



**Cabinet**  
17 June 2019

## **Report from the Assistant Chief Executive**

### **Service Provision on Estates in Brent: Overview and Scrutiny Task Group**

<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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appendix 1 - Scrutiny Task Group Report</li></ul>
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
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#### **1.0 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 This is an update on the recommendations arising from the Service Provision on Estates task group which were agreed by the Housing Scrutiny Committee.

#### **2.0 Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 To note the contents of the report and the recommendations made to Cabinet.

#### **3.0 Detail**

- 3.1 The Housing Scrutiny Committee can commission evidence based reviews of a policy area or function of the local authority, which are led by non-executive members. As part of the work programme discussion, members of the committee discussed a variety of areas which they would like to examine in greater detail. One of these was **Service Provision on Estates in Brent**.
- 3.2 The committee formally set up the members' task group on 29 November 2018. Committee agreed Councillor Long would chair the Task Group, and the other members would be Councillor Aden, Councillor Choudhary, Councillor Mitchell Murray, Councillor Stephens and Karin Jaeger (co-optee). This was an evidence-based review. The Task Group held a series of evidence gathering

sessions. Members of the Task Group were asked to develop recommendations and these are included in the attached report.

- 3.3 The report was presented to the Housing Scrutiny Committee on 25 April 2019 and the recommendations for Cabinet were agreed as below:

### **Recommendation One: Consistency - Brent Standard**

The council should establish a Brent Standard so that residents know the level and quality of service they can expect from Registered Providers and Brent Housing and the council's contractors in terms of the services featured in this report. The Brent Standard to be supported by a Residents' Charter setting out how service requests can be made and detailing response times for all key services delivered. This will help ensure that Registered Providers are accountable to and subject to scrutiny from residents. Residents should be able to report on how well their landlord is fulfilling the commitments. The results should be available to the public.

### **Recommendation Two: Information**

Provide accessible information (signposting to what services are delivered and by whom) to residents including an estate profile for each estate building on the approaches taken by Hackney and Lewisham. Examples of these can be seen at

<https://hackney.gov.uk/article/3866/Estate-services>

<https://www.lewishamhomes.org.uk/your-home/your-estate/>

### **Recommendation Three: Waste Management and External Cleaning**

In renewing contracts for waste services on estates, the council should ensure that the needs of residents on estates are central. Services should be tailored so that they address the particular needs of people living in flats including a focus on increasing recycling. Ways of raising awareness of the benefits of recycling should be further explored. The approach to external cleaning on estates needs to be reviewed and improvements made.

### **Recommendation Four: Complaints and Service Requests**

Registered Providers should provide complaint and service request data to the council on a monthly basis for discussion. This is particularly important where the complaints relate to services that the council or its contractor delivers. These should be reviewed alongside the complaints information for council-owned estates so that trends, hotspots and areas for attention can be identified and addressed. These should be reported regularly to the Scrutiny Committee.

### **Recommendation Five: Transparency of Service Charges**

The transparency of service charges needs to be reviewed. Tenants and leaseholders must be clear about what they are paying for and the potential impacts of any increase in service charges.

### **Recommendation Six: Parking**

The roll out of parking restrictions on estates (where the roads are adopted) needs to be revisited and progress agreed.

### **Recommendation Seven: Roads and Pavements**

The condition of roads and pavements on estates needs to be reviewed and actions put in place to improve their condition. Roads and pavements on new build should be designed up to an adoptable standard. Respective responsibility for management and maintenance needs to be made more transparent.

### **Recommendation Eight: Grounds maintenance design**

Working with service providers the council should review planting and landscape design and ensure that any future developments encourage grounds maintenance delivery rather than hinder it. In particular, new planting should be low maintenance. It should not act as a litter trap. Consideration should be given on how it looks throughout the seasons and over the years.

## **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 If a recommendation was to be implemented then the financial implications would need to be accounted for in a subsequent report to Cabinet.

## **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The Council is a Best Value Authority in accordance with s 1(1) of the Local Government Act 1999. It is required to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way it exercises its functions, having regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness pursuant to s3 of the Local Government Act 1999. If a recommendation was to be implemented, then the legal implications would need to be accounted for in a subsequent report to Cabinet, which may include issues such as consultation and the current contractual arrangements that the Council has in place.

## **6.0 Equality Implications**

- 6.1 Brent is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion; the council is determined to be an exemplar of good practice in equality, diversity and human rights and it is our policy to treat everyone fairly and with respect. We aim to ensure that all our current and future residents, staff and stakeholders are treated fairly and receive appropriate, accessible services, and fair and equal opportunities.
- 6.2 This commitment requires that equality considerations play a key role in our decision-making processes and that our policies are fully compliant with the duties placed on us as a public sector body by the Equality Act 2010. Equality Analyses (EAs) ensure that we follow through on our commitment to equality and they provide a method for clearly demonstrating the necessary legal compliance.
- 6.3 The Equality Act 2010 replaced the pre-existing anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. The legislation covers the exercise of public functions, employment and work, goods and services, premises, associations, transport and education. The act prohibits victimisation and harassment, and all of the

following forms of discrimination: direct; indirect; by association; by perception; or discrimination arising from disability. The detail regarding the Public Sector Equality Duty pursuant to section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 is set out in paragraph 5.3 above.

- 6.4 There are no immediate equalities implications arising from this report for the local authority. However, if the proposed recommendations are implemented then they would help to reduce wider social inequalities in the borough, particularly for people who live on estates.

**7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

- 7.1 Ward members who are committee members have been involved in this report.

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

- 8.1 The task group report does not have human resources/property implications.

**Report sign off:**

**PETER GADSDON**  
Assistant Chief Executive