropriate agreement of the Chief Executive or the relevant Chair of Scrutiny is obtained. All urgent decisions taken are monitored by the Monitoring Officer and regular reports taken to Full Council.
- 3.9.2 Members are required to make sound decisions based on written reports which are prepared in accordance with the report writing guide and have to be cleared by both Finance and Legal. The Cabinet receives a briefing (Leader’s Briefing) three weeks prior to the Cabinet meeting when members can ask detailed technical questions of officers. All reports must be reviewed and signed-off by, or on behalf of, the Director of Finance and the Director of Legal, HR, Audit & Investigations and contain clear financial and legal advice to help members arrive at decisions.
- 3.9.3 In accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council has mechanisms in place to allow the effective, independent and rigorous examination of the proposals and decisions by the Cabinet. These mechanisms involve the Scrutiny process including call-in. The conduct of the Council’s business is governed by the Constitution, which includes Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

- 3.9.4 All members and chief officers are required to complete an annual statement relating to third party transactions and a register of members' interests, which is updated by members, is maintained and published on the Council's website.
- 3.9.5 The Brent Council Code of Conduct for Members, reviewed in 2018, defines the standards of conduct expected of elected representatives, based on the principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. Complaints under the Code are reported to the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee as are details of declared Gifts and Hospitality received by members.
- 3.9.6 In addition, the following codes, protocols and systems are well established within the Council. All are regularly reviewed and updated to account for developments in governance arrangements and changes in local government.

These include:

- A declaration of interest process for members and officers as described above;
- Organisation-wide performance appraisal and employee development schemes are in operation;
- There is a corporate complaints procedure in place in line with Ombudsman good practice requirements, and
- Whistle-blowing, anti-fraud and anti-corruption / bribery policies are in place and publicised in compliance with the national transparency agenda; senior officers' remuneration is published on the Council website.

#### **4. Review of Effectiveness**

- 4.1 The Governance Framework is subject to on-going review as part of the everyday business of the organisation. The reduction in resources within the public sector has increased the attention on ensuring that governance frameworks remain efficient and effective. The Council also has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a formal review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control.
- 4.2 The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the Directors and senior managers within the authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the work of the Head of Internal Audit and Investigation's Annual Report and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.
- 4.3 The Council's review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control is informed by:
- Annual Assurance Opinion of the Head of Internal Audit;
  - Performance against targets;
  - LGA Peer Review, and
  - A review of the previous year's Annual Governance Statement.
- 4.4 The process that has been applied in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance framework is described below:

##### **4.4.1 Performance Management**

The Council has a Performance Management Framework, overseen by the Corporate Performance Team (CPT), within the Chief Executive's Department. The CPT works with Departmental Management Teams to strategically align all the Council's performance monitoring and reporting and coordinate the production of two main reports:

- The Quarterly Performance Report for Cabinet, and
- Portfolio Performance Packs

Members play a regular role in performance management, providing challenge to officers. Cabinet receives a report on performance each quarter. Cabinet portfolio holders have regular meetings with Strategic Directors and review finance and performance indicators.

#### **4.4.2 Management**

The Council Management team meets fortnightly to oversee the operations of the organisation and receives reports for both challenge and comment prior to formal decision-making processes. Reports will also be presented to provide the required assurances regarding the strategic risks the organisation faces. These include periodic reports from the groups and boards established in the identified high risk areas such as Health and Safety; IT Governance; Business Continuity; Corporate Risk and Contracts and Procurement. The role and contribution that these groups make is reviewed on an on-going basis.

#### **4.4.3 The Cabinet**

The Cabinet makes key decisions in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework. It conducts joint planning sessions with the Corporate Management Team to consider the Council's policy priorities and its linkages with the medium term financial strategy. The Cabinet meets regularly with the Council Management Team to develop policy and to receive operational and financial performance information.

#### **4.4.4 Scrutiny Committees**

In 2016, Full Council approved a new structure for scrutiny at Brent Council. This was to replace the Scrutiny Committee with the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee. The new dual Committee system came into effect on 18 May 2016. Each of the Committees has discrete responsibilities for scrutinising the Council's executive and covers different parts of the local authority's services. Policy is reviewed by reports discussed at Committee as well as task groups set up to review a particular issue. In addition, a Budget panel, which is chaired by the chair of Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, was set up. In addition, there is scrutiny of Cabinet members and decision-making at individual Committee meetings of the two Committees. The two Committees have a statutory role in scrutinising policy and decision-making of external organisations and agencies.

