



**Overview and Scrutiny
Annual Report
2018/19**

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All task group reports, agenda papers, and minutes of scrutiny committee meetings for 2018/2019 are published on Brent Council's webpages, which also have full details of minutes, attendees at a committee meeting and recommendations made by the scrutiny committees.

Membership 2018/2019

Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Ketan Sheth, Chair

Councillor Reg Colwill, Vice-Chair

Councillor Ihtesham Afzal

Councillor Rita Conneely

Councillor Claudia Hector

Councillor Promise Knight

Councillor Ahmad Shahzad OBE

Councillor Anita Thakkar

Alloysius Frederick, Roman Catholic Diocese Schools, Co-Opted

Helen Askwith, Church of England Schools, Co-Opted

Simon Goulden, Jewish Faith Schools, Co-opted

Sayed Jaffar Milani, Muslim Faith Schools, Co-opted

Iram Yaqub, Parent Governor Representative Primary Schools, Co-Opted

Housing Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Janice Long, Chair

Councillor Michael Maurice, Vice-Chair

Councillor Abdi Aden

Councillor Tony Ethapemi

Councillor Faduma Hassan

Councillor Robert Johnson

Councillor Daniel Kennelly

Councillor Thomas Stephens

Michele Lonergan, Brent Leaseholders, Co-Opted

Karin Jaeger, Brent Tenants, Co-Opted

Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Matt Kelcher, Chair

Councillor Suresh Kansagra, Vice-Chair

Councillor Neil Nerva

Councillor Kieron Gill

Councillor Saqib Butt

Councillor Erica Gbajumo

Councillor Sandra Kabir

Councillor Roxanne Mashari

1. Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Public Health and Culture

On 10 July 2018 the committee reviewed the work by Public Health England and **childhood immunisation** programmes for school-age children in the borough during 2017/18. The report by Public Health England also looked at immunisation programmes for children aged 0-5 years under the national Routine Childhood Immunisation Schedule. The committee was told that in line with other London boroughs, Brent had not achieved the World Health Organisation recommended 95% uptake coverage for the primaries and Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR); however, the borough's rates were one of the highest in north-west London. Two recommendations were made by the committee to Public Health England.

A special committee was organised on 21 November 2018 to review the vision and strategic objectives of the **London Borough of Culture 2020 Programme**. The report presented by the Lead member highlighted that winning the bid for being the London Borough of Culture in 2020 had provided an opportunity to invest in the Brent's rich cultural heritage, arts and young people. In addition, young people had been at the heart of the bid which demonstrated the importance the local authority put on young people's futures. The London Borough of Culture in 2020 will also provide an opportunity to improve the lives of residents in the Borough and engage the diverse communities living in Brent. Seven recommendations were made by the committee.

Diabetes rates are high in Brent and a significant health challenge, according to a report presented to the committee on 10 July 2018. Brent Clinical Commissioning Group and the Lead Member discussed with the scrutiny committee the local response in Brent, including addressing high-risk factors, prevention, diagnosis and treatment initiatives and the system-wide approach for helping people who are managing diabetes. Two of Brent's Diabetes Community Champions spoke about their experiences of engaging people at various events, and there was also a contribution from the Chief Operating Officer of diabetes.co.uk at the committee meeting. Three recommendations were made by the committee.

Health

The committee has found that a significant issue for the NHS and local authority social care is planning and managing **winter pressures**. A report to committee on 30 January 2019 updated members about learning from the previous winter and set out a system-wide approach to winter preparedness in Brent for the winter of 2018/19 by the NHS, and social care. Joining the discussion at committee on 30 January 2019 were leadership representatives from London North West Healthcare Trust, Imperial Healthcare Trust and Brent Clinical Commissioning Group.

On 13 December 2018 there was a committee meeting with the leadership team of London North West Healthcare NHS Trust to update members about the inspection report by the **Care Quality Commission (CQC)** which was in the summer of 2018 and which examined services provided by the London North West Healthcare NHS Trust.

