



## Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee

**Tuesday 15 January 2019 at 6.00 pm**

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

### Membership:

#### Members

Councillors:

Kelcher (Chair)  
Kansagra (Vice-Chair)  
S Butt  
Gbajumo  
Gill  
Kabir  
Mashari  
Nerva

#### Substitute Members

Councillors:

Aden, Ethapemi, Hassan, Johnson, Kennelly, Long and  
Stephens

Councillors:

**For further information contact:** Bryony Gibbs, Governance Officer  
020 8937 1355; [bryony.gibbs@brent.gov.uk](mailto:bryony.gibbs@brent.gov.uk)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The business relates to or affects:

(a) Anybody of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management, and:

- To which you are appointed by the council;
- which exercises functions of a public nature;
- which is directed is to charitable purposes;
- whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy (including a political party or trade union).

(b) The interests a of a person from whom you have received gifts or hospitality of at least £50 as a member in the municipal year;

or

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

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

# Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Item	Page
<b>1 Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members</b>	
<b>2 Declarations of interests</b>	
Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting, the nature and existence of any relevant disclosable pecuniary, personal or prejudicial interests in the items on this agenda and to specify the item(s) to which they relate.	
<b>3 Deputations (if any)</b>	
To hear any deputations received from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 67.	
<b>4 Minutes of the previous meeting</b>	1 - 10
To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record.	
<b>5 Matters arising (if any)</b>	
To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.	
<b>6 Chair's Report</b>	11 - 16
The attached paper includes notes from the chair of the committee on the agenda for the January meeting, including reasons for the selection of topics, background research carried out by members of the committee in advance of the meeting and some changes to meeting dates.	
<b>7 Knife Crime Task Group Scoping Paper and Terms of Reference</b>	17 - 42
This report proposes the establishment of a members' scrutiny task group to review knife crime in Brent.	
<b>8 Budget Scrutiny Panel Report</b>	43 - 108
This report set out the findings and recommendations of the Budget Scrutiny Panel.	

**9 Consultation on the Draft Brent Local Plan** 109 - 112

The report details progress with the development of the council's new Local Plan and provides access to the results of initial public consultations. It sets out the plans for further consultation.

**10 Affordable Housing Task Group Report** 113 - 148

This report set out the findings and recommendations of the Affordable Housing Task Group.

**11 Committee Work Programme** 149 - 160

The updated committee work programme is attached for members consideration and approval.

**12 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: Thursday 7 February 2019**



- Please remember to set your mobile phone to silent during the meeting.
- The meeting room is accessible by lift and seats will be provided for members of the public.



## **MINUTES OF THE Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Wednesday 5 September 2018 at 6.00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Kelcher (Chair), Councillor Kansagra (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Nerva, Gill, S Butt, Gbajumo, Kabir and Mashari

Also Present: Councillors McLennan, Krupa Sheth and Tatler

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

None.

### **Declarations of interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **Deputations (if any)**

None.

### **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the previous meetings held on 3 July 2018 and 16 July 2018 be approved as accurate records subject to the following amendment: Councillor Butt (Leader of the Council) to be referred to as Councillor M Butt to distinguish from Councillor S Butt, member of the committee.

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

There were no matters arising.

### **Chair's Report**

The committee considered the Chair's report which provided comment on the committee's work-planning and the research and investigative work undertaken by members in preparation for the meeting.

RESOLVED: that the observations made by the Chair in his report to the committee be noted.

### **Highways Contract Performance**

Councillor Tatler (Lead Member for Regeneration, Highways and Planning) introduced the report to the committee which outlined the contractual arrangements in place, the measures for auditing performance, current performance levels and how the contract was linked to the Council's Highways Asset Management Plan.

The report detailed that the existing, eight year contract with Conway Aecom was due to finish on 31 March 2021. The contract covered the provision of a range of highway services through the London Highways Alliance Contract (LoHAC), including safety inspections, planned and reactive maintenance, drainage, scheme implementation, and highways structures inspections and maintenance. A key feature of the contract was a lump sum "Find and Fix" mechanism where the contractor delivered the inspection service and rectified high priority defects. A variation to the contract was currently being implemented to exit this arrangement to improve consistency and responsiveness of service. There were a suite of performance indicators which were monitored monthly and were tied in to the payment process to ensure that the monthly amounts certified for payment were directly linked to performance. Auditing by Officers was carried out across all activities of the contract; the on gully cleansing had improved but timeliness of medium priority repairs remained a concern. A range of repair types were being used in a targeted way as part of the council's Highways Asset Management Programme to improve the longevity of Brent's roads and pavements and make limited resources go further.

Councillor Tatler advised that Andy Best (Contract Manager, Conway) was in attendance to assist in addressing the committee's queries, alongside Jonathon Westell (Highways Contracts and Delivery Manager), Chris Whyte (Operational Director, Environment Services) and Amar Dave (Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment).

The Chair thanked Councillor Tatler for her introduction and welcomed everyone to the meeting, inviting Andy Best to reflect on his experience of the current contract and on working with Brent Council. The committee subsequently queried what factors contributed to delays in repairing defects, what action plans were in place to improve performance and the timescales for improvement against red rated performance indicators. Members expressed concern regarding the time it took for repairs to be made to some Category 2 (medium priority) defects. It was subsequently emphasised the self-monitoring Find and Fix mechanism of the contract created a situation in which it was in the interest of the contractor to categorise defects as Category 2, as the council was required to provide additional funds to the contractor for the repair of such defects. In exploring this issue, members noted the number of defects miscategorised. The committee then questioned the financial and other risks faced by the council as a result of not repairing potentially hazardous paving stones. Comment was sought from the Deputy Leader on the potential increase in the cost of a highways maintenance contract in the future, given the existing state of Brent's highways and in view of the likely increase in extreme weather conditions.

Andy Best explained that on joining Conway he had identified issues in relation to the carrying out of cyclical activity, such as gully emptying, which had meant that related performance indicators were not being met. These issues had since been resolved and performance had improved. Conway was not currently fully compliant with performance indicators due to a lag in defect rectification; however, this followed a difficult period over the winter and was being addressed. Andy Best confirmed that on joining Conway he had inherited a confrontational relationship between the contractor's staff and council officers. Efforts had been made to improve this and there was now a good working relationship in place. There remained two years, six months left of the contract and Conway was committed to

delivering that contract. The Council and Conway would be entering into a contract deed variation regarding the delivery of defect rectification and that was due to be in place by early October 2018.

Expanding on his comments, Andy Best explained that the number of defects occurring during the 2017/18 winter had been unprecedented. This number had fallen steadily over the summer of 2018 and the latest performance indicators recorded a 95 per cent compliance against the measure for Category 1 defects. For Category 2 defects this stood at approximately 80 per cent. Improving the RAG rating of these measures within an eight week period was considered achievable but could not be guaranteed. Addressing concerns regarding Category 2 defects, Andy Best explained that currently, this category required council officers to instruct Conway to carry out the repairs and provide additional funds to accommodate the cost of the repair. In contrast, Category 1 defects were funded from a lump sum provided by the council and were repaired within 24 hours. It was acknowledged that there had been a small number of mis-categorisation of defects between categories 1 and 2 and that there was a conflict of interest between the two parties with regard to defect categorisation. Andy Best confirmed that Council officers provided very robust challenge on any potential mis-categorisation and highlighted that with the implementation of the deed of contract variation, this matter would no longer be relevant. Chris Whyte (Operational Director, Environment Services) added that the new contractual arrangements would grant the council greater powers to determine repair works. Councillor Tatler added that, moving forward, Councillor Krupa Sheth (Lead Member for Environment) would be conducting a review of contracts to which members would be invited to contribute.

Councillor Tatler confirmed that any defects that posed an immediate danger or risk would be fixed as soon as possible. The council's insurance meant that potential injury claims posed no financial risk. The council maintained a fund to pay small claims and would refer larger claims to the insurance provider. Councillor McLennan advised that all options were being considered regarding Highways repair and maintenance going forward, including reviewing borrowing rates to fund a full repair of Brent's highways, estimated to cost approximately £100m. Chris Whyte further explained that Officers and Lead Members had created a business case for the full repair of Brent's roads, whilst at the same time exploring alternative means for reactive repairs. Some measures had been identified that were both very good and cost effective. Councillor Tatler noted injection patching, rather than full resurfacing, had been a successful and speedy solution. Consideration was being given to undertaking injection patching twice yearly to prepare the roads for winter and summer conditions.

The Chair thanked Andy Best for his contribution to the discussion and Andy Best left the meeting. The committee subsequently addressed a number of queries to the Lead Members and officers. Members questioned whether a single contractor was the best model for delivering highways services or whether the use of multiple smaller contracts could be used to support smaller businesses in Brent. Queries were raised regarding quality control of reactive repairs. The committee noted that the budget for Highways Maintenance was not sufficient and questioned whether consideration had been given to the implications for Brent residents of the funding decisions made for this service.

Councillor Tatler confirmed that the contract deed variation that was shortly due to be finalised would allow the council to explore options for reactive repair works, including contracting to smaller or localised businesses. Referring to the review of contracts to be undertaken by Councillor Krupa Sheth, Amar Dave advised that members would be asked to consider what needed to be delivered, how it would be delivered and for how long. Councillor Tatler agreed that there was not enough money for the full repair and maintenance of Brent's highways but the administration was required to make difficult funding decisions across the council's priorities and this was the political decision that had been made.

Addressing members queries regarding quality control, Chris Whyte emphasised that the internal audit team had audited the quality controls in place and had deemed them robust. Jonathon Westell advised that the team conducted a desktop audit of 100 per cent of repairs made, using the photographs submitted by the contractor after each repair. The contractor was only paid if the quality of the repair was approved via this audit process. This monthly desktop audit was undertaken by a team of two officers and site visits could be conducted when necessary. Chris Whyte added that following the contract deed variation, the council's on-street resources would be increased.

During the discussion it was agreed that the following information requested by the committee but not available at the meeting, would be provided to following the meeting:

information on the longest time a Category 2 defect remained unresolved;  
the number of deductions made each month due to work being completed inadequately; and,  
an appraisal of how much a new Highways Contract would cost the council in two years' time.

The Chair thanked the officers and Lead Members for their attendance.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment ensure an update is provided to the committee in two months' time on the performance achieved against the indicators set out in the report (PI 1, 2, 3, 5 and 8).
- ii) That the Cabinet note the committee's view that no self-monitoring contracts be entered into by the council in the future;
- iii) That discussions be held by the Chair, members of the committee and officers regarding the potential to undertake specific scrutiny work appraising options for the repair of Brent's highways, including consideration of funding via long term borrowing.
- iv) That the committee endorse the statement of the Lead Member for Regeneration, Highways and Planning thanking the officers for their hard work in managing the Highways Contract.

## **Digital Strategy progress and outcomes for vulnerable people**

The Chair informed the meeting that the committee had recently undertaken a visit to the Harlesden Hub, during which members had had the opportunity to learn about how the council was supporting vulnerable residents. At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor McLennan (Deputy Leader) advised that Sadie East (Head of Transformation) and Peter Gadsdon (Director Performance Policy & Partnerships) were in attendance to introduce the report and assist in addressing members queries.

Sadie East presented the report on the progress of the Brent Digital Strategy from its launch in June 2017. The report provided details of key projects and workstreams related to channel shift and the initiatives designed to support vulnerable residents, as well as the wider work within the delivery of the strategy to secure positive outcomes for vulnerable people. Sadie East provided a brief overview of these key workstreams, noting the initial successes of the roll out of the Microsoft Dynamics Platform to the Housing Management Service which had already resulted in improvements in customer service and quality of response. Work to support residents' to improve their digital skills had included the impending launch of a digital skills curriculum by Brent Start (Brent's Adult Education service) and the introduction of cutting edge technology to a classroom of the Stonebridge Learning Centre. Progress had been made in securing ultrafast fibre broadband for Brent's social housing stock and more widely for residents and business in the borough. By 2020 new broadband networks were anticipated to provide coverage to up to 80% of the borough. The committee further heard that a report recommending approval to expand the hub model was due to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 12 September 2018.

The Chair thanked Sadie East for the introduction and invited questions from the committee. Members sought details of how success was measured with regard to supporting residents' digital skills, including whether a one-off lesson could be offered for those engaging with a service digitally for the first time. The committee also questioned whether the council could enhance the profile of the My Brent service to encourage greater take up. Questions were raised regarding how support was provided for those who either did not have internet access or were not in the habit of using it, how the council identified users requiring special assistance and how this information was deployed across the organisation. A member questioned why council officers working at the Harlesden Hub did not access the library's free wi-fi. Further queries were raised regarding the Client Index, its current use in the council and whether it could support targeted roll-out of the council's digital offer. In concluding their questioning, members expressed that they had been very impressed with the Harlesden Hub and asked officers to reflect on any pitfalls that may have been identified and resolved via the pilot.

Responding to members' queries, Sadie East drew the committee's attention to the draft outcomes framework attached at Appendix E to the report. This outlined the key objectives around modernising online channels and supporting residents to access online services and included proposed measures and baselines. Members further heard that officers were exploring the use of the Microsoft Dynamics platform to better capture the interactions at the Harlesden Hub. Officers welcomed members' suggestions on the promotion of the My Brent service and the provision of one-off skills sessions to those accessing services digitally for the first time and

agreed to take these forward. Matthew Dibben (Head of Employment Skills and Enterprise) confirmed that the latter could be provided as part of the expanded digital skills programme due to be launched by Brent Start in the next few weeks.

Addressing the committee's queries regarding residents who either could not use the internet or were not in the habit of doing so, Sadie East confirmed that visitors to the Harlesden Hub had included people who were digitally excluded and added that word of mouth advertising of the support available at the Hub had been successful in reaching some people from this cohort. Peter Gadsdon advised that Lewisham Council had recently obtained funding to buy iPads to loan to residents to help them become confident with the technology. If successful, consideration could be given to the provision of a similar facility at Brent's libraries. It was further emphasised that the agreement recently made by the council with two providers to deliver affordable ultrafast broadband connections to Brent's housing stock included the delivery of digital inclusion activities for key groups. Peter Gadsdon clarified that it was anticipated that residents benefiting from this new infrastructure would be able to access a reasonable package for approximately £5 per month which would, for instance, be sufficient for streaming services. With regard to residents that might require additional assistance, officers were exploring whether the Microsoft Dynamics system could be used to flag records where additional needs had been identified. With the instigation of the EU General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), the council had been required to revise all of the privacy notices provided at the point of gathering an individual's data: these now stated that information would be shared across the council's systems.

With regard to officers at the Harlesden Hub using Wi-fi, Peter Gadsdon explained that as the Hub was a pilot, the council had not invested too much in its set up. However, as part of the council's changing methodology regarding the delivery of services, the council would be replacing the current thin client access and remote working options for council staff, with laptops with a direct connection to the council's network.

A brief overview was provided to the committee of the council's Client Index. Peter Gadsdon advised that this was a master data management system which pulled data from a number of council systems and data matched the records. The Client Index was still extensively used for a range of functions including fraud detection. A recent upgrade of the Client Index had delivered a new facility, Business Process Manager. It was possible to use the Client Index to provide a targeted communication regarding the council's digital offer. The Microsoft Dynamics system currently being built would eventually make the Client Index redundant.

Reflecting on the Harlesden Hub pilot, Peter Gadsdon confirmed that the most difficult part of the project had been building the relationships with the various voluntary sector partners to ensure that the offer provided was localised. Repeating this process for each roll-out area was essential, as it was this crafting of the offer that underpinned its value for local residents and provided momentum to the project. Sadie East emphasised that the word-of-mouth advertising had been key to the success of the Harlesden Hub pilot.

The Chair thanked the officers and Lead Member for their contribution to the meeting.

## RESOLVED:

- i) That the Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships ensure that officers explore ways to incentivise residents to sign up for a My Brent Account;
- ii) That the Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships ensure that consideration is given to how to assess the success of face-to-face interactions at Harlesden Hub or the Brent Civic Centre supporting residents in acquiring digital skills, including how well those skills are able to be utilised subsequently. The outcome of this process to be feedback to the committee;
- iii) That the Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships ensure a targeted communication is sent promoting the council's digital offer to those groups identified as requiring assistance with digital skills;
- iv) That the minutes of the meeting be shared with the Lead Member for Schools, Employment and Skills and Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform for comment on the committee's discussion;
- v) That the Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships ensure the ICT set up in the Harlesden Hub is reviewed to support access improvements and enable staff quick access to council server.

## **Area Based Working Update**

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Tatler (Lead Member for Regeneration, Highways and Planning) introduced the report on the progress made by the Town Centre Managers and Neighbourhood Managers leading on the council's new area based approach. The report before the committee summarised the achievements made in the first six to fifteen months of operation of four Town Centre Managers (TCMs) and the first seven months of operation for the five Neighbourhood Managers (NMs). The report also summarised the objectives and deliverables for 2018/19 and the medium-long term plans. Councillor Tatler emphasised that the approach described recognised that each area had different needs and requirements. Councillor Krupa Sheth (Lead Member for Environment) highlighted that there had been lots of positive feedback from residents, businesses and community groups regarding the new area based approach and work of the NMs and TCMs.

The Chair welcomed Shirley Holmes (NM), Rubina Charalambous (TCM) and Richard Hay (TCM) to the meeting, alongside officers Matthew Dibben (Head of Employment Skills and Enterprise), Simon Finney (Head of Neighbourhood Management) and Rosalyn Flowers (Economic Growth Senior Manager).

In the subsequent discussion, the committee questioned whether NMs and TCMs would develop closer working relationships with the ward councillors for their areas, noting the scope for both strategic and resident level working. Clarification was sought regarding the working relationships between NMs and TCMs, noting that certain issues impacted across the remits. The committee further noted that some NMs made greater use of social media, for instance to engage with resident forums,

and questioned how the council could support NMs in developing social media skills. The committee asked the NMs and TCMs to comment on whether there were any additional resources or tools that would help to increase the productivity of their roles. The committee subsequently queried what support was available to NMs and TCMs.

Councillor Krupa Sheth advised that it had recently been determined that monthly meetings would be held with NMs, TCMs and ward councillors. Councillor Tatler added that the TCMs had been established for a longer period and there was an expectation that they involved local councillors in any developments for their areas. Furthermore, action plans had been developed in consultation with ward members and were regularly reviewed. Going forward, TCMs would be asked to involve ward members in the review of these plans.

Clarifying the roles and expected working relationships between TCMs and NMs, Councillor Tatler advised that they worked jointly across their respective remits to achieve improvements for their areas. NMs' primary focus was public realm issues and addressing these would deliver outcomes that would support the work of TCMs. Discussing the use of social media, Simon Finney agreed that training could be provided to encourage greater use by NMs and TCMs and advised that challenge would be provided going forward on this issue. Responding to the committee's queries regarding resources, Richard Hay advised that a lot of the necessary tools were already in place to support his role as TCM and commented on the importance of joint working with NMs to resolve issues. Richard Hay expressed that providing hospitality was not a necessarily element of his role and rather, as long as TCMs were approachable connections were made organically. Chris Whyte emphasised that since the NM posts were established they had largely been a standalone resource, however plans were now in place to expand the area based working approach to provide dedicated services around these positions, for instance, allocating dedicated enforcement officers

With the permission of the Chair, a member of the public commented positively on the NM and TCM roles and highlighted a number of issues for attention. Chris Whyte agreed to follow these matters up with the resident and NM as appropriate.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution to the meeting.

#### RESOLVED:

- i) The committee expressed its thanks to all the officers involved for their hard work;
- ii) That the Cabinet note the committee's endorsement of the move towards neighbourhood based working;
- iii) That the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment ensure that the council offer training to all Neighbourhood Managers and Town Centre Managers to ensure all officers in these positions have sufficient skills to utilise social media to support their work with the community and report back to the committee on the impact of this training.

### **Committee work programme 2018/19**

RESOLVED: that the work programme for 2018/19 as set out at Appendix A to the report be agreed.

### **Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 8.02 pm

M KELCHER  
Chair

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 <p><b>Brent</b></p>	<p><b>Resources &amp; Public Realm Scrutiny Committee</b> 15 January 2019</p>
	<p><b>Report from the Director of Performance, Policy &amp; Partnerships</b></p>
<p><b>Chair's Report</b></p>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<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>	1 – Chair's report
<b>Background Papers:</b>	N/A
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy & Partnerships, <a href="mailto:peter.gadsdon@brent.gov.uk">peter.gadsdon@brent.gov.uk</a>

## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The attached paper includes notes from the chair of the committee on the agenda for the January meeting, including reasons for the selection of topics, background research carried out by members of the committee in advance of the meeting and some changes to meeting dates.

## 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The committee is asked to note the observations made by the chair in the report at Appendix 1.

## 3.0 Detail

- 3.1 Consideration of the council's budget is likely to take up a considerable portion of the meeting, given its importance. First, the group will consider the terms of reference for the new Knife Crime Task Group, a vitally important issue across the borough. The group will also pre-scrutinise the council's Local Plan and consider the final report of the Affordable Housing Task Group.

## 4.0 Legal implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications.

**5.0 Financial implications**

5.1 There are no financial implications.

**6.0 Equality implications**

6.1 There are no equality implications.

**Report sign off:**

**PETER GADSDON**

Director of Performance, Policy & Partnerships.

# **Resource and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee**

## **Chair's Report – 15 January 2018**

### **By Cllr Matt Kelcher**

A happy new year to you all and welcome to the January 2019 meeting of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee.

Our January meeting is always one of the most important meetings of the year as it focuses on the council's proposed budget, ahead of it being presented to full council in February.

I'm sure that this will be the most discussed issue at the meeting, but we also have other important business to get through. This report covers all of the items we will be investigating at the meeting and the work we have done in preparation outside of our public meeting. It also explains some recent changes to business that the committee was forced into.

### **Postponement of December meeting**

As you may have noticed, we have not met publicly as a committee for some time. We had to postpone our originally scheduled December meeting as there were problems with the two substantive reports we were due to discuss.

a) Council Tax Support - Since the committee's annual work programme was initially agreed, the council has taken the decision not to implement a new Council Tax Support scheme until 2020. We originally scheduled this item to pre-scrutinise the proposals but as there currently are none we could not achieve this at this meeting. I've therefore rescheduled for May when there will be potential options for us to consider before they go to public consultation.

b) Annual Complaints Report – We have a constitutional obligation to review the annual complaints report. However, at a recent Corporate Management Team meeting the draft report was not agreed and amendments are under consideration. So as there is no final report for us to review there would be nothing to scrutinise at the meeting.