#### **4.4.5 The Audit and Standards Advisory Committee**

The Audit and Standards Advisory Committee met five times during 2019/20 and has considered the work of Internal Audit during the year, the Head of Internal Audit's annual report and opinion and the External Auditor's annual audit letter. The Committee

monitors the effective development and operation of risk management. It reviews the annual statement of accounts specifically to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from audits that need to be brought to the attention of the Council. The Audit and Standards Advisory Committee also considers the Treasury Management Strategy and the Annual Investment Strategy and reviews treasury management activity during the year. The Committee is also responsible for a number of matters related to member conduct and has received reports concerning these during the year.

Those matters which come before the Committee which require a formal exercise of Council functions (e.g. approval of accounts) will continue to be made by the Audit and Standards Committee, which will consist of the Councillor membership of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee.

#### **4.4.6 Corporate Governance Group**

Set up in 2016, this is an informal, but significant, meeting of the Council's three corporate Statutory Officers together with the Head of Audit and Investigations and the Independent Adviser to the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee. It reviews key governance issues, the results of recent sensitive investigations and similar material in order to update policy and practice as appropriate.

#### **4.4.7 Internal Audit**

The Council receives assurance about the effectiveness of the corporate governance, internal control and risk management arrangements from the work of Internal Audit which provides independent and objective assurance across the whole range of the Council's activities. It is the duty of the Head of Audit and Investigations to give an opinion, at least annually, on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal control within the Council. This opinion has been used to inform the Annual Governance Statement.

The Head of Audit and Investigations produces an annual report which will be presented to the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee. This report will outline the key findings of the audit work undertaken during 2019/20.

An external quality assessment carried out of the Internal Audit Service during 2018/19 concluded that the Internal Audit Service conformed with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. The outcome reflected a professional and successful Internal Audit service commanding a good level of respect and credibility across the Council and seen as a key part in supporting and developing good governance within the Council.

It is the opinion of the Head of Audit and Investigations that, taking into account all available evidence from audit work undertaken in 2019/20, there is reasonable assurance over the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's overall framework of governance, risk management and control during the financial year 2019/20. Internal audit did not review all of the wider governance mechanisms described in this report however there was no evidence to suggest any deficiencies in the arrangements described by senior stakeholders in this statement.

#### **4.4.8 External Audit**

Grant Thornton UK LLP is the Council's appointed external auditor. As well as an examination of the Council's financial statements, the work of the Council's external auditor includes an assessment of the arrangements the Council have in place to deliver value for money in its use of resources.

#### **4.4.9 Risk Management**

The Council managed its risks during 2019/20 in accordance with the approved Risk Management Policy. The Corporate Management Team formally considers risks, with quarterly reports also being presented to the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee. A new risk strategy was approved in June 2017. In 2018/19, a review of the effectiveness of the Risk Management approach established that risk is well understood across all levels of management. Connecting risk assessment and management to the Borough Plan will be developed as the corporate risk register evolves.

#### **4.4.10 Developing Capacity**

The Council has operated procedures during the period covered by this statement to ensure the training needs of staff are assessed against core competencies and any key training needs are met. Additionally, the Council has provided and makes available ongoing training opportunities to Councillors to enable them to effectively fulfil their duties.

#### **4.4.11 Engagement**

Regular consultation is also undertaken with residents to ensure that the authority makes decisions based on resident requirements and feedback regarding general provision and quality of service.

### **5. Significant Governance Issues**

During 2019/20 no significant governance issues were identified.

The Coronavirus pandemic which manifested towards the end of this reporting period has necessitated some interim amendments to processes and controls. These are being delivered in a controlled manner with appropriate advice to managers regarding the risk of error and fraud.

#### **Covid Governance**

There is a comprehensive and current Major Emergency Plan in place which has been utilised to form the basis of the Council's response

Brent has adopted the standard Gold (Strategic), Silver (Tactical) and Bronze (Operational) emergency management structure to exercise control over the activities of the organisation during the emergency and to keep this under review.