On 28 November 2018 there was a discussion of the **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)** offer in Brent, and the improvements and investments identified in the CAMHS Local Transformation Plan. The report, presented by Brent

Clinical Commissioning Group, updated the committee on progress against the recommendations made by the scrutiny committee's task group, chaired by Councillor Shahzad, in 2017 which reviewed Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. The committee was told that work on developing a programme of peer and staff support in schools was ongoing as well as the engagement and recruitment of community champions. One of the recommendations from the task group was a joint engagement event for parents by the local authority and Brent CCG. This took place on 12 February 2019 at Brent Civic Centre.

Brent Healthwatch attended for the discussion on health items at the committee in 2018/2019.

Adult Social Care

On 17 April 2019 discussed an Update on Transforming Care Programme: Learning Disabilities. The report gave a background to why the Transforming Care programme was developed and an update on Brent's progress against national and regional requirements and priorities. It also set out the priorities for this year agreed at the Health and Wellbeing Board in January 2019. Brent Healthwatch attended for the discussion as well.

Children's Services

The **Annual School Standards and Achievement Report 2017/18** was reviewed by committee on 18 March 2019. At the meeting to discuss the issues set out in the report alongside the Lead member were three head teachers from Brent schools. Linked to this item at the same committee meeting was a discussion of a separate report about the **underachievement of boys of Black Caribbean heritage**.

On 28 November 2018 the committee discussed a report on the **Youth Offer in Brent**, including details on the delivery of services such as Connexions, Brent Youth Parliament, services delivered from Roundwood Youth Centre, and the Brent Youth Zone website. On 28 November 2018 there was a report looking at the development of **family hubs** in Brent. The report provided information about children's centres in Brent and an overview of family hub models and their potential to improve the wellbeing of children and young people. In advance of the meeting, members of the committee visited a family hub in Pimlico run by Westminster Council.

In 2018/19 the committee set up a task group to review **contextual safeguarding**, which was chaired by Councillor Hylton. The five recommendations made by the task group, agreed by the scrutiny committee, were presented to Cabinet on 17 June 2019.

Safeguarding Boards

Members scrutinised the annual reports of the borough's two statutory safeguarding boards to review multi-agency partnership work. The annual report of the **Brent Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)** was presented on 8 October 2018 by the Independent Chair. The report outlined the activities of the Brent LSCB from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. The committee also reviewed the report of the **Brent Safeguarding Adults' Board**. The report was presented by the Independent Chair who introduced the report which provided a summary of safeguarding activity carried out by Brent Safeguarding Adults' Board and its partner organisations across social care, health and criminal justice, in line with the priorities of the Board.

2. Housing Scrutiny Committee

Housing Estates

An important area of focus for the Housing Scrutiny Committee in 2018/19 was reviewing **housing estates** in Brent. On 12 July 2018 there was a discussion about a report which provided the committee with an outline of the Estate Parking Project, commissioned by Housing Management and working in collaboration with the Parking and Highways teams in Environmental Services, to consider the introduction of more effective parking controls. There was also a look at grounds maintenance at the committee meeting on 13 September 2018. The report provided an overview of the **grounds maintenance** arrangement across the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land as well as an outline of the contract management arrangement, and the council's approach to tree management, and how the ground maintenance service complements the wider approach to housing and neighbourhood management.

The Housing Scrutiny Committee also set up a task group in 2018-19 to review **service provision on housing estates**, chaired by Councillor Long, which reported its recommendations to Cabinet in June 2019. The scrutiny review focused on three housing estates: Chalkhill, Stonebridge and Church End. These estates were among the earliest regeneration areas in the borough, and the estates are now managed by Registered Providers. In each estate, housing management has to be integrated with public realm services such as grounds maintenance, waste and street cleaning, parking and highways. One of the main aims of the task group was to look at this complex area of service delivery.

On 25 April 2019 there was a discussion of tackling **anti-social behaviour**. This report provides the Housing Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the handling arrangements for anti-social behaviour complaints perpetrated or affected by resident living in homes and/or estates managed by the Council. In particular, it provides clarity surrounding cases managed by Brent Housing Management and those referred to the Council's Community Protection Team

Housing Policy

13 September 2018, The report provides a brief overview of the Council's current **Allocations Scheme**, used for the allocation of Social Housing in Brent, specifically how the scheme is applied to Care Leavers, and explains the allocation of properties owned by Invest4Brent (I4B). On 12 July 2018 there was a review of the **Resident Engagement Framework**. This report provides an overview of Brent Housing Management resident engagement framework, the associated delivery plan as well as an overview of current performance in the contact centre together with the improvement activities underway to deliver further improvements to the council's call-handling performance.