These issues left us with a very empty schedule with little time to bring forward other items on our workplan. I did not want to lose one of our six annual committee meetings or have a very short one which would leave us with too much to cram in later, so I took the decision to postpone until February when no meeting was originally scheduled. This will mean that all the items we have planned to scrutinise will get the time and analysis they need.

### **February meeting**

The December meeting was initially postponed until the 11 February. However, following consultation with the council's Director of Legal and HR, we have had to make some adjustments to the Budget Scrutiny Panel process to become fully compliant with the constitution.

Part of this includes an addition to our committee's February agenda, whereby the committee must examine and discuss the final budget proposals to be detailed in a report to cabinet by the finance department at the very end of January 2019.

According to the constitution, the committee must then “make a note of its deliberations and send a note to cabinet for it to consider”. It transpired that Cabinet is also on the 11th of February, but unfortunately prior to the committee meeting, which meant that the February committee had to be rescheduled again because the exact sequencing of these events is crucial and cabinet cannot fall prior to the committee if the committee is to send a note to cabinet for its consideration.

Therefore, the only date that it was possible to reschedule the (new) February meeting for was Thursday 7 February. The only time that there was a boardroom available on that date at short notice was 7.30pm, hence the meeting being scheduled for that time on that date.

I realise this will cause problems for some, but if you can let me have any apologies as early as possible I’m sure we can arrange substitutions.

## **Food Banks Task Group Update Report**

We usually review progress on each of our task groups six to twelve months after publication.

Therefore, an update report on the Food Banks Task Group recommendations has been added to the agenda for the February committee.

## **Knife Crime scoping**

Our first duty tonight will be to approve the paper setting out the terms of reference for our next task group, which is due to investigate how the council can help to tackle knife crime in the borough.

This is a vitally important issue and I hope the task group – which I have appointed Cllr Sandra Kabir to chair – can begin its work as soon as possible and deliver some innovative recommendations for us all to consider.

## **Budget Scrutiny Panel Report**

As mentioned above, discussion of the council’s budget is likely to take up a significant proportion of the meeting, given its vital importance.

The report in your papers was written by the Budget Scrutiny Panel (which I chaired) following three months of investigations and interviews. It is intended to be a starting point to the budget scrutiny process and to give committee members some prompts and topics they might like to raise at our public meeting.

But it is certainly not exhaustive and if members have concerns about other areas of the budget, they should feel free to raise them on the night.

## **Local Plan**

Another important issue we will have a chance to pre-scrutinise at the meeting is the development of the council’s local plan. This is an important issue that we had no hesitation in adding to our forward plan at our first committee meeting.

To help members to understand more about the issue we held a briefing session on 2 January with Amar Dave, the strategic director with responsibilities in this area.

### **Affordable Housing Task Group**

My huge thanks go to Cllr Neil Nerva for his efforts in chairing the first task group we undertook in this municipal year which investigated how the council can provide more affordable housing for Brent residents.

The final substantive item we will scrutinise tonight is the task group's final report. I look forward to hearing what additional ideas members have on this issue.

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	<p align="center"><b>Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee</b> 15 January 2019</p>
	<p align="center"><b>Report from Community Protection and Public Health</b></p>
<p><b>Knife Crime Task Group Scoping Paper</b></p>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	N/A
<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>	
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	2
<b>Background Papers:</b>	0
<b>Contact Officers:</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Karina Wane, Head of Community Protection, <a href="mailto:Karina.Wane@brent.gov.uk">Karina.Wane@brent.gov.uk</a> Anne Kittappa, Senior Policy Officer <a href="mailto:Anne.Kittappa@brent.gov.uk">Anne.Kittappa@brent.gov.uk</a> Richard Harrington, Senior Policy and Scrutiny Officer <a href="mailto:Richard.Harrington@brent.gov.uk">Richard.Harrington@brent.gov.uk</a>

## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To enable members of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee to set up a members' scrutiny task group to review knife crime in Brent

## 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee to discuss and agree the contents of this report and scoping paper (appendix A)
- 2.2 Members of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee to agree to set up a task group with the terms of reference in appendix B.

## 3.0 Detail

- 3.1 Under its terms of reference, the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee can review or scrutinise Community Safety. The committee is the Crime and Disorder Committee for the purposes of section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006. This means it can review or scrutinise decisions made, or

actions taken, by responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions and to make reports or recommendations to Full Council with respect to these functions.

- 3.2 The Crime and Disorder Committee can investigate the work undertaken by Community Safety Partnerships as a whole, rather than individual agencies.<sup>1</sup> The task group will produce a written report with recommendations for the Community Safety Partnership for Full Council. This recommendation-making function is an important one that overview and scrutiny has in a local authority. It's considered good practice that recommendations are SMART (specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and timed) and limited in number. In addition, information about likely recommendations will be shared and discussed with the Cabinet member for the area prior to being made.
- 3.3 The scope of this task group is to gain a better understanding of knife crime in Brent, and how interventions can reduce knife crime.
- 3.4 The task group will gather and question evidence and consider it along with relevant quantitative and qualitative data, gaining a comprehensive view. The evidence gathering sessions will be set out once the task group has been established.
- 3.5 Membership of the task group is drawn from non-executive members.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 11.1 There are currently no financial implications but the task group may recommend commissioning services not currently commissioned, or extending services currently commissioned which will have financial implications.
- 11.2 The MOPAC London Crime Prevention Fund contribution for 2019-2021 will decrease by £80,000 per year from April 2019. A proposal has gone to MOPAC to reduce current programmes and to cut the Community MARAC coordination provision in order to match future funding levels.

#### **12.0 Legal Implications**

- 12.1 There are no legal implications.

#### **13.0 Equality Implications**

- 13.1 Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the council has a duty when exercising its functions to have "due regard" to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not. This is the public sector equality duty.

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<sup>1</sup> Pulling it together, Centre for Public Scrutiny 2012

13.2 The protected characteristic is defined in the Act as: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, Race (including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), Religion or belief, Sex and Sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership are also a protected characteristic for the purposes of the duty to eliminate discrimination. The previous public sector equalities duties only covered race, disability and gender.

13.3 All commissioned services collate data relating to equality as part of the programme of work including gender, disability, sexuality, ethnicity, and age (with particular interest in young victims and perpetrators). The commissioned services are monitored on their ability to deliver effective services to specialist BME cohorts, and to link in with other local specialist partners to facilitate this.

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

14.1 There has been several consultation meetings with stakeholders, community members and lead members around the issues related to knife crime in recent months.

#### **15.0 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)**

15.1 None.

**Report sign off:**

**Peter Gadsdon**

Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships

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**Resources and Public Realm  
Scrutiny Committee**  
15 January 2019

**Report from Community Protection  
and Public Health**

**Knife Crime Task Group Scoping Paper**

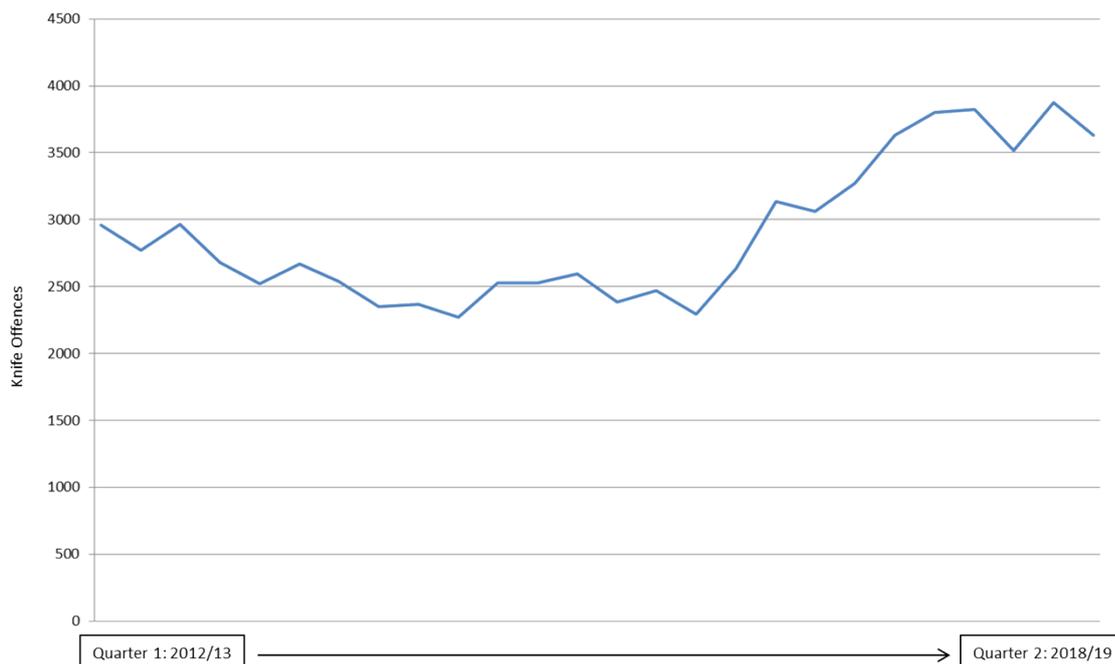
**1.0 Purpose of the Report**

1.1 Brent Council is committed to tackling knife crime and working in partnership, both internally and externally, to enable a targeted response. This report will highlight current knife crime trends across London and the specific challenges we face in Brent. It will then discuss the importance of a public health approach to knife crime, and provide an overview and update of a range of successful prevention interventions. The paper will then set out the scope for the task group.

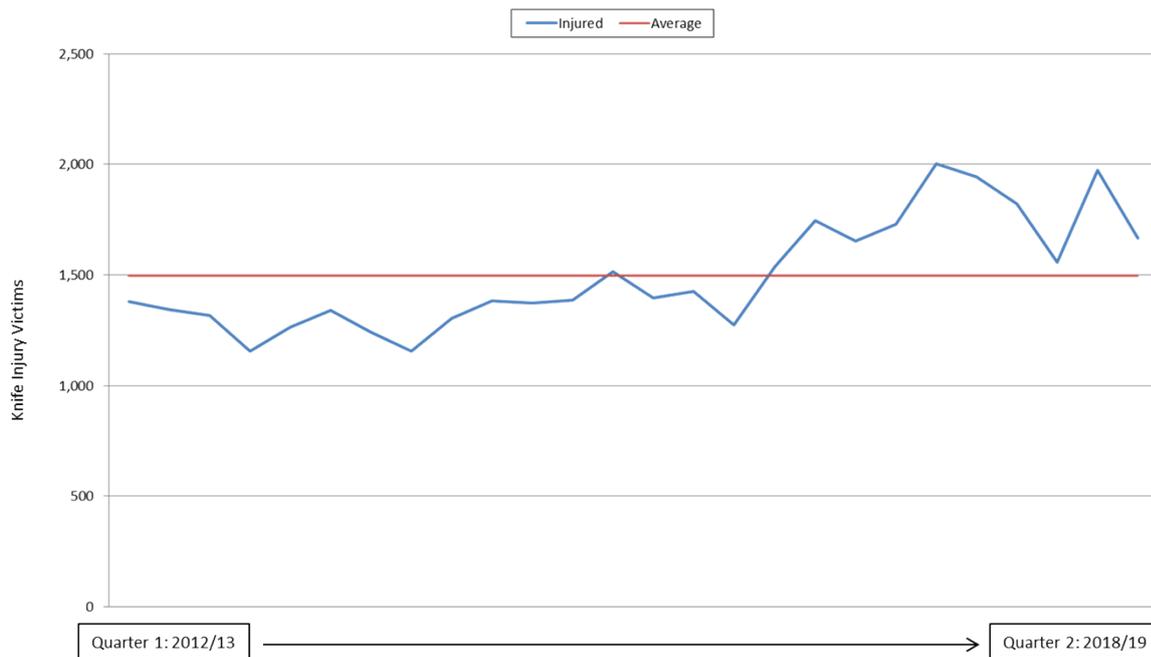
**2.0 Knife Crime data and analysis – What Are the Problems?**

**2.1 The Pan-London Picture**

2.1.1 Number of knife offences across London (Metropolitan Police Data, accessed November 2018):



### 2.1.2 Number of London knife injury victims - non fatal (Metropolitan Police Data, accessed November 2018):



2.1.3 In the last 12 months, the highest number of knife crime offences in London was recorded in **Southwark** (782 compared to 924 in the previous 12 months). The highest number of victims being injured as a result of a knife crime offence was also recorded in **Southwark** (359 compared to 493 in the previous 12 months). **Total number of offences involving knife crime has increased by 4% from 14,092 in the previous 12 months to 14,672 in the last 12 months.** Knife related murders in London decreased by 4% from 89 (previous 12 months) to 85 (last 12 months); this is still high compared to the London average of 56 knife related murders over the previous five years. The highest number of knife related murders in London was again recorded in **Southwark** (9 compared to 11 in the previous 12 months).

Source: Metropolitan Police November 2018 (last 12 months – 01/11/2017 to 31/10/2018, previous 12 months 01/11/2016 to 31/10/2017)

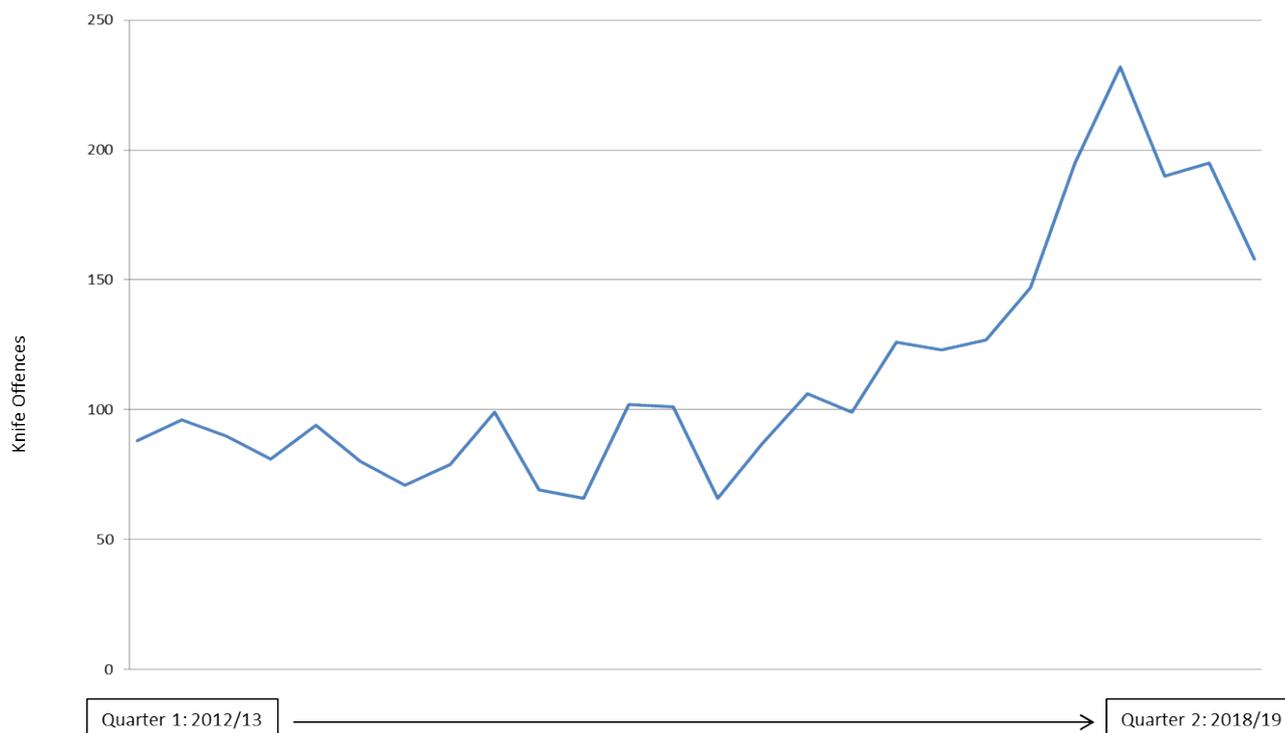
2.1.4 The Mayor's knife crime strategy sets out six main areas of focus:

- Targeting lawbreakers
- Offering ways out of crime
- Keeping deadly weapons off our street
- Protecting and educating young people
- Standing with communities, neighbourhoods, and families against knife crime
- Supporting victims of knife crime

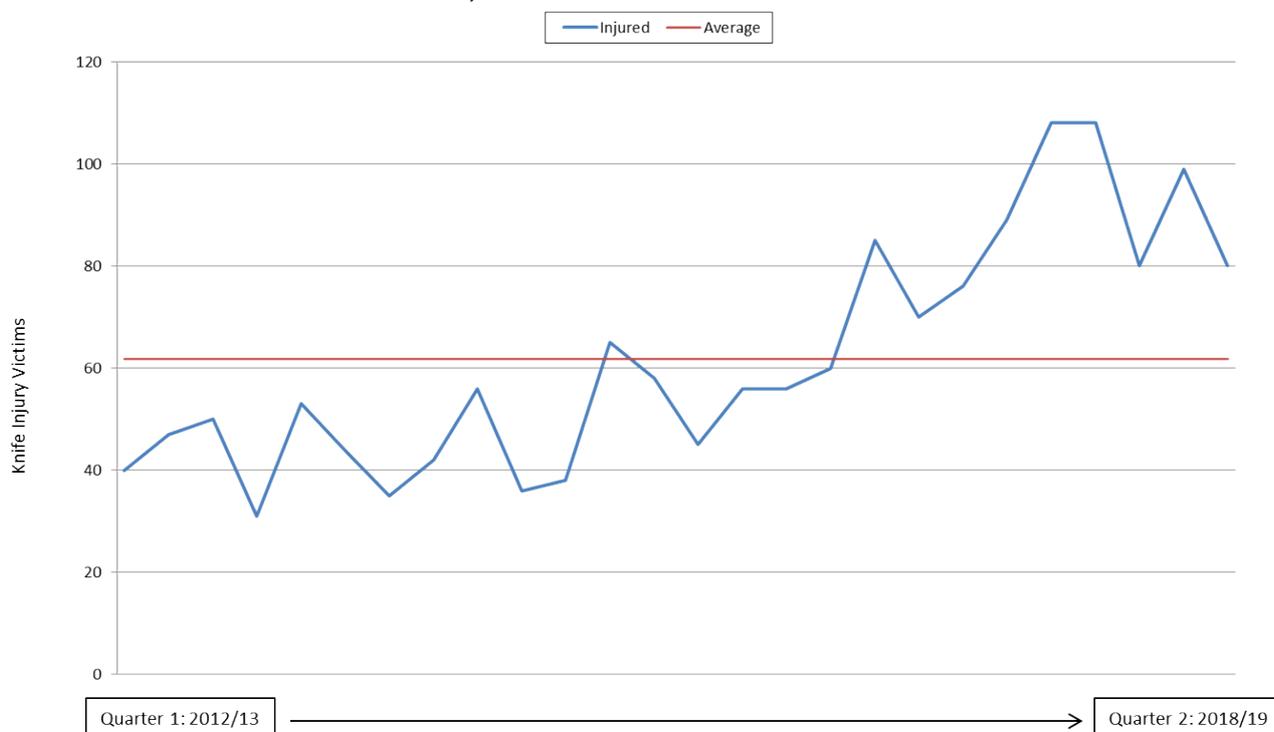
2.1.5 In September 2018, the mayor announced he was setting up a Violence Reduction Unit which, building on existing partnerships will bring together specialists, to work together to reduce violence in London through a public health approach.

## 2.2 The Brent Picture

### 2.2.1 Number of knife offences across Brent (Metropolitan Police Data, accessed November 2018):



### 2.2.2 Number of Brent knife injury victims - non fatal (Metropolitan Police Data, accessed November 2018):



- 2.2.3 In the last 12 months, Brent had 755 knife crime offences, which is an **18% increase** on recorded offences on the previous 12 months (640). **This was the 3rd highest level of knife crime of the 32 London boroughs.** In the last 12 months, Brent saw a **0.5% year on year decrease in the number of victims being injured** as a result of knife crime offences. **The 355 injured victims of knife crimes in Brent was the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest of the 32 London boroughs.**
- 2.2.4 The number of **knife related murders in Brent reduced from 5 in the previous 12 months to 1 in the last 12 months; this was below the London average.**

Source: Metropolitan Police November 2018 (last 12 months – 01/11/2017 to 31/10/2018, previous 12 months 01/11/2016 to 31/10/2017)

### 3.0 The Cost of Knife Crime to Health

- 3.1 Calculating the single agency cost of knife crime is complicated; many different agencies (central government, local government, police, health, and other agencies) are involved in preventing and responding to those affected. However, there is a clear cost to the health economy.
- 3.2 The Trauma Audit Research Network (TARN) at the University of Manchester conducted a comprehensive cost analysis of knife crime in terms of the cost to the health sector. The team looked at all penetrating trauma injuries that resulted in immediate admission to hospital for three or more days, or death within 93 days.
- 3.3 Stabbings accounted for almost three quarters of all penetrative injuries with an **average cost to the National Health Service (NHS) of £7,196 per victim.**
- 3.4 TARN research director Dr Fiona Lecky said "**Public health initiatives that aim to reduce the incidence and severity of penetrating trauma are therefore likely to produce significant savings in acute trauma care costs.**"
- 3.5 Nationally, there were **4,434** finished consultant episodes (FCE) recorded in English hospitals in 2016/17 due to assault by a sharp object. Using the above estimate, the cost to NHS England was **£31,907,064 in 2016/17.** This is highly likely to be an underestimate due to the cost-based figures being ten years old, and therefore not reflecting inflation costs, as well as an unknown amount of general underreporting.
- 3.6 Locally, there were **385 knife injuries and 3 fatalities in Brent** recorded by the Metropolitan Police in 2017/18. This puts the estimated cost of Brent knife crime to NHS England at **£2,792,048 in 2017/18.** Again, this is highly likely to be an underestimate due to reasons given above. It is therefore clear that knife crime is a significant cost to the health economy as well as other public sector bodies.