Active strategic management is by the Gold tier of command (Chief Executive) which is responsible for:

- Strategic oversight of the emergency response and a final decision on matters where there are opposing views or competing demands for resource;
- Representing the council at multi-agency Strategic Coordinating Group(s), and

- Setting of strategic aims and objectives including any tactical parameters that Council Silver must follow.

Gold Group is chaired by the Chief Executive who is responsible for ensuring that strategic intent and decisions are both recorded and communicated down the chain of command

The Gold Group:

- Provides collective oversight of the council's response
- assumes control of areas within their usual remit using normal reporting lines. There is a Silver group link officer.
- Advises Council Gold regarding decisions or actions required where they have particular expertise
- provide updates to Council Gold Group regarding progress against objectives within their remit
- can be delegated or co-opted to lead on elements of the response as an extension of their usual remit e.g. Mass Fatalities Coordination Group, Public Communications, Recovery Coordination Group, Humanitarian Assistance Steering Group etc.

Similar arrangements are in place at both Silver and Bronze levels with individual leads, collective responsibilities of the group and individual tasks as necessary

Almost every council service potentially is playing a part during the Covid 19 emergency. In addition to the roles just described above (which are dedicated response roles), staff are undertaking tasks important to successful management of the crisis. Examples include:

- Children's and Adult's Social Care
- ICT
- Facilities Management
- HR
- Housing Needs
- Highways and Environmental Teams
- Transport
- Building Control
- Environmental Health
- Mortuary and Burial Services
- Waste Management
- Contact Centre
- Legal Teams
- Finance.



The crisis has required the Council to be innovative and flexible in releasing funds in a swift and controlled way. Interim processes have been put in place to maximise the benefits to residents and businesses.

Crises like this will inevitably attract individuals who see the opportunity for fraud. All managers have been reminded of the risk of fraud and the various forms it may take. Interim processes are designed with this particular risk in mind.

**6. Conclusion and Evaluation**

As Leader and Chief Executive, we have been advised of the implications of the results of the review of the effectiveness of the Council’s governance framework.

Our overall assessment is that this Annual Governance Statement is a balanced reflection of the governance environment and that an adequate framework exists within Brent Council to ensure effective internal control is maintained.

We are also satisfied that there are appropriate plans in place to address any weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement in the system of internal control.

Signed:

.....

**Muhammed Butt**

**Carolyn Downs**

Leader of the Council

Chief Executive

Date:

.....

This page is intentionally left blank

**A&SAC FORWARD PLAN & WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21**

Topic / Date	05-May-20	26-May-20	29-Jul-20	08-Sep-20	08-Dec-20	11-Feb-21	31-Mar-21	11-May-21
<b>Internal Audit &amp; Investigations</b>								
Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Annual Report, including Annual Head of Audit Opinion			X					
Review Internal Audit Charter					X			
Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Progress Reports		X			X		X	X
Draft Internal Audit and Investigations Annual Plan							X	
<b>External Audit</b>								
External Audit progress report and sector update report		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
External Audit plan						X		
External Audit - Certification of grants and returns							X	
External Auditor's Report			X					
External Auditor Annual Audit Letter				X				
<b>Financial Reporting</b>								
Treasury Management Mid-term Report				X				
Treasury Management Strategy & Annual Investment Strategy						X		
Accounting Policies						X		
Statement of Accounts (Draft)		X						
Statement of Accounts (Final)			X*					
Treasury Management Outturn Report			X					
<b>Governance</b>								
To review performance & management of i4B Holdings Ltd and First Wave Housing Ltd		X		X			X	
Review of the use of RIPA Powers		X		X		X		X
Receive and agree the Annual Governance Statement	X*							X
<b>Risk Management</b>								
Strategic Risk Register Update			X			X		
Emergency Preparedness	X							
<b>Audit Committee Effectiveness</b>								
Review the Committee's Forward Plan	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Review the performance of the Committee (self-assessment)								
Training Requirements for Audit Committee Members as required								
<b>Standards Matters</b>								
Quarterly update on gifts and hospitality		X		X		X		X
Annual Standards Report		X						X
Review of the Member Development Programme and Members' Expenses							X	

\* Will also require approval by Audit & Standards Committee

This page is intentionally left blank