Finance and Performance

On 29 November 2019 the Housing Scrutiny Committee discussed the **Housing Revenue Account (HRA)** within a local and national policy context, along with the key challenges for the borough and how they are being managed. The report provided members the Housing Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the Housing Revenue Account budget, focusing in particular on specific aspects of the Housing Revenue Account such as ring-fenced funding, self-financing arrangements and impact on the

Housing Revenue Account as a result of the lifting of the borrowing cap, which was announced by the Government in 2019.

At committee on 6 February 2019 there was a review of the 2017/18 **Complaints Annual Report** with a particular focus on complaints performance for housing issues by the Community Wellbeing Department. The report included a summary of the root cause of complaints and improvement actions in the Housing Directorate during 2017/18. The Housing Scrutiny Committee took a particular look at the performance of Brent Council's housing management at a separate meeting on 6 February 2019. The report outlined the current performance for Brent Housing Management from April to December 2018 in key improvement areas and highlighted performance targets alongside monitoring data, commentary and progress against the improvement plan work.

In terms of council housing on 25 April 2019 there was also a look at This report is to provide the Housing Scrutiny Committee with analysis of the Council's rent collection and arrears. It provides detail on rent collection performance for 2018-19. The report outlines some of the key factors influencing rent collection and arrears recovery and describes what action is being taken to maximise collection. Specific focus is given to describing what constitutes technical arrears, small arrears/low levels of debt and how these are managed.

On 6 February 2019 also a review of Welfare Reform and Homelessness (including the Homelessness Reduction Act. The report provides information about the impact of Welfare Reform on housing services and homelessness in the borough, feedback on the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 as well as an overview of how challenges and outstanding risk have been managed. 25 April 2019 there was a look at The report presents the draft tackling **financial exclusion strategy** and delivery plan and outlines the proposed next steps in the process.

Fire Safety

Housing Scrutiny Committee spent a significant amount of time monitoring fire safety in the borough in response to the tragedy at Grenfell Tower in June 2017. A task group chaired by Councillor Long reviewed fire safety in low-rise domestic properties of up to nine storeys and the completed report, which contained 11 recommendations, was agreed by the committee on 16 January 2018. Councillor Long formally presented the scrutiny report to the Cabinet on 12 March 2018. On 29 November 2018 there was a progress update about the recommendations in the task group report to the Housing Scrutiny Committee. On 25 April 2019 the scrutiny committee was given an update about progress made with fire safety in the borough, which also reviewed the task group's recommendations and the progress to date with implementing them.

Private Rented Sector

The Housing Scrutiny Committee reviewed the Private Rented Sector and Brent Council's schemes for **landlord licensing** in 2018/19. On 13 September 2018 there was a report providing an outline of the council's landlord licensing scheme within the context of private rented housing in Brent. The report included an overview of its financing, impact on landlords and tenants as well as challenges and future strategies. This looked at the impact of the different licensing schemes introduced in the borough to date.

3. Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee

The committee considered a range of issues within its remit during 2018-2019 and heard evidence from Brent Cabinet and executive officers and external stakeholders. This included two in-depth scrutiny inquiries which were undertaken through Scrutiny Task Groups, one on **affordable housing**, looking at ways of increasing affordable housing in new developments and another set up to consider **knife crime** in Brent and possible further actions the council and partners could take to reduce knife crime.

In July 2018 the Committee considered **Brent Council Priorities for 2019** onwards and how the council would deliver its policies and priorities of the administration, with evidence from the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive. The Committee also considered **Council property and assets** and the new assets strategy, including an examination of how Brent could use its properties to generate workspace and office space for local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Evidence was heard from the Deputy Leader, the Strategic Director for Resources and the Interim Director of Property.