### 4.0 Knife Crime – A Public Health Issue

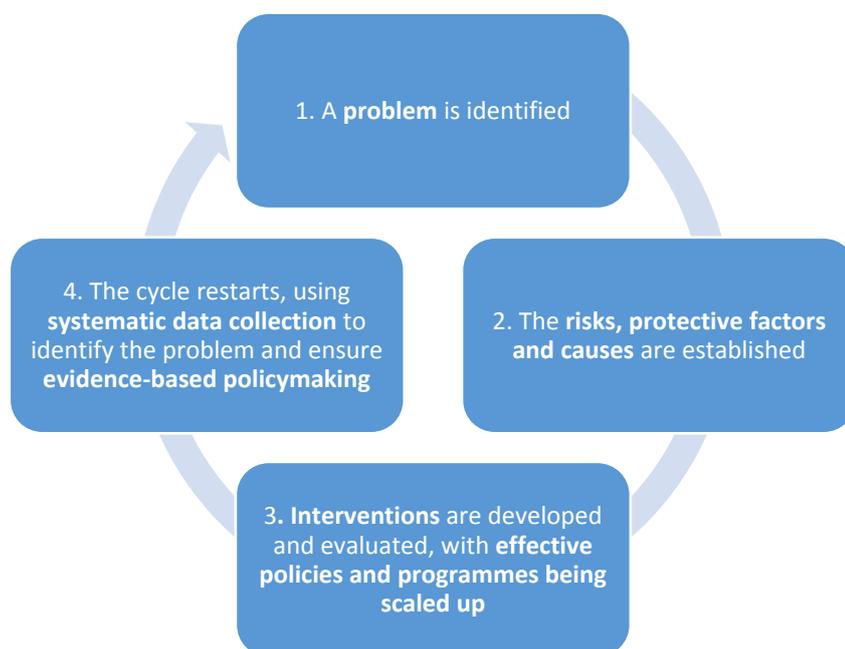
- 4.1 *Why should the health sector be involved in violence prevention?*  
Violence negatively affects the health of victims as well as those who witness violence; it **acts like an epidemic disease**; and it can be effectively prevented using health methods. A significant number of scientific studies have conclusively shown that violence displays all of the characteristics of an epidemic disease: **Clustering, Spread, and Transmission.** For example, geographical data

mapping has shown that there are clear crime hotspots. Furthermore, mental trauma from exposure to violence has been scientifically shown to increase a person's risk of adopting violent behaviour themselves, meaning that violent behaviour transmits and spreads based on exposure – just like an epidemic disease.

#### 4.2 What do we mean by a “Public Health Approach to Knife Crime”?

The public health approach to knife crime has been proven to be successful in areas where it has been employed to tackle the causes of violence. This approach essentially involves **treating violence as a preventable public health issue**, using **data and analysis to identify causes** and focusing on **prevention through multi-agency systemic approaches**. The public health approach to any problem is **interdisciplinary and science-based**, concerned with **long-term as well as short-term effects**, and draws upon many disciplines including: medicine, epidemiology, sociology, psychology, criminology, education and economics. The public health approach also emphasises **collective action**. Cooperative efforts from health, education, social services, justice and policy are necessary to solve knife crime. Each sector has an important role to play in addressing the problem and, collectively, the approaches taken by each have the potential to produce important reductions in violence. Public Health approaches focus on a population defined by a shared health risk (i.e. risk of violence) rather than individuals. Solutions must therefore involve co-production with communities.

#### 4.3 The Public Health model requires **four steps**:



#### 4.4 Why is evidence-based policy making important?

Evidence-based policy making means using research findings to **inform new policies or improve effectiveness of existing programmes**, supporting data collection and analysis for research and management, developing policies that **incentivise the use of evidence**, and **evaluating current programmes to better inform future decisions**. This approach prioritises rigorous research findings, data, and analytics.

- 4.4.1 In an era of constrained public resources, evidence-based policy making helps maintain focus on the outcomes we want to achieve, for whom, and at what cost. It **encourages transparency and accountability** by clearly stating the goals of policies and programmes and then independently evaluating their results to see if those goals were achieved. By focusing on outcomes, an evidence-based framework **prioritises effectiveness of social interventions and efficiency** in use of resources. Evaluation also allows cost savings to be accurately calculated. This approach encourages a **virtuous cycle of knowledge building**. By evaluating policies and programmes and by using data, we can learn how well programmes are working. Ultimately, this information can be used to improve programmes or to terminate consistently ineffective programmes and find better approaches. From there, the cycle of learning and improving continues (see 4.3).

## 5.0 Knife Crime Prevention Research

- 5.1 The Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) conducted a 2015 **review of 67 relevant programmes** to understand what does and doesn't work, entitled 'What works to prevent gang involvement, youth violence and crime?'.  
The following factors were found in programmes that were effective in preventing gang involvement and serious youth violence, including knife crime:

- 5.1.1 **Creating positive change rather than focus on negatives of knife crime:** Effective programmes create positive changes in the lives of Children and Young People (CYP) and their families, whilst reducing risk factors and preventing negative outcomes. The focus should be on programmes which **develop skillsets in CYP to equip them to make healthy life choices, and strengthen families' ability to tackle problems together**, rather than teaching about the negative effects of knife crime.

- 5.1.2 **School-based and family-focused:** Effective programmes often involve practicing skills, problem solving strategies, parent training, and/or therapy. School-based programmes should encourage indirect parental support for their children and practice at home. Effective programmes for high-risk CYP tended to be **interactive, family-focused and therapy-based**, reaching CYP in settings they normally interact in (e.g., at home/in school). Family-focused interventions take the influential power of the wider family/peer groups on the CYP's behaviour into account. Parent and family programmes should use content tailored to real-life problems; for example family-therapy programmes can be structured around key phases but still seek to strengthen each particular family by addressing their issues and needs.

- 5.1.3 **Trained facilitators:** Effective programmes often require or recommend trained facilitators, acting in their professional capacity, who have experience working with children and/or families. Training can help ensure facilitators understand what needs to be implemented and how, and therefore can play an important part in ensuring consistency and quality in delivery. Good facilitators tend to have a good level of education and experience of working with CYP and/or families, which may be key to skilfully and confidently treating their often complex problems.

- 5.1.4 **Therapy:** a key feature of programmes targeting high-risk youths and/or families. CYP with greater levels of need and on the fringe of involvement/already involved in crime and violence may therefore require more specialised treatment.

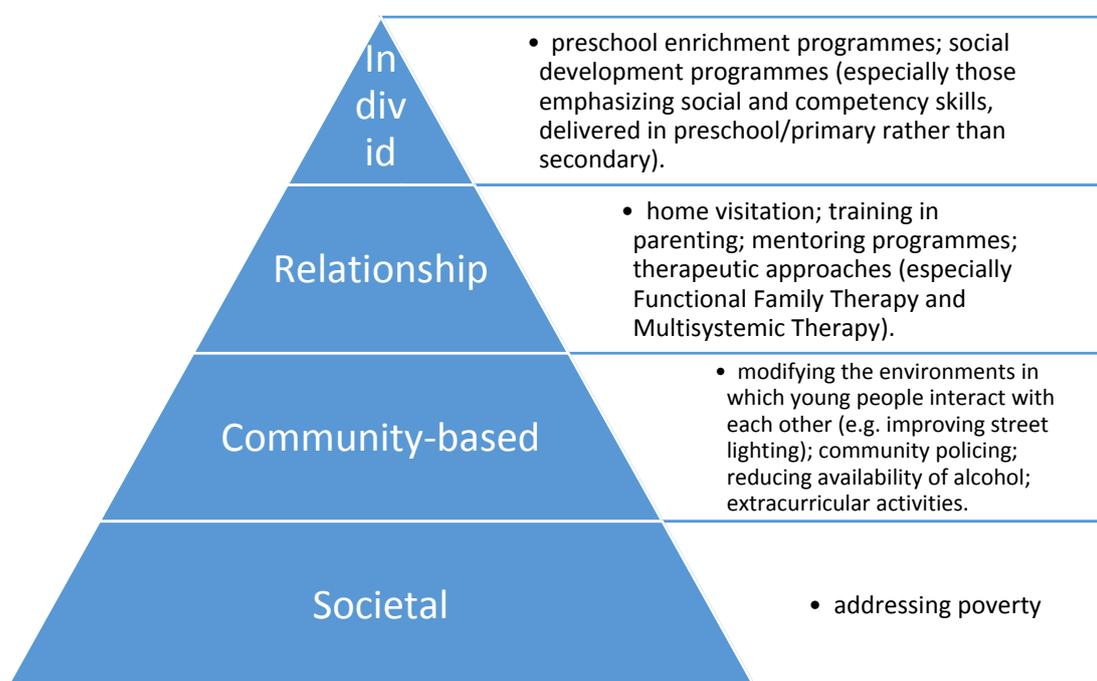
**Functional Family Therapy and Multisystemic Therapy** have a particularly strong evidence base for success.

5.1.5 **Implementation fidelity and evaluation:** Sticking to the original programme specification and ensuring good implementation quality are crucial in terms of ensuring and/or maximising effectiveness. The importance of implementing the programme as originally specified and intended has also been highlighted in the literature. **Process evaluation and adequate monitoring procedures** may help identify whether the programme was implemented correctly and consistently, whether participants received an adequate proportion of the programme, and any barriers to implementation that need to be addressed. **Effects of any adaptations, intentional, accidental, or otherwise, should be evaluated.** Practitioners replicating an evidence-based programme should still evaluate the outcomes.

5.1.6 **Avoid quasi-military programmes:** None of the effective programmes identified had a military element, which is often linked to deterrence and discipline-based approaches. The bulk of research evidence clearly favours non-military-style programmes that aim to foster positive changes through skill-building, parent training, and therapy.

5.2 **World Health Organisation (WHO) approaches to preventing Serious Youth Violence**

The WHO reviewed successful evidence-based interventions from all over the world, and concluded that approaches to preventing youth violence can be broken down into individual, relationship, community-based, and societal.



Overall, strategies which research has shown to be effective include:

- 5.2.1 Overall, it is clear that **prevention begins at birth**, and that longitudinal approaches such as these will not necessarily show a clear benefit for a number of years. These are long-term rather than quick-fix solutions. However, the **potential cost savings are enormous**, as risk factors for serious youth violence are similar to those for Child Sexual Exploitation, Substance Misuse, and Mental Health Problems, among others.
- 5.2.2 Brent is developing an early years and primary school prevention programme aimed at building self-regulation in young children and resilience in families. The programme is built on evidence-based research as promoted by the Early Intervention Foundation. The proposal will need Schools Forum agreement for Dedicated Schools Grant funding.

## 6.0 Real World Approaches Utilising a Public Health Approach

### 6.1 Scotland Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)

- 6.1.1 The Scottish VRU is a national centre of expertise on violence. Part of Police Scotland, the VRU targets violence wherever it occurs, whether it's on the streets, in schools or in homes. Supported by the Scottish Government, the unit has **adopted a public health approach, believing violence is preventable, not inevitable, and treating violence as an infection which can be cured.**
- 6.1.2 Influenced by the 2002 WHO report referenced in Section 6.2, the VRU is the only police member of the WHO's Violence Prevention Alliance, and the only police force in the world to adopt a public health approach to violence. The VRU teamed up with agencies in the fields of health, education and social work to create **long-term attitudinal change in society rather than a quick fix.** The VRU also focused on enforcement seeking to contain and manage individuals who carry weapons or who were involved in violent behaviour.
- 6.1.3 In tackling gang crime, the unit imported a successful anti-gang violence initiative spearheaded in Boston in the 1990s. The Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV) programme broke up Glasgow's long established gangs by **offering gang members an alternative** to the violent lives they were living. The VRU also successfully lobbied for increases in maximum sentences for carrying knives. With studies suggesting police under-recorded violence by as much as 50 to 70% the VRU's researchers have carried out **injury surveillance in AandE departments**, helping to fully define the scale of the problem facing Scotland. The VRU have a selection of different projects that support their initiative. These include:
- **Injury surveillance** which helps to create a fuller picture of violence, providing agencies with more accurate data to inform the development of prevention and intervention strategies.
  - **Navigator** who work in emergency departments in Glasgow and Edinburgh to help stop the revolving door of violent injury in hospitals. The programme engages with patients at a moment when they may be open to breaking free from the challenges trapping them in a cycle of violence.
  - **Medics against Violence (MAV)** were set up in 2008 by 3 surgeons who dealt every day with the awful consequences of violence. They aim to prevent violence through education and now run an award winning secondary school programme. MAV volunteers (all NHS professionals) work with local schools going into classrooms and speaking directly to children about how to avoid

violent situations and stay safe. To date MAV have reached over 150,000 young people.

- 6.1.4 In September 2018 the Mayor of London announced they are developing and implementing a Violence Reduction Unit in London; to be operational from February/March 2019.

## **6.2 The Cure Violence Model**

- 6.2.1 Cure Violence stops the spread of violence by using the methods and strategies associated with disease control – resulting in reductions in violence of up to 70%. This model (originally called Ceasefire) was developed in the USA to respond to high gun crime, but many elements can be adapted to focus on knife crime. **It focuses on three things:**

- 6.2.2 **Detect and interrupt potentially violent conflicts:** Trained violence interrupters and outreach workers prevent stabbings by identifying and mediating potentially lethal conflicts in the community, and following up to ensure that the conflict does not reignite.

- **Prevent Retaliations:** Whenever a stabbing occurs, trained workers immediately work in the community and at the hospital to cool down emotions and prevent retaliations – working with the victims, friends/family, and anyone else connected with the event.
- **Mediate Ongoing Conflicts:** Workers identify ongoing conflicts by talking to key people in the community about ongoing disputes, recent arrests, recent prison releases, etc. and use mediation techniques to resolve them peacefully.
- **Keep Conflicts ‘Cool’:** Workers follow up with conflicts for as long as needed, sometimes for months, to ensure that the conflict does not become violent.

- 6.2.3 **Identify and treat highest risk:** Trained, culturally-appropriate outreach workers work with the highest risk, meeting them where they are at, talking to them about the costs of using violence, and helping them to obtain the social services they need e.g. job training and drug treatment.

- **Access Highest Risk:** Workers utilize their trust with high-risk individuals to establish contact, develop relationships, and work with those most likely to be involved in violence.
- **Change Behaviours:** Engage with high-risk individuals to convince them to reject the use of violence by discussing the cost and consequences of violence and teaching alternative responses to situations.
- **Provide Treatment:** Workers develop caseload who they work with intensively (meet several times a week), assisting with needs such as drug treatment, employment, leaving gangs.

- 6.2.4 **Mobilise the community to change norms:** Workers engage leaders in the community as well as community residents, local business owners, faith leaders, service providers, and those of high risk, conveying the message that the residents, groups, and the community do not support the use of violence.

- **Respond to Every Stabbing:** Whenever a stabbing occurs, workers organise a response where dozens of community members voice their objection to the stabbing.

- **Organise the Community:** Workers coordinate with existing partners and establish new block clubs, council tenants, and neighbourhood associations to assist.
- **Spread Positive Norms:** Programme distributes materials and hosts events to convey the message that violence is not acceptable.

6.2.5 The Cure Violence model offers elements of new approaches which could be trialled across Brent. We have been successful in sharing some of the local pressures and gaining interest in Brent being a location of assessment. Funding routes are being explored to support the undertaking of this activity.

### **6.3 *Redthread Youth Violence Intervention Programme and Hospital Interrupting Violence Exchange***

6.3.1 The Youth Violence Intervention Programme runs in **hospital emergency departments, in partnership with the major trauma network**. Every year, thousands of young people aged 11-24 come through hospital doors as victims of assault and exploitation. It is at this **point of crisis** that the Redthread youth workers utilise their unique position embedded in the emergency departments alongside clinical staff to engage these young victims.

6.3.2 This moment of vulnerability (the **'Teachable Moment'**) when young people are out of their comfort zone, alienated from their peers, and often coming to terms with the effects of injury, is a time of change. Many are more able to question what behaviour and choices have led them to hospital and, with specialist youth worker support, pursue change they haven't felt able to before. Redthread focus on this moment, supporting and encouraging young people to make healthy choices and positive plans to disrupt the cruel cycle of violence that can too easily lead to re-attendance, re-injury, and devastated communities.

6.3.3 Redthread also founded and coordinate the **Hospital-based Interrupting Violence Exchange (HIVE)**, a national network designed to help existing and emerging hospital-based violence intervention programmes share ideas and insights. Regular teleconferences are hosted for practitioners from different projects and areas of the UK to talk through opportunities and challenges. There is also an annual symposium, where all those working on the model get together to discuss the latest developments.

6.3.4 Further discussions have progressed with Red Thread, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and **Northwick Park Hospital** to identify the opportunity to fund an extension of the existing St Mary provision of hospital – Hospital based interruption and supporting teachable moments. The need to source funding for this provision is ongoing.

### **6.4 StreetDoctors**

6.4.1 StreetDoctors give **young people at risk of experiencing violence the skills and confidence to deliver first aid**. Set up by medical students, they are a registered charity led by medical volunteers. Sessions are tailored to be directly relevant to young people at risk of violence, including what to do when someone is bleeding and/or unconscious. Sessions are interactive, giving participants the chance to **practise CPR, the recovery position and managing blood loss**.

6.4.2 They help dispel the myth that there are parts of the body where it is safe to stab someone by explaining how the body's organs work and what happens when someone loses blood. StreetDoctors volunteers are young people themselves, which helps create a **peer-to-peer** relationship with the young people.

6.4.3 StreetDoctors also deliver **StepWise**, a peer education programme over 3-6 months which empowers young people at risk of violence to learn, share and teach emergency lifesaving skills. Young people are provided with first aid accreditation, career guidance and co-facilitate sessions alongside medical

volunteers. This programme therefore goes further by offering personal development through **peer education, career development and first-aid accreditation**.

6.4.4 Children's Services and Community Safety are delivering key information sessions to the team in December 2018 pre rollout. The Safer Neighbourhood Board have funded Street Doctors delivery.

## **7.0 Tackling Knife crime in Brent – What We Currently Do**

### **7.1 Community Protection**

7.1.1 **Offender Management Programme (OMP)** - focuses on reducing reoffending for priority offenders. This enhanced programme includes a targeted and coordinated partnership intervention for a range of offenders, including knife crime offenders and habitual knife carriers, among others. Support includes offenders under 18 years old, and utilizes provision from commissioned services, such as Air Network and St Giles Trust (see below). This intervention is fully funded by the Mayor of Policing and Crime (MOPAC) London Crime Prevention Fund. This is being reviewed for 2019-2021.

7.1.2 **Air Network** - provides a mentoring, sports and well-being programme supporting those on the Offender Management Programme, comprised of an extensive community-based mentoring, activity and personal development programme. This includes an under 18s worker, who focuses on providing support to those known to the Youth Offending Service (YOS) and other CYP services. Workers have prison access to provide support to cohort offenders prior to release, meet the targeted cohort at the prison gate when released, and escort to release appointments. The service has flexible working hours, including an out-of-hours service. Workers provide assistance with appointments if needed (e.g. escort to probation appointments) and provide support around the nine pathways of re-offending (including housing support and assistance securing housing, education, training and employment, and support with drug and alcohol needs).

7.1.3 **St Giles Trust - Gangs Intervention Programme (2017-19)** aims to challenge and work with those involved in gangs to change their behaviour, while holding them to account to take responsibility for their actions. The programme encourages those involved in gangs to exit gang lifestyle and stop carrying knives. Early intervention is provided to those identified as being on the periphery of gang offending. The Gang Mentors Education Programme provides two mentors, one for over 18s and one specialist young person's mentor. Each mentor engages and supports identified individuals involved in gangs that cause

the most harm and risk in the borough to reduce their involvement in gangs and achieve positive outcomes. Educational programmes are offered to all Brent schools to provide early intervention and prevention and increase awareness around the consequences of joining a gang. There is also a peer training project offered to those who have engaged significantly with the Gang Intervention Programme and exited gang lifestyle. This is as well as gang awareness training for professionals who work with gang-affected people and/or families, to build awareness around the issues, and how to best support those involved.

- 7.1.4 **Youth Gangs worker (2017-19):** This funds a youth gangs worker who provides specialist support for CYP engaged in statutory services on the periphery of gang involvement, integrated into the Youth Offending Service (YOS): half of cases are YOS nominals and half are allocated to Family Solutions and wider Children's Services referrals. The worker supports CYP to exit gangs, develop greater empathy, access mentoring provision and diversionary activities, and obtain formally accredited achievements. Work includes: victim awareness; joint enterprise; knife crime; consequences of the index offence/arrest; consequences of crime more generally; gangs lifestyle – strategies to avoid been drawn into gangs; county lines and drug dealing; home visits; goals and aspirations setting; supporting young people to develop positive interests – in sports/music/hobbies.
- 7.1.5 **The Partnership Tasking Team (PTT)** provide focused policing activities linked to the Safer Brent Partnership priorities and the MOPAC local priorities, including Violence with Injury – non DA. Fortnightly tasking enables the PTT officers to respond to local issues of high concern and this is mirrored and aligned to the work of the Police Safer Neighbourhood Officers and other Policing departments. Working together has increased policing capacity and through this approach have successfully found; illegal weapon stashes (knives and guns), removed street drug dealing in locations through the use of enforcement powers and techniques, safeguarded vulnerable CYP at risk of exploitation and prevented the escalation of ASB. Prolific individuals identified by the Partnership Tasking Team and Safer Neighbourhood teams will be referred to Brent's Local Joint Action Groups which meets monthly. Criminal Behaviour Order applications (CBOs) are sought on all individuals prosecuted for criminal offences who meet the threshold. CBOs are effective in prohibiting criminal groups from associating and even banning them from areas. Breach of these orders could lead to imprisonments and the PTT will also be central to monitoring and enforcing breaches through the courts. The PTT also undertake stop and search of known drug dealers and habitual knife carriers to help enhance deterrence mechanisms in hotspot locations.
- 7.1.6 **Identify, Quantify and Manage (IQM) Risk Tool** will employ Predictive Modelling, which uses a range of data sources from YOS, social care, schools, and gang area intelligence. The model draws upon risk indicators identified from extensive research for 'The Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups'. The early identification of vulnerable CYP provided by the model will promote the use of earlier cost-effective interventions, ensuring better decisions are made each time a young person engages with services. The model will introduce a quantifiable and objective risk assessment which can be managed across partner agencies. The dashboard can focus the current risk management partnership meetings already in place through providing instant intelligence and insight into priority cases, for example areas of high knife crime incidents. The tool is currently in development. The deployment of this model into a multi-agency environment will undoubtedly

better safeguard the most vulnerable children through better risk management and early cohort specific interventions.

7.1.7 **Communication Campaign:** Community Safety are have developed a hard-hitting honest media campaign focusing on the effects of Knife Crime. This includes working with Brent mortuary to educate the public on the dangers of knife wounds, taking a new perspective to raise awareness of the real impact on young people, their friends and family.

## 7.2 **Children and Young People's Department**

### 7.2.1 **Early Help – The Youth Offending Service (YOS)**

- **Case manager supervision:** Statutory supervision sessions with young people offer needs-led individual support in line with assessed needs, such as anger management and resolving conflicts without the use of knives. A lot of offending behaviour sessions with young people focus upon consequential thinking so that they are better able to make safe decisions and take responsibility for their actions. All YOS caseworkers have been trained to provide Beyond The Blade training to young people.
- **Group work programmes:** The YOS delivers a rolling eight-week Weapons Awareness Programme (see below). Other programmes which have a clear violence with injury focus include Crime Prevention presentations jointly delivered with the Police, and Victim Awareness Sessions delivered by the Brent Centre for Young People.
- **Weapons Awareness Programme:** Delivered in consultation with the Police and other agencies to children and young people who have been known to be involved in, or identified as vulnerable to involvement in, weapon related violence. The programme looks at carrying weapons and the effects that this has on those who carry weapons and others. It covers various topics including attitudes to carrying knives, the law, social implications of knife crime, victim awareness, conflict management and physical and mental health consequences. Young people are encouraged to address their attitudes and develop skills that allow them to understand the consequences of this type of behaviour and how it impacts upon victims and the wider society. The programme includes a session with a victim's mother who talks about her experiences, and a session with a police officer about the law and issues surrounding stop and search. The young people's parents are invited in on the last session to discuss their children's learning. The programme is delivered and facilitated by YOS practitioners and also external providers, including **StreetDoctors** who provide sessions on the impact of knife crime.
- **YOS Risk Management Panel** is a multiagency group that provides regular oversight and coordination of provision for young people who have been assessed as posing a high risk of harm to the public or themselves, including where knife crime has been identified.
- **Adoption of the Trauma Informed Approach:** All YOS case managers and managers have been trained in the Trauma-Informed Approach which offers a wider understanding of the issues relating to the pattern and behaviour of offending and improves YOS's ability to tackle knife crime by providing a psychology-led approach to multi-agency case formulation and intervention

planning. This, in turn, will enable youth justice staff to tailor and sequence interventions more effectively according to the developmental and mental health needs of individual young people. This helps YOS staff to manage the impact upon themselves of trauma in their work with young people.

- **Partnership working:** with a range of key services within the Council such as Family Solutions, social work services and Inclusion. Externally with CAMHS, Police, Brent River College (PRU), Employment Training and education providers and schools to provide a joined up approach to reducing risk of harm to CYP and the communities they live, socialise and learn in.

#### 7.2.2 **Early Help – the Family Solutions Team** contribute towards prevention of knife crime in a number of ways:

- **Troubled Families Programme:** Supporting especially vulnerable families that have been 'stepped down' from statutory children's social care or are at likely risk of escalating problems. Intensive family support that aims to promote resilience and reduce the risk of escalation.
- **Early Help offer:** families at the greatest risk of escalating problems have access to a 'team around the family' model of integrated and intensive family support to ensure families have tailored support when children in need/child protection plans have been discharged. This is available for families with children and young people aged 0-19 years old and is responsive to family needs. The families that benefit from early help have needs which fit within Levels 2 and 3 of Brent's 4 levels of need. Early Help teams are based within children's centres.

#### 7.2.3 **Inclusion – Youth Provision:** There is one Council Youth Centre in the borough (Roundwood Youth Centre), with facilities including a Café, IT suite, multi-use games area, media area, performance area, and dance studio. Brent Connexions Service provides 6 targeted support workers for young people at risk of/who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), or are at risk of becoming NEET, by signposting to various services including SEND, YOS and CAMHS. The workers act as personal advisors, supporting young people through the journey back into education/work and enabling them to make informed choices about their future.

#### 7.2.4 **Setting and School Effectiveness – Schools** receive an **educational programme in primary schools** within Brent to provide early intervention and prevention by increasing awareness of the consequences of joining a gang, covering different themes including knife crime. This is provided by St Giles and funded by the Brent Safer Neighbourhoods Board. For secondary schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRU's), **Your Life You Choose (YLYC)** delivers a one-day multi-agency presentation to educate young people about the consequences of crime, not only for the offender but their family and friends, victims and the wider community. The project is led by magistrates in the North West London Justice Area. YLYC Brent brings together magistrates, police – safer schools officers and trident officers, prison officers, inclusion officers, Directions project – ex offenders, paramedics, education consultation in cyberbullying and sexting.

### 7.3 **Public Health**

#### 7.3.1 **Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home visiting (MECSH)** is a new model for the delivery of effective sustained home visiting. MECSH is an evidence-

based programme that is delivered by health visitors to the families in their caseload in need of additional support.

- 7.3.2 MECSH has developed as a manualised home visiting programme that, uniquely, is fully integrated within public health and community services and achieves both individual family and whole population improvement. It provides support during those critical sensitive periods in child development, and curriculum that promotes children's health and development in all areas: it particularly focusses on emotional control, habitual ways of responding, symbol, language and social skills.
- 7.3.3 Brent Public Health has recently commissioned the **New Beginnings Service from Westminster Drugs Project (WDP)**, the integrated treatment recovery and wellbeing service for substance misuse in Brent which includes a focused young people's service. The New Beginnings service will continue to support a range of strategic initiatives across the workstreams of the Safer Brent Partnership as well as the continued work to support drug misuse offenders across the criminal justice system including the local probation office, Willesden Magistrates and the London prison estate. The young people's service has been be relaunched and will target those young people impacted or directly affected by substance misuse, as well as issues that impact on their wider environment such as gang and knife crime. It includes a co-located post within the Youth Offending Service.
- 7.3.4 Many of those who access the services provided through New Beginnings have been directly or indirectly involved as either perpetrators or victims of knife-related crime. The precise number and scale needs to be mapped. Knife crime and its aftermath directly impacts on those accessing the specialist young people's service. A key area for the New Beginnings Service is to ensure that people engaging in treatment and recovery services are no longer engaged with local drugs markets with all staff trained to deliver brief interventions targeting the carrying of knives. The services at Cobbold Road and Willesden Centre for Health and Care have a zero tolerance policy to the carrying of weapons both in and around service buildings and threats to staff inferring that people are carrying weapons.
- 7.3.5 The young people's service has been relaunched, re-focused and targets working with those young people directly or indirectly affected by substance misuse and issues that impact on their wider environment such as gang and knife crime as well as including the co-located post with the Youth Offending Service. The service offers a range of interventions including group work, one to one support, outreach and drama workshops as well as wider interventions around bullying and resilience.

#### **7.4 Health**

- 7.4.1 **Redthread** (discussed above in point 6.3) are based in St Marys Hospital to provide support to young people who enter the hospital suffering from a violent injury.

#### **7.5 Wider Services**

- 7.5.1 **Outcome Based Reviews** – Council wide reviews into Gangs, Domestic Abuse and Children at the Edge of Care include key partners and community members.

Findings created new initiatives and programmes to be developed 2018/19. These include:

- A digital solution that connects local young people with advice, support, activities and opportunities in the local area. Brent Youth Zone (<http://www.brentyouthzone.org.uk/>) went live in October 2018 and will officially launch in December.
- An early response service, including out of hours and wrap around support, with interventions aimed at reducing the number of young people who become looked after. This service is scheduled to go live in January 2019.
- Developing a Family Hub model that provides whole-system support as soon as a need emerges, at any point in a child's life. Subject to Cabinet decision on budget proposals, the Family Hub model would be fully operational in October 2020.

**7.5.2 Brent Council Communications team** have delivered a number of local campaigns and events including 'It's Time to Talk' campaign focused on working with and empowering residents and community leaders to tackle issues such as hate crime, gangs, child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse and extremism. This work involved partnering with The Beat London 103.6 FM to hold a series of panel discussions on the issues. The team also promotes the message from the Mayor of London's Anti-Knife Crime Campaign through Brent's communications channels, including social media, Your Brent (our fortnightly newsletter) and The Brent Magazine.

We have also developed a local campaign highlighting the risk of knife crime, taking on board feedback from those affected by knife crime, to raise the awareness of 'No to knives'. Further messages will be developed and shared, including messages shared by family and friends who have experienced loss.

**7.5.3 Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB):** Contextual Safeguarding. Following two fatal stabbings of young people in Brent in 2017, the Board commissioned a learning event to discuss serious youth violence in January 2018 where Dr Carlene Firmin, Principal Research Fellow at the University of Bedfordshire, presented on contextual safeguarding. This concept promotes the idea that young people's behaviours, levels of vulnerability, and resilience are all informed by the social/public, as well as private, contexts in which young people spend their time. When spending time in extra-familial contexts, young people may be exposed to healthy norms which promote pro-social relationships, or they may encounter harmful norms that are conducive to abusive and exploitative relationships. Redthread was also represented at this learning event. Robust and cohesive partnership working is needed across our diverse sectors and professions to influence the environments in which abuse and harm can occur to effectively safeguard children and young people in Brent. At the April 2018 LSCB Board meeting, it was agreed to reduce the number of priorities from four to the following three: Domestic Abuse; Neglect; and Child Exploitation. An agreement was also made to widen the child sexual exploitation priority to child exploitation to focus on issues such as missing children, gangs and knives as well as sexual exploitation.

7.5.4 **Brent Safeguarding Adult Board (BSAB)** expects safeguarding assessments, and assessments for care and support, to include a focus on keeping safe, and in some circumstances this might include a focus on prevention of, or protection from knife crime. They also expect strong co-operation across agencies, for example in the sharing of relevant information to help prevent and detect crime. The Board itself does seek to raise awareness of different forms of abuse and neglect, and works closely with other Boards and partnerships when focusing on prevention and protection.

#### 7.5.5 **Police**

- **Emergency Response** via 999/101.
- **Proactive work in hotspot areas** using Stop and Search powers, plus dispersal and Sec 60 legislation when available to identify, deal with and deter knife and weapon carriers. Body-worn video provides support and accountability to interactions.
- Dealing with **outstanding wanted offenders** linked to violence and knife crime.
- **Safer Neighbourhoods:** Carry out weapons sweeps in conjunction with local community, ranging from youth groups to local residents. Patrols aimed at dealing with ASB and criminality associated with street-drinking in hotspot areas. Work in conjunction with partners through the Local Joint Action Boards to address locations and addresses where criminality occurs or is based, e.g. crack house closure work leading to a decrease in drugs use and associated acquisitive and violent crime in the area. Dealing with outstanding wanted offenders linked to violence and knife crime. Participating in **Operation Sceptre** activity aimed at identifying and dealing with habitual knife carriers and linked offending. Execution of drugs warrants resulting in crime and ASB reduction in the immediate area.
- **Schools Officers:** Provide talks in assemblies and with groups around knife carrying. Weapons arch in association with schools. Liaise with Pupil Referral Units to identify and divert young people from crime and violence. Provide summer school work to divert young persons from gang activity.
- **Licensing:** Proactive and reactive work to deal with issues connected with licensed premises, reviews where required and assistance rendered to licensees to run safe venues. Proactive work done on Wembley event days to ensure licensed premises operate in a safe manner with a view to reducing criminality, violence and offences committed by those attending events, especially football.
- **Crime Wing:** Reactive response to violent crime – secondary investigation, detailed suspect handling and ongoing victim support with use of Family liaison Officers where required. Dealing with outstanding wanted offenders linked to violence and knife crime. Dealing reactively with domestic abuse matters, ensuring victim support, victimless prosecutions used if required.
- **Gangs Unit and Crime Squad:** Targeted work at persons involved in crime on Brent and borders. Participation in operations such as Operation Viper aimed at offenders involved in gang crime, knife, weapons and violent

criminality. Participating in Operation Sceptre activity aimed at identifying and dealing with habitual knife carriers and linked offending.

### 7.5.6 Community Engagement

**Youth Fund:** As a response to and following the recommendations of the 2016 Gangs Outcome Based Review (OBR) the Partnership and Engagement Team have been working with community leaders to develop a Youth Fund (project) that will be composed of four strands i.e. Celebrating the success of young people in Brent, preventing young people from joining gangs through diversionary activities and providing intervention and support to young people at risk of joining gangs or going into crime by providing information, advice and guidance to children, young people, parents and families. Young people and community leaders will form part of the project team and grant assessment panel for this specific project. It is anticipated that the Youth Fund will come on stream by February 2019, allowing Activities to begin from the Easter holidays 2019.

Members of the Partnership and Engagement Team recently attended two public meetings organised by the Community Safety Team at Willesden Green Library on the 14 November and at Harlesden Salvation Army on the 15 November 2018, where we updated the local community on our intentions to work with community organisations to provide diversionary activities for children and young people in key parts of Brent which have been identified as crime hotspots or places where there is known 'gang-activity' such as Church Road, Harlesden, Stonebridge, South Kilburn, St. Raphael's Estate, Chalkhill and Neasden.

Currently the wider Strategy and Partnerships Team have been mapping community organisations and community leaders that deliver projects aimed at tackling knife crime and youth violence. It is our hope that local community organisations with suitable knowledge, experience and skills will deliver projects as part of the Youth Fund initiative and help us address the epidemic of knife crime and youth violence that is currently on the streets of London, including Brent.

## 8.0 Scope

There are conflicting statements about whether knife crime is linked to gangs, historically they have been linked, but research from the London Assembly's Police and Crime Committee found that fear of being attacked leads to young people now carrying knives who are not necessarily in a gang. The task group will review the links between knife crime and gangs in Brent.

The London Assembly's Police and Crime Committee recommend the public health approach, outlined in paragraph 4.0. This requires good partnership working, including multi-agency working, and working with neighbouring boroughs. The task group will review the partnership working arrangements.

The public health approach is advocated by MOPAC to be adopted London wide. Part of its implementation will include elements like the Violence Reduction Unit, which begins in January 2019 and is London wide. The public health approach requires these wider elements to be backed up with local

interventions. The task group will review what will need to be done locally to complement the wider London approach, including:

- the use of RedThread, and other violence interrupter schemes;
- street based interventions;
- education and employment opportunities for ex-offenders;
- using education for nurturing children to prevent crime; and
- Early Intervention schemes for different ages, including younger children.

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# KNIFE CRIME IN BRENT MEMBERS TASK GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

## **A. CONTEXT**

In London, the total number of offences involving knife crime has increased by 4%, and in the last year in Brent, it increased by 18% to 755 knife crime offences. This was the 3rd highest level of knife crime of the 32 London boroughs.

Knife crime is not only an offence; it impacts on the health of victims, and their families and peers. The cost to the NHS of each stabbing is upwards of £7,200.

Violence acts like an epidemic disease, and can be tackled using a multi-agency public health approach. This involves treating violence as a preventable public health issue, using data and analysis to identify causes and focusing on prevention through multi-agency systemic approaches.

In Brent there are a number of interventions already in place for older children and teenagers, while early intervention programmes for younger children are currently being developed.

## **B. OBJECTIVES**

The aim of the task group is gain a better understanding of knife crime in Brent and how interventions can reduce knife crime, and which ones will work locally. With this knowledge the task group can make recommendations that will help in reducing rates and mitigate negative impacts on Brent residents.

According to the constitution and the 2006 Police and Justice Act the group can make recommendations to the Community Safety Partnership through Full Council when discharging their duties as the Crime and Disorder Committee.

### **The task group will:**

- Review the links between knife crime and gangs in Brent
- Review partnership working arrangements
- Review what can be done locally to complement the wider London public health approach, including:
  - The use of RedThread and other violence interrupter schemes
  - Street based interventions
  - Education and employment opportunities for ex-offenders
  - Using education for nurturing children to prevent crime
  - Early intervention schemes for different ages, including younger children

**C. GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Task group will report to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, and keep other relevant committees informed as appropriate.

There should be at least three members present at each meeting.

The task group will meet once a month, from January 2019, until the final report is presented at the April scrutiny meeting.

**D. MEMBERSHIP**

1. Cllr. Sandra Kabir (Chair)
2. Cllr. Erica Gbajumo
3. Cllr. Robert Johnson
4. Cllr. Elliot Chappell
5. Cllr. Thomas Stephens

Richard Harrington – Senior Policy and Scrutiny Officer

**Other key stakeholders would be invited as appropriate which will include:**

1. Representative from the MET
2. Representative from the CCG
3. Representative from the LNWH
4. Representative from St Giles

	<p align="center"><b>Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee</b> 15 January 2019</p>
	<p align="center"><b>Report from the Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships</b></p>
<p><b>Budget Scrutiny Panel</b></p>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Non-key
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b>	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appendix A – Report of the Budget Scrutiny Panel</li> <li>• Appendix B1 – Covering Report for Cabinet Report</li> <li>• Appendix B2 – Cabinet Report – Draft Budget Proposals.</li> </ul>
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Pascoe Sawyers, Head of Strategy and Partnerships, <a href="mailto:pascoe.sawyers@brent.gov.uk">pascoe.sawyers@brent.gov.uk</a> 020 8937 1045

## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report set out the findings and recommendations of the Budget Scrutiny Panel.

## 2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee review the Budget Scrutiny Panel report and agree its recommendations.

2.2 The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee note the membership for the Budget Scrutiny Panel.

## 3.0 Detail

3.1 The Budget Scrutiny Panel has been chaired by Councillor Matt Kelcher, chair of the Brent's Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee. The Panel was

convened after the Cabinet published and discussed its draft Budget proposals for 2019/20 and 2020/2021 at a Cabinet meeting on 15 October 2018.

- 3.2 This was a joint Panel made up of members from the council's three Scrutiny Committees. The members were Councillor Ketan Sheth, Councillor Afzal, Councillor Colwill (Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee); Councillor Long, Councillor Johnson, Councillor Stephens, (Housing Scrutiny Committee); Councillor Nerva, Councillor Kelcher, Councillor Kansagra (Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee). The chair of the Resources and Public Realm Committee has chaired the Panel to reflect the committee's remit to scrutinise resources and the Budget.
- 3.3 The Cabinet's Budget proposals 2019/20 and 2020/2021 included appendices which had Budget templates as well as Budget proposals which were organised into four categories: recommended, difficult, very difficult and most difficult. The Panel decided that to focus its work it would concentrate on these Budget proposals. The Cabinet's Budget proposals also included proposals for the estimated Collection Fund balance for Council Tax, and consultation on Council Tax increases of 4.99% in 2019/20, subject to legislative uncertainty set out in the report, and 3.99% in 2020/21. The Cabinet report also noted that there would be consultation on the Budget until 31 January 2019.
- 3.4 To scrutinise the Budget, the Panel met with Cabinet members, the Chief Executive, Chief Financial Officer as well as Strategic Directors, and Operational Directors from the council's five departments: Chief Executive's; Resources; Regeneration, Growth and Environmental Services; Community Wellbeing, and Children and Young People. The explored key lines of enquiries with Cabinet members and officers around the Budget proposals. The purpose of the panel has been to scrutinise the Cabinet's plans and offer suggestions and amendments to improve the proposals where appropriate. In particular, the Panel has focused on the Budget proposals in appendices to the Cabinet report of 15 October 2019.
- 3.5 After the meetings and discussions the task group has made a number of recommendations. These are set out in the task group's report.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The report does not have direct financial consequences because decisions on the Budget will be taken by Council. However, if any recommendation to adjust the budget by amending savings proposals were to be accepted then the financial consequences of this would have to be matched in finalising the Budget and the final Budget report when it is presented to Council in February 2019.

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 An overview and scrutiny committee has power to make recommendations to a local authority's executive and Council on policy areas with its remit which it has reviewed and discussed. However, there is no obligation on an executive,

or Council, to accept and implement a recommendation. Under the Council's Constitution, the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee is entitled, as part of the process for developing proposals for the Budget, to produce a report setting out its view of the budget priorities and any other issues it considers relevant.

- 5.2 Prior to final budget proposals being agreed by Cabinet, the committee has an opportunity to consider the proposals and to submit a note of its deliberation and comments on the proposals to Cabinet. This year this will take place at the Committee's meeting on 7 February 2019. Cabinet must take this note into account when finalising its budget proposals.

## **6.0 Equality Implications**

- 6.1 The Equality Act 2010 prohibits victimisation and harassment and discrimination which is direct, indirect, by association, by perception, or discrimination arising from disability. Under section 149 of the Act, public bodies such as councils must in the exercise of their functions have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not; foster good relation between people who shared a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 6.2 Effective equality analysis supports the council to understand how its activities and decisions could impact on local communities and to identify and mitigate against any potential for discrimination. As part of the Budget proposals, equality analysis screenings have been completed for all Budget proposals in accordance with the council's guidance and that where some potential adverse impact has been identified affecting one or more of the target equality groups a full equality analysis has been carried out.

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

- 7.1 Ward members who are members of the Budget Panel or on Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee will be involved in scrutinising this report.

***REPORT SIGN-OFF***

***Peter Gadsdon***

Director Performance, Policy and Partnerships

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**London Borough of Brent**  
**Report of the Budget Scrutiny Panel 2018/19**

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# **1. Introduction**

## **Scrutiny process**

Brent's constitution gives a clear and important role to overview and scrutiny in its budget setting process. We take this responsibility very seriously and hope to act as a critical friend and second pair of eyes when it comes to examining the cabinet's budget proposals. This report summarises our investigations, conclusions and recommendations with regards to the proposed two-year budget for 2019/20 and 2020/21. It is intended to begin a constructive debate about the specific proposals in the budget and also the wider way in which Brent sets a budget and its priorities. It will be presented to for adoption to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee and then to the Cabinet and Full Council and so we hope it will allow all councillors to have their say about these important issues.

As the budget cuts across all departments in the council, our Panel was comprised of members of all three Brent scrutiny committees. Each of the committee chairs was represented on the Panel, alongside backbench committee members and representatives from the opposition group. As chair of the scrutiny committee which has responsibility for council resources, Matt Kelcher had overall responsibility to chair the Panel.

Thank you for to all of the members for giving up their time to take part in this process, and also to the many council officers who worked very hard to provide us with all of the information and support we needed.



**Councillor Afzal**



**Councillor Colwill**



**Councillor Johnson**



**Councillor Long**



**Councillor Kelcher, Budget Panel Chair**



**Councillor Kansagra**



**Councillor Nerva**



**Councillor Sheth**



**Councillor Stephens**

The panel held a series of evening meetings between September and December 2018 to prepare this report. This included private meetings where we discussed our own findings and ideas, and evidence sessions where we questioned lead members and relevant officers about the proposals they are responsible for bringing forward.

## **Two-year budget**

For the past few cycles Brent has set two-year budgets, the second year being formally adopted (with any necessary changes) at the Council's budget setting meeting prior to that financial year as is required by law. Overall, we endorse this approach as it allows for longer term planning and gives the organisation as a whole some breathing space to consider big issues and trends outside of annual budgetary pressure.

This policy also influences the format of budget scrutiny. At the start of a two-year cycle there are many new budget proposals to consider – around 70 on this occasion – which take up a huge amount of the Panel's time. In the middle of a two-year cycle there are far fewer new policies to consider, and so we have more time to examine larger strategic issues. For example, last year, we took the time to analyse the impact of business rates devolution to the London pilot pool on local government finances as a whole.