In September 2018 the committee considered a report on progress with the implementation of the **Digital Strategy**, including an examination of the protections afforded to vulnerable residents. Evidence was received from the Deputy Leader and the Head of Transformation. The Committee considered the **highways contract performance**, including surfacing and repairs, with evidence from the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Highways and Planning, the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment, the Operational Director of Environment Services and the Head of Highways and Infrastructure. The committee also considered **area based working**, with evidence from Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Highways, Planning on the Council's area based approach and the progress of the new Town Centre Managers and Neighbourhood Managers.

In January 2019 the Committee considered the draft **Local Plan**, which was in development for launch in 2020 and due for consultation during 2019, with evidence from Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Highways, Planning, the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment, the Operational Director Regeneration and the Head of Planning, Transport and Licensing. It also heard an update from the Deputy Leader and officers on **food banks** and the Cabinet actions following the Food Banks Scrutiny Task Group report recommendations made in 2017-2018 and received a report from the **Affordable Housing Task Group**.

In January 2019 the Committee received a report from the Budget Scrutiny Panel, which had been convened following the publication of the Cabinet's **Draft Budget Proposals for 2019-20 and 2020-2021**, which were considered further in February 2019, including the Council Tax Support scheme and potential impacts of Council Tax collection moving in-house. In February 2019 the Committee also considered the **Annual Report on Complaints 2017-2018**, with evidence from the Deputy Leader of the Council.

In March 2019 the Committee considered **Contracts 2023 and the merits and obstacles of bringing services back in-house** and examined the feasibility and options for bringing the Business Rates service back in-house when the existing contract expires. It considered the Council's **Air Quality** Pledges and how the council

is progressing with local air quality action plan measures, with evidence from the Cabinet Member for Environment, the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment and the Operational Director of Environment Services. It also considered initiatives to reduce barriers and increase **recycling in flats**, including current challenges with regards to increasing recycling and what steps are being taken to develop the best possible recycling service for residents.

At its April meeting the Committee considered the **Economic Impact of Wembley Stadium** with oral and written evidence from the Head of Operations of the Football Association, the Senior Manager of Deloitte Sport Business Group and an Assistant Manager of Deloitte. It also considered Tackling **Illegal Rubbish Dumping** on Non-Council Land, with evidence from the Cabinet Member for Environment, the Head of Neighbourhood Management, as well as a report **on street parking management of larger vehicles** and an update on **Electric Vehicle Charging**, with evidence from the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Highways and Planning.

5. North West London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Overall, members focused on **Shaping a Healthier Future** (SaHF), the North West London Joint Committee, **Continuing Healthcare** and **Health Based Places of Safety** as the main areas of scrutiny in 2018/2019 for the North West London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC). There was a particular focus on the future of Shaping a Healthier Future (SaHF) and the proposed reconfiguration of acute hospitals (SOC 1). It was confirmed to members during 2018/2019 that the NHS would no longer be taking this programme forward.

Some topics are still dealt with and reviewed by local health scrutiny committees. The JHOSC does not need to deal with all issues but sought to be strategic in its selection of topics. The test for selecting a topic is based on whether it impacts or affects all or most local authorities who are members of the JHOSC. In 2018/2019 the members of the JHOSC were Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hounslow and Westminster. Richmond is a co-opted member of the joint committee. There was also an approach to Hillingdon Council to ask if they wanted to take part in the North West London JHOSC in the future.

The NW London JHOSC held three meetings in 2018/2019. Full details of the minutes and agenda item papers are available on Brent Council's website. The agenda items for 2018/2019 included:

- Shaping a Healthier Future (SaHF)
- Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP)
- The proposed reconfiguration of acute hospitals (SOC 1) and the compliance with reconfiguration test
- North West London Joint Committee of CCGs
- Winter Plans

- Patient Transport Strategy
- Health-Based Places of Safety
- NWL CCG's use of consultants
- Congenital Heart Disease standards implementation in London
- Integrated Care Systems and the NHS Long-Term Plan in North West London
- Continuing Healthcare Policy.

The North West London JHOSC is not the only joint health scrutiny committee in London; others have also been established including Inner North East London JHOSC, North Central London JHOSC ,South West London JHOSC, and South East London JHOSC.