For reasons outlined already, there is insufficient time and resources for such broad stroke work at this point in the cycle, and so this report will focus much more heavily on specific plans in the draft budget.

Next year we intend to again take a more strategic approach.

## Legal statement

Local authorities have a legal duty to set a balanced budget. We are happy to confirm that we believe that this budget meets this test.

We would also like to commend the council's team overall for the prudent, if tough, financial decisions it has taken in recent years which ensure that Brent is able to achieve a balanced budget, despite facing huge cuts from central government.

We are pleased there is no immediate prospect of the council falling into the kind of deep financial difficulties we have seen in places like Northamptonshire County Council.

## 2. Recommendations

### Speaking up

1. Advocate for the introduction of a locally set "tourist tax".

### Council Tax

2. The council continues with the approach of increasing Council Tax at the permitted annual rate, and encouraging development and regeneration that will bring housing to the borough.

### Budget or policy?

3. In future years an additional column or categorisation is added to the budget proposals. This would clearly define a proposal as one of: **Cut; Income generation; Service transformation; Efficiency.**

### Consultation

4. For future budget consultations, the council looks for clear comparisons with similar authorities and explicitly benchmarks itself against criteria such as number and quality of responses to ensure its processes are working well and continuing to improve.

### Sponsorship and partnerships

5. Brent to consider the idea of whether it could coordinate all public sector spending to boost local employment and business. We are ideally placed to act as a central coordinator bringing together all public sector bodies which procure services in Brent

and getting them to synchronise their pre-qualification policies. This would give the strong message that Brent is open for business.

#### Budget proposals

6. In future, full equality impact assessments should be done for every budget proposal. This is more transparent and helps prepare for possible outcomes from actions.

#### Housing

7. To ensure the selective licensing scheme can have the impact we all want to see, an investment is made into acquiring the temporary staff needed to clear the backlog and process new landlords quickly.
8. Housing Scrutiny Committee examines the issue of housing acquisition and what mitigation might be undertaken within the next six months. They should also consider the idea of merging First Wave and i4B into a single company, and if this would ensure that all of Brent's private property acquisitions have an additional social benefit goal.

#### Voluntary sector

9. Every time the council scales back funding to a voluntary organisation it simultaneously offers advice and support about where other funding may be available. Most specifically, it should actively promote the possibility of acquiring money from strategic CIL funds.

#### Borough of Culture

10. Strong overview and scrutiny of London Borough of Culture, by putting a backbench member on the board of the charitable trust which will oversee its delivery, and also with quarterly financial updates sent to the chair of the relevant scrutiny committee.

#### Social care

11. The introduction of 15-minute care visits does not go forward.
12. Recommissioning of care provisions is a large and important topic. A full report on the matter should come before the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee within six months.

#### Public health

13. Ceasing of untargeted smoking cessation services – policy should be reviewed in two years and if smoking rates have increased then it should be reconsidered.

#### Libraries

14. Serious consideration is given to the idea of transferring libraries to a charitable trust.
15. Every effort should be made to see if volunteers can take over some of the services to prevent closures.
16. Exploration of all options which help to maximise the use of library buildings and extract additional financial value from them.

#### Roundwood Youth Centre

17. Once the site is handed over, Brent must clearly measure and benchmark activities undertaken at the centre.
18. Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny does some further investigations into their long-term financial viability as part of its work programme on children's services.
19. The council and YBF to conduct a review of the best ways to promote what is happening at Roundwood.

#### Family hubs

20. Hubs should have a strong triage service, so anyone dropping into the centre is quickly assessed.
21. Council should pay close attention to public transport routes and geographical areas when choosing potential sites.

#### Environment

22. Launch of a 'Considerate Builders Scheme' which promotes local tradespeople who set high standards.
23. Some investment is made in providing more suitable bins and disposal areas at Brent's transport hubs – mainly tube stations and bus stops – to give people an easy and ethical way of disposing of items such as cigarette ends.
24. Additional income from increased licensing activity in the Wembley area should be ring-fenced for a project which will be of benefit to affected residents.
25. The benefits to urban wildlife of turning down street lights should feature prominently in future publicity around the concept.
26. Litter patrol activity should be targeted at areas missing out, so our response is joined-up.

27. The Cleaner Brent app should be amended so that people can report piles of uncollected leaves.
28. A review into how the council can ensure applications for new residential developments – in particular car-free developments – always include appropriate waste disposal options.
29. The council should try to persuade all sites in the WLWA to agree to a 'no black bags' policy.

#### Community safety

30. A report to come to RPR Scrutiny by the end of 2019 looking at how Brent can mitigate against cuts to the Met Patrol Plus Scheme, by beefing up our own internal patrol/enforcement teams.

#### Scrutiny

31. Instead of making cuts via the very blunt instrument of axing one committee, a clear budget for scrutiny is set and the three current chairs work with officers and backbenchers to come up with a proposal to deliver scrutiny within that budget.

#### Reserves

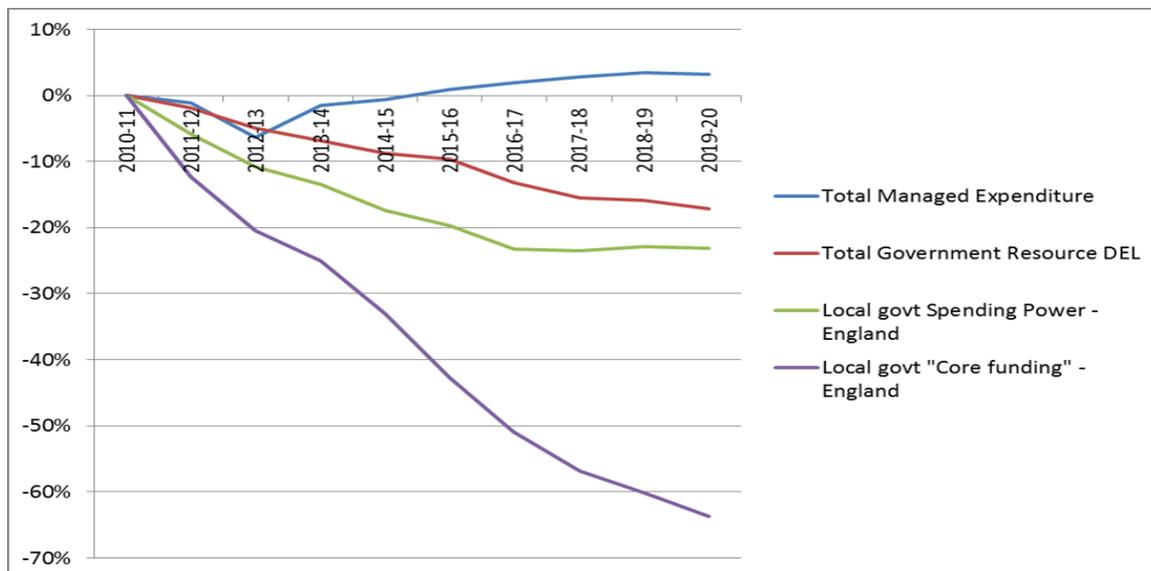
32. A paper on reserves is brought to RPR Scrutiny within six months. It should include information on each fund in reserves, when it was established and when it was last accessed.

### 3. Context

#### Local government budgets

During the course of our work, the Panel heard a bizarre rumour emanating from central government. This rumour was that austerity was now over.

Unfortunately, this does not seem to be the case for local government. As this chart demonstrates, however the devolution of business rates to local government is achieved, there will still be a significant budget gap across the short- and medium-term future. As noted above, such gaps are illegal and must be filled no matter how much pain they cause.



Cumulative like-for-like change in public spending - 2010-11 to 2019-20

In our opinion, constrained finances are likely to be the new norm for local authorities. It is hard to envisage a return to the financial position that existed before 2010, a time when, as recently described to the Panel Chair by a retired Chief Financial Officer, 'a bad year was when your increased grant was just below the rate of inflation'. We therefore must continue to work innovatively to find savings and cuts and to closely target the resources we do have towards our top priorities.

#### Speaking up

It was clear from our conversations with cabinet members and officers, that there is a perception that county councils have a much stronger influence in central government than communities like Brent.

This is undoubtedly influenced by the political alignment of central government and most current county council administrations. We also heard that this is partially attributable to the fact that they have their own influencing body in the shape of the County Councils Network (CCN), which lists ‘securing concessions from national governments’ as one of its main activities in the ‘What we do’ section of its website.

The CCN recently took credit for a successful campaign which persuaded the Chancellor to announce ‘new funding for adult social care, children’s services, and for potholes’.

In theory, London Councils should perform a similar role for Brent and the other 31 London boroughs. However, there is a far greater divergence of interests between members of London Councils – for example inner and outer London boroughs and those controlled by different parties – than there appears to be amongst the councils in the CCN. This makes consistent lobbying on agreed policies and priorities more difficult.

The Panel appreciates some of the work being done to highlight the problems facing councils like Brent by advocates of our sector. We would particularly mention the Local Government Association’s “Breaking Point” campaign and the “Red Lines” campaign in London. If Brent can play its role in promoting and supporting similar initiatives in future this is something we would support.

At this point, we should note that many county councils may look at Brent’s situation with some degree of envy. The level of regeneration we have, particularly in Wembley, will ensure we have a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) account far larger than most counties, and also that many thousands of young professionals – who are net contributors to council coffers – will be moving into Brent in coming years.

Despite this, we agree that it is hard to be heard without a voice and think it can only be a good thing for Brent to push vocally for its interests.

We would **strongly recommend** that a first step should be to campaign for the introduction of a locally set “tourist tax”. At present, hundreds of thousands of tourists visit our borough from around the world every year, particularly to attend events at the sporting and musical venues in Wembley. Of course, these people boost the local economy, but they also make asks of Brent’s finances in areas like street cleansing and licensing. Presently they make no direct contribution to the local authority to compensate for this.

This is not the case in many European countries or the United States, where visitors pay a small “tourist tax” every time they make an overnight stay in a hotel or rental property.

If Brent had the power to set something similar this would be fair, as it would ensure we have the funds to cope with the large numbers of people who visit us every year. It would also be proportionate as it could be set at the level of just a few pounds something that would surely not discourage tourists from attending the kinds of world class events that take place in our borough. Unfortunately, the law in the UK does not currently allow us to do this.

We do know that the Local Government Association has previously advocated something similar and we would hope that Brent plays its part to push this issue back to the top of the local government agenda.

## **The “B” word**

Brexit, and its potential impact on the local economy, loomed large in our thoughts throughout this process.

We welcome the fact that Brent published, as part of the December 2018 Full Council meeting, a report on the implications of Brexit and we certainly gave this consideration.

However, with so much uncertainty hanging over the process and with the picture changing on a daily basis it has been impossible to include a comprehensive section on what the impact of Brexit will be for Brent.

One area that we would like to highlight, however, is the potential impact on the council workforce. Around half of the employees who work for our biggest contractor, Veolia, and around ten per cent of directly employed staff in Brent, are from European Union countries. There would be huge consequences if all of these people were asked to leave following Brexit. Furthermore, if the government pushes through with plans for a £30,000 immigration salary cap this may make it extremely hard to recruit for many important positions within the council. The council needs to plan carefully for this eventuality.

## **Council Tax**

This budget is built on the assumption that Brent will continue to increase Council Tax at the annual rate permitted. We believe that local authorities have little choice but to do this, and

it is therefore no surprise at all that the majority of authorities in the UK are taking the same approach.

With the central government grant due to be abolished imminently, all councils will soon be entirely reliant on internal sources of revenue; council tax, business rates and charges. To ignore one of these few sources would not be prudent, particularly because council tax rises are cumulative, meaning if it is frozen at any point the income deferred is lost forever.

Of course, increasing council tax is not the only way to increase the council tax base and so we also must continue to encourage development and regeneration that will bring new housing to our borough. But as the below table demonstrates, Brent's current council tax levels are not in any way out of sync with London averages.

<b>London Borough</b>	<b>Band D 2018-2019</b>
Westminster	710.5
Wandsworth	745.81
City of London	933.41
Hammersmith and Fulham	1022.04
Kensington and Chelsea	1123.07
Newham	1258.77
Tower Hamlets	1280.37
Southwark	1329.54
Hackney	1374.67
Lambeth	1386.27
Hillingdon	1407.16
Barking and Dagenham	1411.85
Islington	1429.45
Ealing	1440.12
Bromley	1452.71
Hounslow	1461.99
Barnet	1483.57
Camden	1488.43
Merton	1492.89
<b>Brent</b>	<b>1496.54</b>
Lewisham	1498.10
Greenwich	1543.45
Redbridge	1549.98
Enfield	1555.40
Haringey	1575.80
Bexley	1588.04
Sutton	1602.75
Waltham Forest	1614.97

Croydon	1636.96
Havering	1658.06
Harrow	1688.92
Richmond upon Thames	1706.94
Kingston upon Thames	1770.97

We therefore **recommend** that the council continues with its approach.

## **4. Process**

### **Budget ... or policy?**

It is clear that the proposals in this budget go much wider than a few cuts to services. Also contained within the proposals are wider ranging reforms to the way we deliver services, like the move to a “Family Hub” model. This is an innovative reform that we believe the council would be right to consider whatever its financial pressures. In better times the savings accrued from this reform would perhaps be ploughed back into other priorities rather than used to plug a savings gap.

We believe the fact that all such ideas are only publicised as part of the budget setting process can create unnecessary suspicion amongst the public that they are solely being done to save money.

At a public meeting in December the Panel Chair mentioned the budget item relating to uniformed litter patrols as a positive development. One constituent told him that they did not understand why it would be in the budget as it is good news which does not cost money. In our experience people assume budget items are only about saving money and are never positive.

To overcome this, we **recommend** that in future years an additional column or categorisation is added to the budget proposals. This would clearly define a proposal as one of the following:

- **Cut** – a clear reduction in a service to save money, for example shutting the household recycling centre on certain days
- **Income generation** – when the council generates new revenue for itself, for example by selling its ICT services to another borough

- **Service transformation** – a political reform which has incidental savings, for example moving to a family hubs model
- **Efficiency** – a change which saves money without having an impact on frontline services, for example restricting colour printing at the civic centre

We believe that this approach would make it immediately clear to local people that the budget setting process is actually a much broader and more significant reform process than simply cutting services. Furthermore, if local people were aware that the budget papers also contained fresh new ideas that they could influence the development of, they may be more inclined to take part.

## Consultation

We can only commend the intentions of the council to carry out a thorough consultation. They have gone far beyond what is legally necessary or most would expect in an attempt to allow local residents to say what they think about the budget proposals. This includes using new technology such as the online budget calculator as well as getting out onto the streets for consultation events at local supermarkets.

However, we do have some doubts about the ability of local people to fundamentally change and influence what will be passed in the budget. To summarise simply:

- The council needs to save around £20 million in this two-year budget
- The budget proposals add up to roughly £26 million
- The proposals are ranked in order of the impact they will have, with the most difficult making up Appendix D of the proposals
- The ideas in Appendix D are extremely unpalatable and total around £6 million, so if these ideas are rejected, people will have to accept all of the other proposals to make the budget balance

Therefore, to some extent we believe the public are being presented with a *fait accompli* in the way the savings are ordered. As one member of our Panel put it; 'if I were a betting person, I think I could make quite good money on predicting which proposals will ultimately end up in the budget'.

This could perhaps be avoided in future by grouping the proposals by department or total savings, then people could categorise themselves what they believe to be most unpalatable and have a greater influence over what will ultimately be rejected from the budget proposals.

We heard that by now many people in Brent are suffering from “consultation fatigue” and perhaps not giving as many new ideas and free text responses as they once were. We therefore also **recommend** that for future budget consultations the council looks for some clear comparisons with similar authorities and explicitly benchmarks itself against criteria such as number and quality of responses to ensure its processes are working well and continuing to improve.

Consultation cannot be done for free – this year it has cost around £11,000 – and if the level of participation is stagnating or declining then our process must be questioned on a value for money basis.

## **Sponsorships and partnerships**

As ever, the Panel took a significant interest in the council’s attempts to engage with business and generate income through additional sponsorship and partnerships. We are pleased that some progress seems to have been made since our recommendations in this area last year.

As we recommended, the council has undertaken a wider review of all potentially available advertising space in the borough and is set to bring some of the operation in house next year at the end of the current contract with JCDecaux. This will allow the borough to have more control over local advertising and hopefully generate more income.

However, one area we believe the council still can go further on is in the area of public sector procurement. Reforms to the machinery of government – local or national – to support our own businesses are long overdue in this country. It is amazing to think that the Government is still debating about whether it is a good idea to have an industrial strategy or not, decades after many of our competitors developed their own.

The head of the US Small Business Administration reports directly to the US President whereas none of the 15 direct reports to the permanent secretary in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is responsible for small British businesses. No wonder 45 per cent of US Federal procurement spend goes to home grown American

small businesses - a figure which represents roughly eight times the lending rate of the UK Enterprise Finance Guarantee scheme after taking into account the relative sizes of the two economies.

Brent should not be afraid to think big, and realise the huge role it can play in creating a virtuous cycle where local businesses are supported to grow and then contribute back into the community and council coffers.

One in every seven pounds in the UK is spent by the state (equating to approximately 40% of GDP), making procurement one of the key levers that any public sector body has to boost business, employment and the economy.

Currently many businesses feel frustrated and locked out of the public sector procurement process. All public sector bodies set their own prequalification test for procurement contracts, so in any given area the council might ask for copies of accounts dating back five years and a biography of the CEO, the Fire Service might ask for six years of accounts and a biography of every director, the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group for something different altogether.

Some authorities are already realising this and working to coordinate all public sector spending in their area to boost local employment and business. Preston is one such and its model is also now being studied by academics in conjunction with local authorities in Hertfordshire.

We **recommend** that Brent Council joins this movement. We are ideally placed to act as a central coordinator bringing together all public sector bodies which procure services in Brent and get them to synchronise their pre-qualification policies. This would give a strong message that Brent is open for business and encourage businesses to base themselves here so that they can access many different procurement opportunities, and in the long term pay more business rates back into Brent.

We would emphasise that within this there would also be a golden opportunity to ensure further Living Wage payment within local supply chains if such a commitment became a more regular requirement to secure local procurement opportunities.

## 5. Budget proposals

### **Overview**

One of our biggest responsibilities is to scrutinise the budget proposals put forward by the cabinet. There are around 70 of these, which were set out in the report (which all members can access on ModGov) to cabinet in October 2018.

At our first meeting, we decided it would not be practical to conduct in depth investigations into each of these. We therefore selected a range of proposals which most concerned us and called in the relevant cabinet members and directors to question them further on their plans. The section below summarises and elaborates on these discussions and makes recommendations emerging from our work.

At points during this process we came across some proposals which were extremely hard to scrutinise. This is simply because there is no service delivery rationale for pursuing them, they are simply cuts to a service to plug the financial gap that the council has been placed in by central government.

It would be the easiest thing in the world for us to criticise these cuts and point out all of the ways in which they might impact on people in Brent. However, this would not be constructive scrutiny and would ultimately not achieve anything as there is no doubt that the council has to make cuts, and that cuts have consequences.

We will refer to some of these proposals as we move forward through this section but will also look at proposals which are more clearly policy reforms and new ideas, and suggest how we think they might be improved or enhanced.

The final thing to say at this point is that we do believe impact assessments can help councillors and the public to understand exactly what kind consequences cuts will have.

We are aware that in the past the decision has been made not to carry out detailed impact assessments on every plan, but we would **recommend** that in future this is done for every proposal. This is more transparent and helps the council to prepare for possible outcomes from our actions.

## Housing

We discussed at length proposal CWB007, which aims to extend the selective licencing scheme for private landlords to more parts of the borough and also have the positive attendant benefit of raising income through more licence fees.

We agree with the principles of selective licencing and believe that if done correctly this policy could certainly improve standards in the private rental sector in Brent. Our concern is that the current processing time thwarts these aims. There is still a backlog of applications and sign ups six months after the scheme was extended into five new wards. This means that a huge amount of officer (and ward member) time that could be used on enforcement and taking corrective action is only allocated to getting people on the register.

We therefore **recommend** that, to ensure the scheme can have the impact we all want to see, an investment is made into acquiring the temporary staff needed to clear the backlog and process new landlords quickly. Once an appropriate tipping point is reached and the large majority of landlords are signed up this can then mean all council resources in this area are used for enforcement and changing behaviours.

Additionally, we looked at proposal CWB010 which seeks to generate income for the council by acquiring 50 new properties for rent at the market rate under Brent's First Wave company. Unlike investments through i4B (Investing 4 Brent), this project does not have a clear social objective of acquiring affordable units for temporary accommodation, it is purely to raise income.

We understand the council's need to do this, but are still concerned that it may have an impact on some first-time buyers in Brent. It is difficult enough already to get onto the property ladder for many local people. If the council enters the private rental market – even in a limited way – its clout and financial backing will surely lead to it jumping ahead of first-time buyers in the race to acquire property as it comes onto the market. It would be difficult to ever measure accurately how many local young people might be forced to move out of the borough, or stay living with parents or in rented accommodation, as a result of this policy. But it is certainly an issue we should all be aware of.

As a result, we **recommend** that the Housing Scrutiny Committee examines this issue and what mitigation might be undertaken within the next six months. They should also consider

the idea of merging First Wave and i4B into a single company, and if this would ensure that all of Brent's private property acquisitions have an additional social benefit goal.

## **Voluntary sector**

Despite promises to reinvigorate a "Big Society", the policy of austerity has actually led to a hollowing out of the voluntary sector across the UK. Local government has for many years been one of the biggest funders of charities and voluntary organisations through grants and commissioning, but with so few funds in council coffers these have inevitably declined. This much was clear from our own experiences and interviews with officers and cabinet member on this topic.

In this context we understood the need for the council to further reduce the grants we offer to the voluntary sector through proposals like PPP001A. But we do not believe this should be the end of the story. We **recommend** that every time the council scales back funding to a voluntary organisation it simultaneously offers them advice and support about where other funding may be available. Most specifically, it should actively promote the possibility of acquiring money from strategic CIL funds for projects which will benefit people in the borough. Our aim should be to save as many projects as possible, even if we cannot directly fund them.

Similarly, we discussed the idea of aggregating CIL money for particular outputs. The clear example given was for tree planting. Currently, members and the council are encouraging community groups and individuals across the borough to apply for one off sums of money for tree planting in the area. We believe it would be more efficient if a certain amount of the CIL budget was allocated as the "Brent Trees Fund" which fund a certain number of trees per year. People would bid into this fund directly, making the process of allocating new trees more strategic and efficient.

## **Borough of Culture**

During the period of this two-year budget Brent will have the status as London Borough of Culture 2020. This is undoubtedly a great opportunity for Brent and we hope that communities across the borough enjoy what will be a fantastic occasion in the year our borough hosts the European Championships final.

However, it would be remiss of a budget scrutiny panel not to examine the financial implications of such a project at this point and we therefore also asked the relevant cabinet member several questions about their plans.

The simple facts about Borough of Culture costs are as follows:

- The total budget for the London borough of Culture is £4.6m.
- The Mayor of London and Greater London Assembly contribute £1.35m.
- The council have a series of bids, in progress or planned to make up the remaining amount.
- Examples of some of these are as follows: £250k from Paul Hamlin Foundation, £250k from Heritage Lottery Funding and £120k from the Arts Council.
- The Council has budgeted to provide £1m of which £250k is Neighbourhood CIL.
- With this in mind, there is currently a shortfall of £1.5m, for which the council is actively fundraising.

Overall this seems like a prudent financial approach with most of the income coming from external sources. The only problem would come if the council's fundraising efforts are not successful in raising some or all of the remaining £1.5m. We discovered that in this eventuality the current policy is to take what funding is needed from usable reserves.

Given the importance of this project and the not insignificant financial stake the council is putting into it, we believe that there needs to be strong overview and scrutiny of the project at all stages. The priority for this scrutiny would be to ensure that funds are spent appropriately and generate the maximum legacy for local residents, particularly young people who were at the heart of our bid.

We **recommend** that this is achieved by putting a backbench member on the board of the charitable trust which will oversee delivery of the year of culture, and also with quarterly financial updates sent to the chair of the relevant scrutiny committee.

## **Social care**

Proposal CWB019 – to introduce 15-minute care visits is rightly included in the “Most Difficult” appendix. When this idea was proposed a couple of years ago the Panel took a strong stance that this should only be done as a final resort. Such a reform would undoubtedly have a negative impact on the most vulnerable.

According to research by Unison (*Suffering Alone at Home*, January 2016) a large number of councils do commission 15-minute home care visits including 45 per cent of those in London. Their research suggests that such short visits are affecting the ability of homecare workers to deliver quality care. The United Kingdom Homecare Association, which represents providers, has further said that it is concerned that domiciliary care such as help with washing, dressing and meal preparation cannot be crammed into a 15-minute slot.

We should be proud to stand apart from the many councils which have chosen to take this drastic step whilst not considering other income generation options, such as charges for garden waste. We therefore clearly **recommend** that this proposal does not go forward.

We also discussed at length the council's plans for recommissioning its care provisions, the risks and rewards that come with having fewer providers and the implications for our Real Living Wage commitments. This is a very large and important topic and therefore we **recommend** that a full report on the matter comes before the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee within six months.

## **Public health**

It is a relatively recent development that local authorities have been responsible for public health provision and received a ring-fenced grant from Public Health England to deliver this service. Even within this short time period the level of funding for this service has been continually cut – a trend which was confirmed in an announcement from the Department for Health and Social Care made whilst we were finalising this report – in a way which we doubt would have been done had funding remained with the NHS and its protected budget.

Therefore, the council is still developing the best possible model to deliver these services and ensure that all appropriate schemes are funded inside the ring fence and not taken from the general pot.

We support this broad strategic work but also have some specific concerns about individual public health proposals. For example, CWB003 ceases untargeted smoking cessation services. We acknowledge that this might have excellent effects on those who most need support to break this life shortening habit, but remain concerned that it could lead to some increase in smoking amongst the general population who will no longer get any support. We therefore **recommend** that this policy is reviewed in two years' time and if general smoking rates have increased then it should be reconsidered.

Likewise, CWB004 would decommission the universal health check offer to target those at higher risk. Again, a general review of this policy should be undertaken at the appropriate time.

## **Libraries**

CWB006 proposes to reduce library hours and offers no argument that residents will benefit from a better service if this is implemented. We do not agree with this proposal and believe it should have been placed in the “Most Difficult” appendix.

We are pleased that residents in Brent know they have six council-run libraries in the borough that they can go to seven days per week. Scaling back on this universal service would undermine the trust the council has slowly rebuilt with the community following the closure of several libraries before 2014. We also believe there is a real danger that demand will be dampened if people become confused about which libraries they can go to at certain times and which they can go to at others.

There are other options we feel the council could consider before passing this proposal. The first of these is transferring the library service to a charitable trust as other authorities – including Glasgow, Luton and Fife - have done. If our library service were run in this way, the six buildings could become eligible for business rates relief of at least 80 per cent, presenting significant savings without a loss in the service.

We **recommend** that the council gives serious consideration to this idea.

Secondly, the largest mistake, in our view, that the council made before adopting its proposal of library closures a few years ago, was refusing to give local community and volunteer groups any opportunity to run the service. We **recommend** that this time every effort should be made to see if volunteers can take over some of the services to prevent closures. We are aware that some libraries require a permanent security presence and that this work cannot be done by volunteers, but this is not the case in every library and so should not prevent a volunteer team from keeping these branches open.

Thirdly, we **recommend** that Brent explore all options which help to maximise the use of library buildings and extract additional financial value from them. For example, residents in flats above shops often struggle to get hold of council recycling bags for their waste. If they could collect these easily from their local library this would be easier for them and give the

library further status as a local hub for council services. Likewise, there is much potential to rent out event space in some of our libraries, like the upstairs floors in Harlesden Library, and we think more work needs to be done to sweat those assets.

This are just some starting ideas, but it is our fundamental belief that any alternative to make savings in the service are considered before we resort to the drastic step of partial closures.

## **Schools**

Proposal CYP001 proposes to fund some statutory education functions from the Dedicated Schools Grant. We agree with the lead member and director that this would be fair and appropriate as we are only requesting around £250k from a pot of over £300m.

However, we are naturally wary of any budget proposal over which the council is not fully in control. This money would need to be approved by the Schools Forum an organisation of hard working volunteers we have a huge amount of respect for. We appreciate the hard work Brent has done to build up a relationship of trust with this organisation by openly sharing all of its plans around school funding in the past and would be hopeful that Brent's bid is successful.

Perhaps, in future, budget proposals which are contingent on external approval should be highlighted as such to ensure all possible contingencies are made to cover the gap if the bid is unsuccessful.

## **Roundwood Youth Centre**

Members of the Panel were very interested in proposal CYP005 which relates to the future of the Roundwood Youth Centre. All agree that the facility is one with great potential but is currently underused and is therefore a drain on the council's revenue budget.

The council should not wish to dispose of this asset, but even if it did, this would not be straightforward as the facility was built with a National Lottery grant of £4.997m as part of the Government's Myplace programme. Under the terms of the grant agreement, the council is required to notify the Cabinet Office of any planned changes of use or ownership and could be required to repay the grant in whole or in part.

Therefore, the only solution is to increase the use of the site. We are satisfied that the proposal CYP005 has a strong potential to achieve this. It would establish alternative

education provision on site for local children who have been temporarily suspended from school. This would actually enhance our local offer as currently pupils have to travel out of the borough to places like Hammersmith when under a school suspension. Crucially this would mean that the youth centre is not empty and costing money to maintain during the school day.

It is far from ideal, in our opinion, that this new school would be a free school, but unfortunately the law ensures that new schools opening are always outside of local education authority control. Perhaps a change of central government policy in future may allow the school to one day become part of the Brent family.

The arrangement is also not perfect for Brent because the asset would transfer to Brent Special Academies Trust meaning any additional income they derive from hiring out other rooms on site would not be retained by the council. However, we will retain some oversight of the organisation as a senior officer will sit on the Trust's board.

The proposal would hand over youth provision at the site to a new provider, with the Brent Youth Foundation in particular having expressed an interest in becoming that provider. The council's clear intention is that more activities would be run at the Centre than there are currently. We **recommend** that once the site is handed over Brent must clearly measure and benchmark this.

On the face of it, Brent Youth Foundation is an excellent partner to deliver these services. It is a local charity which exists to deliver services to young people in just this way. We would, however, note that much of their funding comes from the City Bridge Trust and John Lyons' grants. We believe some more investigation needs to be done into the long-term viability of these sources. We would therefore **recommend** that the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny does some further investigations into their long-term financial viability as part of its work programme on children's services.

Finally, we would note that activities are only beneficial to Brent's young people if they are sufficiently advertised and promoted. Members of the Panel who represent the wards surrounding the Youth Centre report that even those young people who live very close by have often not heard about activities on their doorstep. Therefore, we **recommend** that the council and their new partner conduct a review, including asking young people themselves, of the best ways to promote what is happening at Roundwood to the target audience.

## Family Hubs

As already noted earlier in this report, the move to a “Family Hubs” model (proposal CYP008), is a policy which could have benefits to service delivery as well as making overall savings.

To summarise, the plan is close some children’s centres (though we noted that the name sometimes gives a misleading description, few children’s centres are full buildings which are open on a daily basis, most are single rooms, often attached to schools, which deliver specific services at limited times) to consolidate our offer at fewer sites. These sites would then deliver more comprehensive services all the way to the age of 18 and become a central hub for families in each area of Brent.

The bulk of this reform will be delivered in the second year of this budget and so many questions about the precise make-up of the new hubs have yet to be answered. It is probably beneficial that the council has a bit of extra breathing space to develop this policy as 2020 will also see the end of the Troubled Families Programme funding. The new service will have to be designed in a way to compensate for this.

With this in mind we would make **two recommendations** to cabinet as they seek to finalise the policy.

Firstly, we think it is hugely important that hubs have a strong triage service, so that anyone dropping into a centre is quickly assessed and directed to the most appropriate means of support. The Resource and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee saw the importance of this at its recent site visit to the Harlesden Hub, a project which operates along similar lines.

Secondly, we would suggest that when the council is choosing sites for the hubs they pay close attention to public transport routes as well as geographic areas. For example, as the crow flies, Kilburn and Kensal Green are not far apart, but there are few direct transport links which would make it very hard for residents in one of the two area to access services in the other.

## Environment

We have no doubt that members of the public will have many concerns with savings, cuts and reforms proposed in the environment department. This is because it is perhaps the only universal set of services delivered by Brent. Not everyone in our borough accesses

children's services and not all of us will need social care. But everyone has a bin that needs to be collected and everyone walks on our streets or drives on our roads. This means that any changes in the public realm will be controversial, even if they do not specifically affect the poorest or most vulnerable.

We discussed various proposals in this department with the lead member and relevant officers. To begin, one member of the panel was particularly passionate about ensuring that builders, whose use of vans and skips damages pavements and curbs, are charged for this damage. For works that require planning permission, or where Brent is the building regulation authority, this is easier to achieve as we can demand a bond up front for the use of skip, for example, and keep this if damage is made.

In circumstance where permission is not required the council will not know work is going on. So, if a skip is dropped in a resident's front garden and the crane dropping it off damages the pavement in the process we will eventually incur the cost as no bond will have been charged.

Our imperfect solution to this conundrum was to **recommend** the introduction of a "Considerate Builders Scheme", as has already been seen in Westminster, in our borough. Those who sign up to the principles of this would get a window sticker and be listed on our website. This would benefit the builders and also raise awareness more generally about the need to be considerate. All materials pushed out about the scheme would have to advertise a way for residents to whistle blow when builders do not follow the principles of the scheme in order to ensure some level of oversight.

Moving on, we welcomed the expansion of litter patrol activity in proposal R&E006 and that an in-house service will give the council more control over where patrols are targeted. This seems to follow on exactly from recommendations made by the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee a couple of years ago. We detected that the cabinet and senior officers had assumed that councillors would be uneasy with litter patrol activity that was low level, such as fining people for dropping cigarette ends outside of tube stations. In fact, no one on the panel felt like this and all believed that tackling low level problems will help to ensure that people do not progress to more serious environmental offences. Though we would add a **recommendation** at this point that some investment is made in providing more suitable bins and disposal areas at Brent's transport hubs – mainly tube stations and bus stops – to give people an easy and ethical way of disposing of these items.

When it came to proposal R&E008, which predicts an increase in income of £50k due to more licensed activity in the Wembley area, we did have a clear **recommendation**. Many residents who live close to the stadium feel that their lives are disrupted on event days and do not receive sufficient compensation for this despite the boost to local businesses. Therefore, we suggested that this additional income is ring fenced for a project which directly benefits these residents in Wembley.

We supported the provisions of proposal R&E001 which refers to turning down many of the street lights across the borough. Many councillors reported that people have contacted them asking for less bright lights outside their houses and we also know that urban wildlife benefits from lower lighting levels at night. We **recommend** that this latter aspect, often overlooked, features prominently in future council publicity about the scheme.

After discussing these overall positive proposals, we turned to more controversial ideas - which, like the libraries example discussed above - can only be described as cuts.

R&E002A/B remove litter patrols and litter bins from zone 5, which constitutes 456 roads or a quarter of land in the borough. We were less concerned about the removal of litter bins on residential streets which often attracts additional illegally dumped waste, but felt that stopping litter picking would lead to less clean and attractive pavements. Of course, as already stated every department must contribute to savings and cuts and these will sadly have consequences, so we do not feel as though we can oppose these proposals out right.

Instead, as mitigation we **recommend** that the litter patrol activity already discussed is targeted at the areas missing out so our response to problems is joined up and collaborative. We also **recommend** that the Cleaner Brent app is amended so that people can report piles of uncollected leaves through it, as it was noted without people on the street such issues may not be noticed.

Most difficult of all was R&E001A which proposes to partially close the Abbey Road Household Recycling Centre, probably for two non-consecutive days each week. We felt that a complete closure of the site would be a step too far, but some reduced hours could be justified given the huge financial pressures weighing down on the authority. Some members of the Panel suggested that this change might increase illegal rubbish dumping in the borough, however, a majority of us felt that this was unlikely. The kind of resident who does the right thing in taking their waste to the recycling centre is unlikely to become a law

breaker and dump their waste on the street because they cannot gain access on two days a week, no matter how frustrated they might feel.

We also noted that there will be a significant group of local residents who will not be affected by this change as they find it extremely difficult to access the site at all. This are primarily people in the south of the borough where car ownership is low. Without a car it is pretty near impossible to take bulky waste to Abbey Road and with the council approving more and more car free developments we will have even more residents in this position in future.

It seems clear that things can be done through the planning system to provide solutions to this problem. We **recommend** a review into how the council can ensure that applications for new residential developments – in particular car free developments – always include appropriate waste disposal options.

Overall, we do believe that not as much income is generated from the Abbey Road site as could be. This is primarily because it is run by the West London Waste Alliance and we do not have full control over it. The Chair of the Panel recently attended a national waste conference where Welsh authorities reported a percentage increase of three figures in income generated through textile sales. They achieved this through a “no black bags policy”, meaning that residents could not simply throw black bags into the general waste section of their recycling centre. All material had to be opened and separated. This led to many old clothes being salvaged to be sold onto textile traders. Brent could only benefit from such a scheme if all sites in the WLWA agreed to the policy and to split the profits. It will not be easy to persuade them all to do so but we **recommend** that the council does try.

## **Community safety**

The main community safety proposal in this budget is the ending of a service. Currently, the council funds 12 additional local police officers through the Met Patrol Plus scheme. Members and residents are offered two alternatives in this area: R&E022 would halve the service and save £200k, and R&E022A would abolish it completely and save £400k.

Reluctantly, and aware once again that cuts have consequences, we would agree with the council’s plans to end this service. Ultimately, we believe that the council has many, many vital services that it needs to deliver to the local community, from social care to fostering, and it is not sustainable to take money away from these to fund a service that another part of government – in this case the Home Office – should be responsible for.

Of course, the situation should be closely monitored, and we should keep a particular eye on how the new three borough command structure influences levels of local policing. All members should also continuously advocate for additional policing in their wards and ask every resident to report incidents so the local crime database is as accurate as possible.

Finally, we would **recommend** that the council bring a report to Resources and Public Realm scrutiny by the end of 2019 which looks at how Brent can mitigate against this cut by beefing up our own internal patrol and enforcement teams.

## **Scrutiny**

This budget contains many difficult cuts that will directly impact upon the lives of our residents. We therefore did not want to spend much time in this report focusing on ourselves but we do feel that proposal PPP007, to reduce the number of scrutiny committees from three to two, should be questioned. The number of cabinet members recently increased by two, and therefore it is reasonable to question if the number of councillors involved in scrutinising the cabinet should be decreased at the same time the number of councillors in cabinet is increased.

Despite this, we do recognise that it is beholden upon us to make savings like every other department of the council. So, we **recommend** that instead of making these cuts via the very blunt instrument of axing one committee, the three current chairs are given a clear budget for scrutiny and work with officers and backbenchers to come up with a proposal to deliver scrutiny within that budget. We would do this by starting from the bottom up, like the council's Outcome Based Reviews, and not simply slicing away from the existing three committee structure. We also believe it would be essential to benchmark our scrutiny service against those of other boroughs when conducting this process.

## 6. Reserves

We took some time to review of all of the ring fenced and general reserves held by the council as part of our budget scrutiny process.

When councillors, and members of the public, talk about “reserves” they are usually only referring to the general reserves pot which currently sits at a safe, but comparatively low, figure of £12million. In fact, it is probably safe to say that many people think this is the only money the council holds in reserve. But of course, there are many other pots of ring-fenced money in the council’s accounts which have been established and set aside for particular projects over the years.

We were assured that these are assessed annually to see if there is still a need for them. Despite this, we think it would be helpful to cast a new set of eyes on these and so **recommend** that a paper on reserves is brought to the resources and public realm scrutiny committee within six months. The paper should include information on each fund in reserves, when it was established and when it was last accessed. This information is currently not collated together in a single usable document and so this could be an informative exercise for the whole council, driven by the scrutiny process.

## 7. Conclusion

We hope this report is seen as a fair and balanced one. We have tried at all times to understand the huge financial pressures that the council is under as a result of the severe reduction of the central government grant.

Many of the cuts in the budget proposals are unpalatable, but we do not oppose these for opposition’s sake because we know if these were taken out of the budget money would have to be found elsewhere and that such alternative cuts could be even more painful.

We have tried to make constructive comments about how some of these negative impacts could be mitigated and also praised the council for its more innovative ideas wherever appropriate.

This report is not the end of the budget scrutiny process and we look forward to discussing our recommendations, and the budget as a whole, in more depth at future scrutiny, cabinet and full council meetings.

	<p align="center"><b>Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee</b> 15 January 2019</p>
	<p align="center"><b>Report from the Director of Performance, Policy &amp; Partnerships</b></p>
<p><b>October Cabinet Report on budget proposals 2019/20 – 2020/21</b></p>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Non-key
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b>	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	1 - Cabinet Report – Draft Budget Proposals
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Pascoe Sawyers, Head of Strategy & Partnerships, <a href="mailto:Pascoe.sawyers@brent.gov.uk">Pascoe.sawyers@brent.gov.uk</a> 020 8937 1045

## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report sets out for consultation and scrutiny the draft budget proposals for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

## 2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee note the overall financial position, and review and comment on the proposals in the report.

## 3.0 Detail

3.1 The report sets out the overall financial position facing the Council for the next four years and highlights the significant risks, issues and uncertainties. It also sets out the approach to consultation with residents, businesses and other key stakeholders.

3.2 It is envisaged that the proposals contained in this report, along with an equalities assessment, would form the basis of the budget to be agreed at the Full Council meeting of February 2019.

3.3 The budget proposals are organised into four categories: Recommended; Difficult; Very difficult; Most difficult. Proposals are included for the Housing Revenue Account; the estimated Collection Fund balance for Council Tax, and consultation on Council Tax increases of 4.99% in 2019/20, subject to legislative uncertainty set out in the report, and 3.99% in 2020/21. The report also notes that there will be consultation on the Budget until 31 January 2019.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

4.1 The financial implications are set out throughout the report. As the budget proposals are for consultation at this stage, not agreement, there are no direct costs associated with agreeing the recommendations, other than for consultation, the costs of which are built into existing budgets.

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 Local authorities must budget to give a reasonable degree of certainty as to the maintenance of its services. In particular, local authorities are required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to calculate as part of their overall budget what amounts are appropriate for contingencies and reserves.

#### **6.0 Equality Implications**

6.1 Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions Brent Council is required to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who do and do not have a protected characteristic.

6.2 The council's Equality Strategy 2015-2019 is committed to promoting equality, diversity and cohesion.

6.3 Effective equality analysis supports the council to understand how its activities and decisions could impact on local communities, and to identify and mitigate against any potential for discrimination. EA screenings have been completed for all budget proposals and where potential adverse impact has been identified affecting one or more of the target equality groups a full EA has been carried out.

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

7.1 Consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the amended constitution, in particular that "Cabinet shall receive a report from the Chief Finance Officer setting out the financial position of the council, and the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee shall meet again to consider the Report and the issues raised."

#### **REPORT SIGN-OFF**

**Peter Gadsdon**

Director Performance Policy & Partnerships



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	<b>Cabinet</b> 15 October 2018
	<b>Report from the Chief Finance Officer</b>
<b>Draft Budget Proposals 2019/20 – 2020/21</b>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Key
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b>	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	Five appendices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget Proposals Recommended</li> <li>• Budget Proposals Difficult</li> <li>• Budget Proposals Very Difficult</li> <li>• Budget Proposals Most Difficult</li> <li>• Budget Templates</li> </ul>
<b>Background Papers:</b>	N/A
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Conrad Hall Chief Finance Officer Email: <a href="mailto:conrad.hall@brent.gov.uk">conrad.hall@brent.gov.uk</a> Tel: 020 8937 6528  Ravinder Jassar Head of Finance Email: <a href="mailto:ravinder.jassar@brent.gov.uk">ravinder.jassar@brent.gov.uk</a> Tel: 020 8937 1487

## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. This report sets out for consultation and scrutiny the draft budget proposals for 2019/20 and 2020/21. Subject to the results of these processes it is envisaged that these proposals, along with an equalities assessment, would then form the basis of the budget to be agreed at the Full Council meeting of February 2019. The report also sets out the overall financial position facing the Council for the

next four years and highlights the significant risks, issues and uncertainties. It also sets out the approach to consultation with residents, businesses and other key stakeholders.

- 1.2. As set out in the report, changes to the local government finance system make it difficult to place an exact value on the budget gap faced over the next few years. Officers are working to a broad brush assumption that net expenditure on services will need to be reduced by around £40m in order to balance the budget over the lifetime of this Administration. However, it will not be until spring 2019 at the earliest, with the expected publication of the Spending Review, that this figure can be firmed up, and not until the Fair Funding review in autumn 2019 before it can be regarded as truly authoritative.
- 1.3. That said, there is no credible interpretation of the economic data and central government's clear prioritisation of other public services (such as the NHS) over local government that would leave the Council with anything less than substantial reductions to expenditure and hence services, and in the worst-case scenario the £40m figure may prove to be an under estimate. In the event that significantly greater reductions are required the Council may be required to consider a 'core services' offer. Accordingly, this draft budget seeks to set a reasonable and proportionate course. Proposals of £26.2m have been identified to be consulted upon, with a working assumption that around £20m of these would need to be agreed in order to balance the budgets for 2019/20 and 2020/21. These proposals are summarised in Appendices A through to D, inclusive. This represents a clear prioritisation, from proposals in Appendix A, which are considered to be highly likely to be included in the final budget, to those in Appendix D, which are recognised to be extremely challenging and potentially controversial. However, this prioritisation does not imply pre-determination of the consultation exercise now proposed, which is an open process in which all views will be taken into account. It is also important to stress that the proposals included in the draft budget add up to £6.2m more than the estimated savings requirement for the next two years, and that there will therefore be the opportunity for nearly one quarter of the proposals (by value) to be removed from the final budget, if that is what the Council eventually determines.
- 1.4. Well-run councils like Brent always seek to set their budgets for at least the next two years, bearing in mind that although the Council seeks to set its business plans for at least two years the legal framework for local authority budget setting is essentially an annual one. This transparent approach allows residents to understand what changes and reductions to service provision are planned, and also gives sufficient certainty to enable effective management of the necessary changes. In the unlikely event that the requirements for 2019/20 and 2020/21 turn out to be less than the approximately £20m assumed at this stage then, subject of course to the consultation and scrutiny processes set out in this report, this should still be regarded as the minimum amount to be agreed, as this would give the Council a head-start on its business planning for 2021/22.
- 1.5. It is also important to stress the nature of the savings being proposed. Inevitably, in this financial climate, they involve tough choices, and some would

only ever be implemented in a worst-case scenario. That said, those proposals in Appendix A are considered to be capable of being implemented with relatively little impact on service delivery. In some cases they simply represent management efficiencies and services ought not to be impacted at all.

- 1.6. Savings in Appendix B are recognised to be more difficult. They will lead to an impact on service delivery albeit that it is considered that this can be managed and mitigated. The proposals in Appendix C and, especially, those in Appendix D, are very difficult. Following the consultation and scrutiny processes, the Council will need to take the views expressed carefully into account in order to manage the demanding task of balancing its legal fiduciary responsibilities with the other legal obligations that go with providing the full range of local authority services and complying with the council's public sector equality duties.
- 1.7. In some cases the proposals set out in this report could, if agreed, be implemented fairly quickly. Officers have sought to profile savings to 2019/20 rather than 2020/21 unless there are insurmountable managerial hurdles (for example if a saving could only be delivered as a result of a re-tendering exercise and the relevant contract does not expire until later in 2019/20). In addition, the most difficult proposals, including all of those in Appendix D, are profiled for 2020/21. This will allow time to design appropriate mitigation or other measures prior to implementation should the decision in light of the results of the consultation process now proposed be to adopt these proposals in principle (again bearing in mind that the legal framework for local authority budget setting is essentially an annual one).
- 1.8. Clearly, the financial context is exceptionally challenging. However, in developing draft proposals for consultation in even the most sensitive areas of service provision managers have sought to identify creative ways to achieve efficiencies without damaging service provision. For example, it is proposed to create a Family Hub model for very early years' provision, building on the successful prototype approach to other service provisions in Harlesden. This will consolidate the number of sites from which the services provided through Children's Centres are delivered, and enhance the services provided at those consolidated sites. This will save £1.5m and is considered to be a more focused way of ensuring that high quality services reach those most in need. This is merely one example, but is intended to be illustrative of the approach taken to balancing the financial challenges with the other lawful duties to ensure that appropriate services are provided, and views will be sought throughout the consultation process.
- 1.9. The process following this Cabinet meeting is:
  - These proposals, together with any changes made by Cabinet, will form the basis of consultation between October 2018 and January 2019 with local residents, businesses and other key stakeholders;
  - The three scrutiny committees will review the budget proposals and report accordingly;
  - In November the General purposes committee will review the calculation of the council tax base; and

- After consultation, a budget report will be presented for Cabinet to recommend a final budget and council tax to the February 2019 Council meeting.

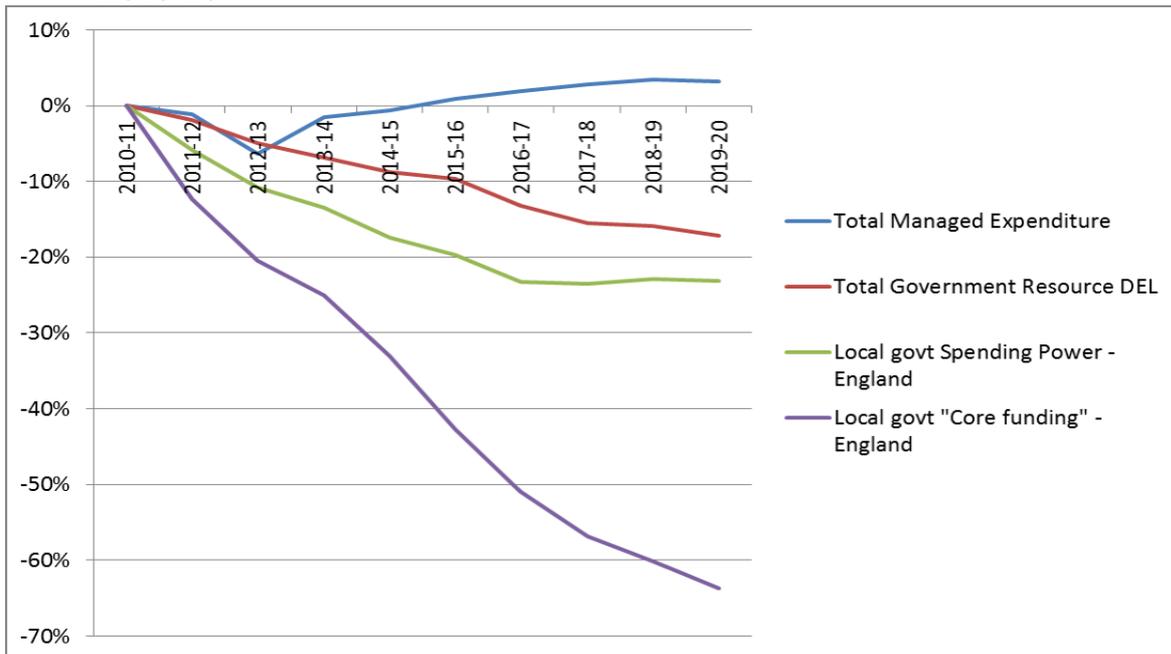
## **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the overall financial position.
- 2.2 That Cabinet agrees to consult on the budget proposals as set out in Appendices A, B, C, D.
- 2.3 That Cabinet note that more detailed information on each of the budget proposals referred to above is set out in Appendix E.
- 2.4 That Cabinet agrees to consult on council tax increases of 4.99% in 2019/20, subject to the legislative uncertainty set out in paragraph 5.10, and 3.99% in 2020/21.
- 2.5 That Cabinet endorses the approach to consultation and scrutiny between October 2018 and January 2019, as set out in section eight of this report.
- 2.6 That Cabinet endorses the changes to the technical budget assumptions underpinning the budget as set out throughout the report.
- 2.7 That Cabinet agrees the estimated Collection Fund balance relating to Council Tax for 2019/20 as a surplus of £0.9m (Brent's share being £0.8m) and note the current estimated balance relating to NNDR for 2019/20 as zero (no surplus or deficit) as set out in section seven.
- 2.8 That Cabinet note the position on the School funding reform proposals, as set out in section nine.
- 2.9 That Cabinet note the budget proposals for the Housing Revenue Account, as set out in section ten.

## **3.0 Current Financial Context**

- 3.1 As set out in the July Finance Review Cabinet report, local government has faced an extremely challenging financial outlook following a prolonged period of austerity as well as disproportionate growth in demand for key services. There is a growing level of uncertainty as the cliff edge of 2020 approaches – marking the end of the current Spending Review period and start of the new 75% business rates retention scheme. Chart 1 overleaf compares the like-for-like cumulative change in core funding with total public and departmental spending over the decade to 2019/20. Core funding from central government will have fallen by 63% in real terms, local government revenue “spending power” (as defined by government) will have fallen by 23%, while overall public spending will have increased marginally over the same period.

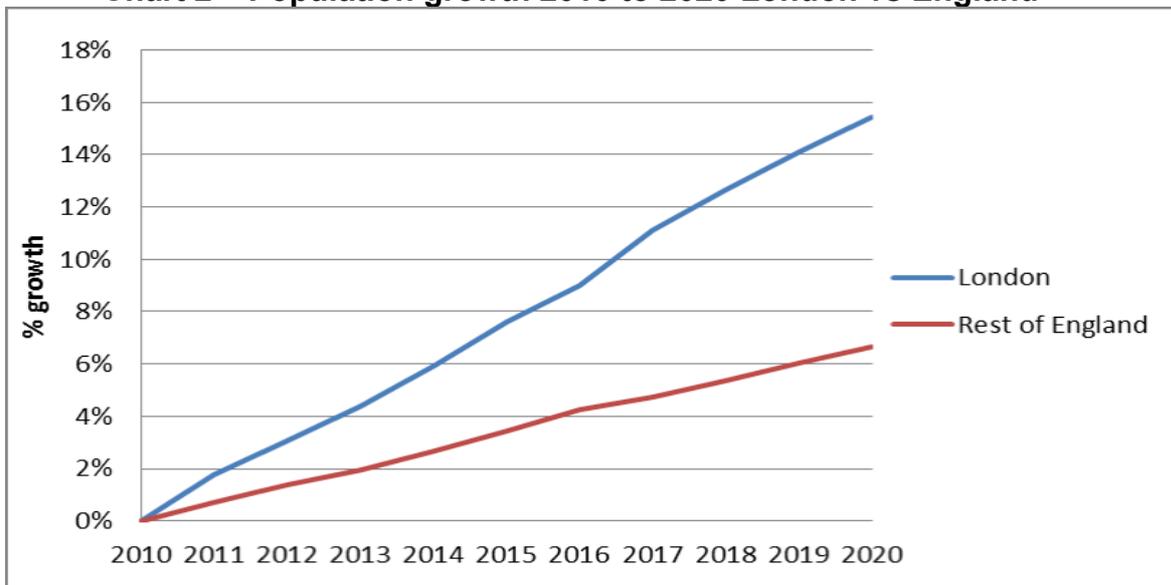
**Chart 1 - Cumulative like-for-like change in public spending - 2010-11 to 2019-20**



Source: HMT (Budgets/Autumn Statements since 2011); DCLG (LGF Settlements 2011-12 to 2018-19)

3.2 At the same time, local government continues to experience growth in demand for services, driven by significant demographic change. Between 2010 and 2020 London’s population will have risen by over 15%, more than double the rate of growth across the rest of England (7%). As population is fixed within the current funding distribution, this growth has compounded the effect of sustained funding reductions.

**Chart 2 – Population growth 2010 to 2020 London vs England**



Source: ONS, Mid-Year Estimates (to 2016) and Sub-National Population Projections (from 2016 onwards)

3.3 This disproportionate growth is set to continue, with London’s population forecast to increase by 21% (to over 11 million) between now and 2039, compared with just 11% across the rest of England. These disproportionate

increases are forecast across all of the major age cohorts: the child population, working age adults and those over 65.

- 3.4 These pressures are being felt across the sector. The profile of the debate over the financial resilience and sustainability of the sector has grown since the start of 2018. Following Northamptonshire County Council's Section 114 notice, East Sussex County Council and Birmingham City Council have also emerged as Local Authorities that have had their financial position under scrutiny. East Sussex County Council has had to set out plans to strip back services to the "legal minimum" amid central government intervention. Northamptonshire County Council is also largely under central government control and has been forced to impose spending controls twice in six months in light of two section 114 notices being served. Finally, Birmingham City Council has been criticised by its auditors for depleting reserves in order to balance its budget. These examples further exemplify the financial pressures that local authorities are under and the need for a long term solution to council funding as there is a risk that more authorities are likely to be forced to implement 'core offers' like the ones issued by Northamptonshire and East Sussex.
- 3.5 Brent has managed its finances well since the start of austerity by adopting a forward-looking financial strategy based on taking difficult decisions early, allowing time for implementation. This has led to total savings of £164 million being delivered since 2010.
- 3.6 As reported to Cabinet in July, the next 18 months will see three major sector specific events that will change the amount of funding every local authority will receive from April 2020, and of course in this period the UK is scheduled to leave the EU, under terms that are still not clear and it is consequently difficult to assess the impact of this on the sector.
1. The Spending Review. This is currently expected in spring 2019 and will set the overall quantum of central government funding to local government. The time period covered is unknown but is expected to be up to three years.
  2. The Fair Funding Review. This will determine the new funding baselines for the start of the 75% business rates retention scheme from April 2020 and therefore determine the distribution of core central government funding to local government.
  3. 75% business rates retention. This will involve, from April 2020, establishing new business rates baselines, setting new parameters regarding the level of risk/reward and therefore, the ability of each local authority to benefit from locally generated growth.
- 3.7 In addition to the above when the long delayed green paper on social care funding is published it may become possible to assess the longer-term impact on adult social care budgets. These represent nearly a third of Brent's net budget and so the implications of these plans could have a significant impact on our medium term funding outlook, but it is not yet possible to predict this with any reasonable confidence

3.8 With regards to understanding the impact of Brexit, given the current uncertainty as to how the Government will respond to the choices and trade-offs facing it during the negotiations, there is still no meaningful basis for predicting a precise outcome which could be relied upon. Moreover, even if the outcome of the negotiations were predictable, its impact on the economy and the public finances would still be uncertain, and to translate those factors down to individual local authority level is simply not possible.

#### **4.0 London Business Rates Retention Pilot Pool**

4.1 The pilot pool has operated for only around six months at the date of drafting this report. The latest forecast from London Councils is that the total additional benefit (for London) of the pool is likely to be of the order of £349m in 2018/19, of which £7m would accrue to Brent on a one-off basis. The first actual data to confirm, or otherwise, these projections is likely to come in late 2018, through the technical NNDR2 return, which sets out data on business rates due and collected.

4.2 Provided this return broadly supports the earlier London Councils forecasts it would then be reasonable to start making provisional allocations of the resources available. As the pilot is limited to one year (although it may be extended for a second year) any allocations could not be to cover ongoing expenditure, but one-off projects and/or capital expenditure would be reasonable.

4.3 As part of the pilot pool, 15% of the net financial benefit, approximately £52m, is to be reserved for strategic investment, to be spent on projects that:

- contribute to the sustainable growth of London's economy and an increase in business rates income either directly or as a result of the wider economic benefits anticipated;
- leverage additional investment funding from other private or public sources; and
- have broad support across London government in accordance with the agreed governance process.

4.4 Following an evaluation process undertaken by the City of London Corporation (the Lead Authority), £46.8m of funds have been recommended, of which £11.3m relates to projects submitted via the West London Alliance. These include a project to deliver a productivity and skills programme for West London to support individuals and businesses and a major investment in digital infrastructure to provide high speed fibre services across West London. The total package of bids is intended to directly grow London's business rates by providing new or refurbished commercial space, as well as ones which will indirectly generate growth by providing transport and digital infrastructure, supporting employment and businesses, and creating frameworks for development

4.5 London Councils are currently in discussions with MHCLG to negotiate the continuation of the London Pilot into 2019/20 and it is expected that the Leaders' committee and the Mayor will make a decision over the autumn.

## **5.0 Key Budget Assumptions**

5.1 As reported to Cabinet in July 2018, officers' best estimate of the budget gap was £30m between 2019/20 and 2020/21. This was an estimate based on the limited information available at the time as the exact gap is inherently uncertain simply because of the number of variables to be estimated and the difficulty of doing so over longer periods of time. This is further compounded by the significant changes to local government funding proposed from April 2020. The actual figure required will not be known for at least a year, once the local government finance reforms are further forward.

5.2 Over the summer, various updates to technical budget assumptions have taken place, including extending the budget model and financing assumptions to cover the entire four year period of this Administration, from 2019/20 to 2022/23, in line with normal best practice. The outcome of these changes is set out in the table below and described in more detail in the following paragraphs.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Assumed Budget b/f before in year growth and savings	266.8	274.9	280.6	287.2
Demographic Growth	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Other Growth	15.2	13.5	13.5	13.5
Technical budget adjustments	(0.3)	0	(0.5)	(0.5)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>285.2</b>	<b>291.9</b>	<b>297.1</b>	<b>303.6</b>
<b>Income</b>				
Revenue Support Grant	24.5	21.2	18.4	16.0
Specific Grants	32.9	31.9	30.6	29.8
<b>Total Central Government Funding</b>	<b>57.4</b>	<b>53.1</b>	<b>49.0</b>	<b>45.8</b>
Council Tax	123.8	131.9	140.6	149.9
Business Rates	93.7	95.6	97.5	99.5
<b>Total funding from residents and businesses</b>	<b>217.5</b>	<b>227.5</b>	<b>238.1</b>	<b>249.4</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>274.9</b>	<b>280.6</b>	<b>287.1</b>	<b>295.2</b>
<b>Savings required</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>8.4</b>

5.3 Overall, based on the budget assumptions set out in this in report, and subject to consultation and scrutiny, savings of £40m are required to balance the budget over the four years of this Administration. For the period 2019/20 and 2020/21, savings of around £20m will be required. (The formal modelling shows a slightly higher figure at this stage but given the current level of uncertainty it will be satisfactory to work towards the £20m figure at this stage).

## **Changes to Technical budget assumptions since July 2018**

- 5.4 Business rates are a tax determined by central government, not local government. Brent (the billing authority) has no say in the calculation of the amount of rates to be charged but is required to collect business rates on behalf of central government and the Greater London Authority having retained a proportion of itself in accordance with the Business rates retention arrangements decided by the Government. Total retained income from business rates in Brent has been growing at an average of 2% per annum over the last three years and this trend is expected to continue. This will yield additional income of £1.9m into the base budget each year. This income would have been expected even if we had not participated in the London pilot pool and therefore it is appropriate to build in to the base budget. Participation in the pilot pool, as mentioned in section five of this report, will generate additional income for the council in 2018/19. However this is one off and therefore not appropriate to build into the ongoing budget assumptions.
- 5.5 There is a risk attached to this assumption should the impact of Brexit have a negative consequence on businesses in Brent. However, as mentioned earlier in the report, at this stage there is still considerable uncertainty as to how the Government will respond to the choices and trade-offs facing it during the negotiations which means there is no meaningful basis for predicting a precise outcome which could be relied upon. That being said, it is expected that the £46.8m investment being made in London via the Strategic Investment Pot will, over time, result in a sustained increase in business rates income, of which Brent would receive a share of the growth under the principles of the business rates retention scheme. Therefore, on balance, it is deemed acceptable to expect the forecast level of business rates income to continue.
- 5.6 Revenue Support Grant (RSG) has reduced by over 56% since the beginning of the four year settlement period and in 2019/20 £24.5m is expected. Whilst funding is relatively certain for 2019/20 there are no guarantees post April 2020 in terms of what, if anything, will replace RSG. For the purpose of budget modelling a year on year 13% reduction in RSG has been assumed. This is slightly more pessimistic than previous estimates, based on the growing concern that the Fair Funding review will lead to resources transferring away from London. This assumption is deemed reasonable as whatever the outcome of the Fair Funding review the government has indicated any grant reductions will be phased over time to prevent any cliff edges from April 2020, and is still less than the rate of reduction over the period to 2019/20.
- 5.7 The council tax base is assumed to grow at 2.5% per year. This is based on the average growth in households over the past three years as well as analysis of the number of approved planning applications for residential properties in the borough, in particular in the Wembley Park area. Growth in the tax base contributes a significant proportion (38%) of the total growth in council tax income, excluding the Greater London Authority share.
- 5.8 Under current legislation the maximum increase in council tax is 3.99%, unless a referendum is conducted. Of this, 1.99% is for general inflation and 2% is for

adult social care. As reported to Cabinet in July 2018, the current budget proposals assume that council tax will rise by 3.99% per annum. Legally, separate decisions on council tax will still be required at each of the budget setting meetings of the full council in February 2019 and February 2020.

- 5.9 As part of the 2018/19 provisional local government finance settlement, the government unexpectedly increased the 'referendum limit' for council tax by 1% which meant council tax could be increased by up to 4.99% without a referendum. Taking into account the inflationary pressures that the council is subject to (which Ministers have confirmed were a significant factor in their decision to increase the referendum limit), the financial position in the round and the results of consultation through the Brent Connects, and other, meetings the option was taken. This option was presented as a one off opportunity and therefore Government policy from 2019/20, including that of the adult social care precept, is currently unknown.
- 5.10 However, on 24 July 2018 the government published a technical consultation that indicated that it was minded to apply the same referendum principles in 2019/20 that applied to 2018/19. The outcome of this consultation will not be known until the provisional local government finance settlement is published in December 2018. That being said, it is widely expected that government will apply the same referendum principles again in 2019/20 ahead of the outcome of the Fair Funding Review in 2020/21. Given the significant funding pressures described earlier in the report and the difficult proposals being considered to balance the budget, it is proposed to consult on increasing Council Tax by 4.99% in 2019/20 ahead of the outcome of the provisional local government finance settlement. This will yield a further £1.2m of recurring income from 2019/20. If the outcome of the government's consultation maintains the existing policy of a maximum increase of 3.99% it is proposed revert back to the previous policy to avoid holding a referendum. However, if this situation arises £1.2m will have to be added to the overall budget gap and consequently further savings of this amount will need to be identified.
- 5.11 The Council is due to receive £11.6m in 2019/20 through the Improved Better Care Fund (IBCF) grant. This funding has conditions attached with regards to ensuring it is spent on adult social care needs, supporting the local care market and that it relieves pressure on the NHS, particularly with respect to delayed transfers of care. A further condition is that spending plans must be agreed with local Clinical Commissioning Groups. This was secured as part of work which took place prior to the Better Care Fund Plan that was submitted to NHS England in September 2017.
- 5.12 This grant represents a significant investment in social care in the short term, but when it was announced the government explicitly did not build them into the long term funding baseline. Therefore, in theory, Brent's allocation in 2020/21 is nil, like all other local authorities. This outcome has been reported as being highly unlikely given the substantial investment since 2017 and the current pressures being experienced within the NHS. As part of the 2017/18 budget £1.8m was previously built in to the Council's future budget assumptions in respect of the IBCF grant. As part of the draft budget being proposed in this

report a further £6m has been assumed to continue to help address spending pressures arising from the increased demands and costs of providing adults social care.

- 5.13 The table below shows the net impact of these changes and summarises other income projections.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Revenue Support Grant	24.5	21.2	18.4	16.0
Specific Grants	32.9	31.9	30.6	29.8
<b>Total Central Government Funding</b>	<b>57.4</b>	<b>53.1</b>	<b>49.0</b>	<b>45.8</b>
Council Tax	123.8	131.9	140.6	149.9
Retained Business Rates	93.7	95.6	97.5	99.5
<b>Total Funding from residents and businesses</b>	<b>217.5</b>	<b>227.5</b>	<b>238.1</b>	<b>249.4</b>
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>274.9</b>	<b>280.6</b>	<b>287.1</b>	<b>295.2</b>

### Expenditure pressures

- 5.14 As mentioned in section 3.3, London's population is forecast to increase by 21% between now and 2039 (broadly 1% per annum), compared with just 11% across the rest of England. In terms of Brent, focussing on the four year period of this Administration, the population is projected to grow by approximately 3% (0.8% per annum) according to the latest Greater London Authority's population projections. Within this there are particularly sharp rises in the 65-84 year group (2.5% per annum) and the over 85 year group (4.6% per annum). The numbers in these two groups are significant determinants of the level of spending on adult social care. Some of this population growth has already taken place and has therefore been factored in to the council's existing budgets. The table below sets out the additional costs expected to be incurred from 2019/20 across a number of services as a result of demographic changes. For the avoidance of doubt, this is the additional cost of providing the same level of services caused by a rising population. It follows that recognising this in the budget is a technical assumption, albeit an important one, and does not imply any change in policy choices. These spending pressures and the impact on the overall budget are under regular review but have remained broadly consistent since 2017/18 and are generally accepted as being reliable.

<b>Department</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Marginal growth per annum £m</b>	<b>Basis</b>
Regeneration & Environment	Refuse Collection	0.1	0.8% growth in overall population
Regeneration & Environment	Public Realm (excluding Refuse Collection)	0.2	0.8% growth in overall population
Children and Young People	Children's social care	0.5	0.1% growth in 0-5 years; 0.6% growth in 0-25 years; 2.4% growth in 10-15 years
Community Well Being	Learning Disabilities, Mental Health and Physical disabilities (18-65)	0.4	0.6% growth in population 18-65 years
Community Well Being	Older People (65+) Non Home Care	1.0	2.5% growth in population 65-84 years; 4.6% growth in population 85+
Community Well Being	Older People (65+) Home Care	0.6	2.5% growth in population 65-84 years; 4.6% growth in population 85+
Community Well Being	Housing - Temporary Accommodation	0.5	Projected growth in temporary accommodation costs
Resources	Customer Services	0.1	0.9% growth in population over 18
Resources	Legal services	0.1	Additional caseload caused by above, principally children's social care and adult social care
<b>Total demographic growth</b>		<b>3.5</b>	

5.15 The budget also needs to recognise the impact of inflation on goods and services, especially where this is contractually obliged in major contracts. General inflation on contracts is assumed to average 2%, which is estimated to cost £3.5m per annum following detailed financial analysis of average spend in the last two years as well taking into account service specific contractually obliged inflation. These figures are to some extent estimates based on available data at the time, and therefore there is some risk attached to them. Inflation has increased slightly recently (CPI was 2.5% in August 2018) primarily as a result of the effects of sterling's past depreciation. As a result the Bank of England increased interest rates to 0.75% in August and commented that over the medium term they expect inflation to return to the 2% target and that any future increases in interest rates will be limited and gradual.

- 5.16 The National Joint Council pay agreement for 2018-20 includes the introduction of a new pay spine on 1 April 2019 and the majority of employees (those on salaries starting at £19,430 per annum) received an uplift of 2 per cent on 1 April 2018 and a further 2 per cent will be received on 1 April 2019. Those on lower salaries will receive higher increases. Financial modelling on the impact of these changes, which includes mapping the current pay spine to the new spine and allowing for grade drift over the next two years, shows that £2.1m will be added to total staffing costs. In addition, the cost of paying providers for the uplift caused by the annual increases to bring the national living wage up to 60% of median earnings by 2020 will add £0.4m to the adult social care budget each year.
- 5.17 The Council's largest requirement for passenger transport comes from the provision of home to school transport for children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) who have a statement requiring the provision of a specific type of education, normally at a special school or unit catering for their particular educational need. Where the statement identifies a need for the learner to be transported to and from school, the Authority has a statutory duty to provide the required transport. In London, the number of SEN pupils has increased by 10 per cent since 2013/14, a higher rate of growth compared to the rest of England. In Brent, passenger numbers for the over the last 2 years have increased by 11.4% and 22% respectively. The projection going forwards is that there will be an estimated 20% annual net increase in passenger numbers and £0.8m per annum has been assumed as the need to cover the rate of growth expected.
- 5.18 As set out on the forecast report on this agenda there is a significant pressure against the Housing Association Lease Scheme budget. As this is being offset in 2018/19 only through one-off funding, this underlying overspend will recur into 2019/20 and beyond. On current information this is expected to add £1.6m to the funding pressure in 2019/20, and hence to the budget gap.
- 5.19 The table overleaf gives a summary of the budgeted spend and financing of the capital programme. The largest proportion of funding in the programme comes from borrowing, at 36% followed by CIL at 28%. Internal funding from capital receipts make up a further 14% and is largely generated from the sale of residential units that will be built as part of a development schemes such as South Kilburn. The remainder will come from various grants and other income sources.

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Total
<b>Boards</b>				
Corporate Landlord	6.5	2.2	0.1	<b>8.9</b>
Regeneration	9.4	8.9	3.1	<b>21.4</b>
South Kilburn	18.3	25.5	24.2	<b>67.9</b>
Public Realm	22.0	7.3	5.7	<b>34.9</b>
Schools	28.7	14.6	14.4	<b>57.7</b>
Housing Care & Investment	20.1	58.3	27.9	<b>106.3</b>
Housing Revenue Account	40.8	57.0	23.5	<b>121.3</b>
I4B	34.0	21.6	0.0	<b>55.6</b>
Pipeline	19.9	169.4	172.2	<b>361.5</b>
<b>Total Estimates</b>	<b>199.8</b>	<b>364.7</b>	<b>271.0</b>	<b>835.5</b>
<b>Financing</b>				
Grants & Other Contributions	32.9	17.3	16.1	<b>66.2</b>
S106 & CIL	40.8	111.2	78.0	<b>230.0</b>
Capital Receipts	39.8	43.6	31.7	<b>115.1</b>
Reserves	32.3	31.1	0.1	<b>63.5</b>
Major Repairs Allowance	12.5	17.4	15.2	<b>45.1</b>
Revenue Contribution	3.1	5.3	3.5	<b>11.9</b>
Prudential Borrowing	38.3	138.8	126.5	<b>303.6</b>
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>199.8</b>	<b>364.7</b>	<b>271.0</b>	<b>835.5</b>

- 5.20 As set out in the capital programme, the Council is planning to borrow externally up to £303.6m over the next three years. This borrowing will have a direct impact on revenue in the form of interest payments, therefore growth of £1m per annum has been incorporated into the revenue capital financing budget.
- 5.21 Following the CIPFA/LASAAC clarification statement in May, the Council dealt with the technical accounting charges for its market loans on a prudent basis in closing the 2017/18 accounts. This enables it now to anticipate the gradual reversal of these charges, estimated at c£0.2m per annum, which will therefore act to trim the savings requirement and has been incorporated in to the £1m growth assumption mentioned above.
- 5.22 All other growth assumptions are unchanged from that reported to Cabinet in July. The table below summarises the changes described above and shows the total growth assumptions built into the overall budget assumptions. This can also be referred to as the 'cost of doing business', i.e. this is the amount by which the budget would have to grow each and every year if all other things remained equal.

<b>Assumption</b>	<b>2019/20 (£m)</b>	<b>2020/21 (£m)</b>	<b>2021/22 (£m)</b>	<b>2022/23 (£m)</b>	<b>Description</b>
Demography	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	Adult Social Care (£2m), Housing (£0.5m), Children's Social Care (£0.5m), Public Realm (£0.3m), Other (£0.2m)
Payroll	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	Based on 2% pay award and new pay spine
London Living Wage	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	Assumed average annual cost of making more contracts LLW compliant
Contracts	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	Primarily based on 2% inflation, known contractual commitments and service specific inflation
Transport	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	Freedom passes (£0.7m) and transporting children with Special Educational Needs (£0.8m)
Technical	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	Pensions, levies (e.g. WLWA) and other technical items
Allowance for uncertainty	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	Need to have some insurance against non-delivery of savings and facilitates adjusting the overall budget in response to consultation
Capital financing	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	Interest and debt repayment costs for capital programme
HALS	1.6	0	0	0	Additional cost of maintaining the Housing Association Lease Scheme
<b>Total Growth</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>17.0</b>	<b>17.0</b>	<b>17.0</b>	

## **6.0 Calculation of savings targets and draft budget proposals**

6.1 The additional savings required are the difference between the council's anticipated total expenditure and forecast total income, as shown in the table overleaf. Taking account of the updates and changes to planning assumptions described in section five the revised budget gap is now estimated at £40m over the next four years. As set out earlier in the report, until the Spending Review is published and until the direction of the Fair Funding review is clearer this estimate will be subject to considerable change or at least uncertainty.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Assumed Budget b/f before in year growth and savings	266.8	274.9	280.6	287.1
Demographic Growth	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Other Growth	15.2	13.5	13.5	13.5
Technical budget adjustments	(0.3)	0	(0.5)	(0.5)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>285.2</b>	<b>291.9</b>	<b>297.1</b>	<b>303.6</b>
<b>Income</b>				
Revenue Support Grant	24.5	21.2	18.4	16.0
Specific Grants	32.9	31.9	30.6	29.8
<b>Total Central Government Funding</b>	<b>57.4</b>	<b>53.1</b>	<b>49.0</b>	<b>45.8</b>
Council Tax	123.8	131.9	140.6	149.9
Business Rates	93.7	95.6	97.5	99.5
<b>Total funding from residents and businesses</b>	<b>217.5</b>	<b>227.5</b>	<b>238.1</b>	<b>249.4</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>274.9</b>	<b>280.6</b>	<b>287.1</b>	<b>295.2</b>
<b>Savings required</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>8.4</b>

### Draft budget proposals

- 6.2 As part of the budget setting process a number of savings proposals have been developed in order to deliver the savings required and balance the overall budget. Throughout the process, in producing the draft budget proposals, the emphasis continues to be on delivering efficiency measures, cost reductions and income generation with a view to protecting front line services and council

priorities as much as possible. The proposals have been categorised as follows:

Appendix A: Recommended budget proposals that have relatively minor impact on residents, business and other stakeholders. Typically these proposals represent generating additional income, general efficiencies in order to reduce expenditure and transformation programmes in order to deliver services within a reduced budget envelope.

Appendix B: These proposals are considered to be 'difficult' in that they will have a direct impact on residents, businesses, the voluntary sector and other key stakeholders. Typically these proposals represent a service reduction or a transformation in the way in which services are delivered.

Appendix C: These proposals are considered to be 'very difficult' as they represent a greater reduction in key council services and will have a greater impact on key recipients of council services, including vulnerable clients.

Appendix D: These proposals are considered to be the 'most difficult' as they represent a significant reduction in key council services, including to the most vulnerable residents in the borough.

6.3 The table below shows a summary of the budget proposals described above by department for the period 2019/20 to 2020/21. The Council Management Team have reviewed the proposals to ensure the plans are realistic and deliverable. Detailed budget templates have been produced, attached as Appendix E, that set out more details of each proposal while providing the overall current budget context, the key risks and mitigations and the equalities impact where relevant.

**Summary of savings:**

	<b>2019/20 £m</b>	<b>2020/21 £m</b>	<b>Total £m</b>
<b>Appendix A</b>	5.7	4.6	10.3
<b>Appendix B</b>	3.7	3.7	7.4
<b>Appendix C</b>	1.2	0.5	1.7
<b>Appendix D</b>	0	6.8	6.8
<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>26.2</b>

### Summary of savings by department:

	2019/20 £m	2020/21 £m	Total £m
<b>Community Wellbeing</b>	3.0	5.6	8.6
<b>Children &amp; Young People</b>	2.0	3.4	5.4
<b>Performance, Policy &amp; Partnerships</b>	0.8	1.3	2.1
<b>Resources</b>	1.2	4.3	5.5
<b>Regeneration &amp; Environment</b>	3.6	1.0	4.6
<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>26.2</b>

- 6.4 Theoretically, there are sufficient proposals within Appendices A-D to balance the budget for 2019/20 and 2020/21 while providing some degree of choice, following consultation and scrutiny, as to which proposals are taken forward and not.
- 6.5 Some of the proposals in Appendix A have been highlighted to show that they have either already been implemented or are planned to be implemented in-year and therefore do not form part of this formal consultation process. The nature of the proposals are such that public consultation is not required. The proposals have been included in the report and appendices in the interests of full transparency and so that a full picture of how reductions in the budget for future years are being achieved can be seen.
- 6.6 It should be noted that this report reflects the position at this point in the budget preparation and these numbers will change as the budget develops over the next two months. We also await confirmation of the Local Government Finance Settlement. If there are any material changes announced by Government these will be taken into account within the budget presented Cabinet in February 2019.

### 7.0 Collection Fund

- 7.1 As part of the Council Tax setting process for 2019/20 the Council is required to estimate the amount of any surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund as at 31 March 2019 and how it is shared amongst the constituent precepting bodies and Central Government. This must be done by 15 January 2019 in relation to Council Tax, and this report asks Members to approve the estimated balance for both Council Tax and Business Rates (NNDR).

### Council Tax

- 7.2 Income from Council Tax is paid into the 'Collection Fund'. Brent and the Greater London Authority (GLA) make charges (formally known as 'precepts') on this fund to finance their budgets. If the eventual collection of Council Tax is

greater than precepts on the collection fund, taking the cumulative position since the introduction of Council Tax in 1993, a surplus will be generated. If the reverse happens, there will be a deficit. Any surplus or deficit is shared between Brent and the GLA. It is normal and proper practice to estimate these surpluses or deficits in setting the budget and to make distributions to the preceptors, or to require contributions from them, according to those estimates.

- 7.3 The Council's 2017/18 audited accounts reported a surplus of £6.0m (Brent's share £4.8m) on the Council Tax Collection Fund. The latest review of the Fund indicates that a surplus on Council Tax of £0.9m can be declared for 2018/19, where the balance will be shared between the Council (£0.8m) and the Greater London Authority (£0.1m) in proportion to their 2018/19 Band D council tax charges. This technical surplus relates to council tax due on or before 31 March 2018, where the council has been more effective than previously assumed in collecting arrears, and also reflects collection performance of debts relating to 2017/18, and an increase in the net collectable figure during 2017/18.

### **Business Rates**

- 7.4 Income from Business Rates is also paid into the 'Collection Fund' and then redistributed in accordance with agreed shares between the Brent, the GLA and central government. Previously these shares were 30%, 20% and 50% respectively. The implementation of the London pilot pool for business rates in 2018/19 changes this rationale with the removal of the central government share, however it has not yet been decided if the pilot will continue into 2019/20.
- 7.5 That said, whatever regime is entered in to, if the year-end income from NNDR is higher than estimated at the start of the year, a surplus would be declared, which would be shared in the agreed ratios. Therefore, if Brent had a surplus it would keep a percentage of this. If income was lower than anticipated, there would be a deficit to be shared in the same proportion (i.e. Brent would bear a percentage of the deficit).
- 7.6 The estimate for the income figure (or net rate yield) for 2019/20, and the surplus or deficit figure as at 31 March 2019 will be taken from the NNDR1 return to be submitted in January 2019. The Non Domestic Rating (Rates Retention) Regulations 2013 require that these figures be calculated and notified to preceptors (central government and the GLA) by 31 January, and the NNDR1 return is used to calculate the figures.
- 7.7 Estimating what the figures will be is complex, as there are many factors which can significantly affect the overall figure, including entitlement to reliefs and properties coming in to, or being taken out, of rating. The biggest uncertainty concerns revaluations arising from appeals against the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) determinations. These are very common and can lead to large refunds being backdated several years. Given these uncertainties, it is recommended that a forecast of no surplus or deficit is assumed at present.

## 8.0 Consultation

- 8.1 The council recognises consultation as a key part of policy formulation, and makes considerable effort to ensure that the views of residents, businesses and other key stakeholders are taken into account.
- 8.2 The council published an online budget simulator on 7 September 2018 to give residents the ability to set a balanced budget by determining their spending and income priorities for the year and leaving comments to explain their choices. The simulator will be open until 31 January 2019, and a summary of responses provided to date will be given at the Cabinet meeting (it would be impractical to do so in advance given the requirements for advance publication of reports).
- 8.3 In addition to the above, the following methods of consultation are proposed to be undertaken:

- A presentation at each of the five Brent Connects meetings, delivered by the Leader and supported by officers, followed by a question and answer session. Brent Connects is a well-established public consultation forum for local residents, businesses and other stakeholders with meetings spread across the borough.

It is proposed to attend a round of meetings scheduled for October as well as a round of meetings between January and February 2019 in order to maximise the amount of time spent on engaging with as many residents as possible.

The following Brent Connects meetings will be attended.

Brent Connects	Date	Date
Harlesden	16-Oct 2018	22-Jan 2019
Kingsbury and Kenton	29-Oct 2018	20-Feb 2019
Kilburn	30-Oct 2018	06-Feb 2019
Wembley	23-Oct 2018	29-Jan 2019
Willesden	17-Oct 2018	21-Jan 2019

- Online consultation. It is proposed to publish the detailed budget proposals on Brent's website, inviting comments and other feedback via the well-established consultation portal. Paper versions will be available on request.
- Consultation with local businesses. There are a number of business forums and associations that the Council regularly engages with that include a wide range of both small and large local businesses. These include the West London Business forum (a non-profit business leadership forum), the Federation of Small Businesses, the Town Centre Business Association and the Business Board.

- The local voluntary sector is closely engaged with Brent's communities and has considerable experience of the impact of the council's difficult choices against a background of funding reductions. Their role as part of the consultation process will also be crucial.
- As indicated in the templates in Appendix E, additional consultation with other groups and/or organisations will be undertaken in respect of some options being considered before they are presented to Cabinet and then Full Council for approval.

8.4 Legally, the results of consultation are something that Members must have due regard to, alongside other relevant considerations, when making decisions.

### **Scrutiny**

8.5 The three scrutiny committees will review the proposals through their budget task group in 2018 in order to carry out the statutory scrutiny of the budget. Following this, the chair of the committee will present a report to Cabinet as part of the overall budget report.

### **Equalities Impact assessments**

8.6 The Council has a duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a protected characteristic and those who don't when making decisions. This duty is set out in more detail in the Equality Implications section of this report. Each of the budget proposals attached in appendix E have been subject to equality impact assessments (EIA) to assess their potential or likely impact on service users and employees with protected characteristics. Where the EIA process identifies a disproportionate negative impact with no reasonable mitigation, the proposals will be subject to a full EIA and may need to be changed or even rejected. In addition, an Equalities Assessment which considers the potential or likely impact of the proposals to be considered by Cabinet in February 2019, will be prepared. The consultation process outlined in this report will be an important source of information for these exercises.

### **9.0 School Funding Reforms**

9.1 In late July 2018 there was a ministerial statement on the teachers' pay rise for 2018/19. The pay rise was confirmed as an increase from September 2018 of between 1.5% for the leadership scale and 3.5% for the main pay scale. This will be funded by a grant separate to the DSG in 2018/19 and in 2019/20. The detailed grant allocations were not announced, although the statement did clarify that the grant will fund the difference between the above and the 1% it is assumed that schools have already budgeted for.

9.2 The statement of the teacher pay rise coincided with the DfE releasing policy and operational guidance on school revenue funding for 2019/20 and 2020/21. Schools revenue funding will continue to be made by via 4 blocks – Schools,

Central, High Needs and Early Years. As in 2018/19 the allocations are to be calculated on the basis of the national school funding formula reforms but will be aggregated and allocated to each Local Authority. This arrangement is confirmed for 2019/20 and 2020/21, which means the primary legislation needed to fund schools directly will not be put before parliament for another year or two.

- 9.3 As announced last year there will be some increase in cash (rather than real) terms to schools block funding allocations in 2018/19 of about 0.5% per pupil. This is separate to the teacher pay rise grant. Local Authorities will continue to set the local schools formulae for distributing the schools block, although LA's allocations are aggregated from school level calculations using the national funding formula.
- 9.4 A key change for 2019/20 is that the DfE will top slice the amount of Schools Block previously set by each authority as a Growth Budget and then reallocate to authorities according to a formula multiplied by actual growth between October 2017 and October 2018. The size of the growth allocation will not be known until December 2018. Decreases in allocations will be minimised to 0.5% of the total Schools Block, which is £1.2M for Brent.
- 9.5 In 2017/18 underspends on growth funds compensated for overspends in the High Needs Block and this looks set to be repeated in 2018/19. It looks as though this opportunity for mitigation on overspends will be reduced in 2019/20.
- 9.6 The central block funds ongoing responsibilities and historic commitments, and is not expected to change much. The DfE expect historic commitments to reduce from 2020/21 onwards. In Brent historic commitments total £0.8M, £0.6M of which helps support the School Effectiveness Service.
- 9.7 As previously announced there will be a small increase to the High Needs Block of 0.5% per head of under 19 population. This will be insufficient to contain the currently projected overspend of approx. £2M, and the growing demand for High Needs support, e.g. increases in the number of Education, Health & Care Plans (EH&CPs). No other funding increases are expected. The national high needs formula calculates £6M less than the current allocation for Brent, with the funding protections meaning that the high needs block will stay at £54M plus 0.5% per child/young person. More detailed guidance on the High Needs Block will be announced in September.
- 9.8 There were no new announcements made on Early Years Block. Brent early years providers are funded at a slightly higher hourly rate than that received in the DSG, with reserves making up the shortfall of £300k in 2018/19.

## **10.0 Housing Revenue Account**

- 10.1 The 2018/19 HRA budget was set in consideration of the significant effect the government's Housing and Planning Act (2016) and other measures will have

on the Council's housing stock including on its future size, financial performance and management over coming years.

- 10.2 The prescribed 1% reduction in rents between 2016 and 2020 as set out in the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 will significantly reduce rental income to fund services. In October 2017 the government announced a return to CPI plus 1% for 5 years starting in April 2020. This will provide stability and certainty over planned investment in the stock, service improvement and new development, at least in the medium term. The approach beyond 2025 remains uncertain but there is an expectation that rent increases will remain.
- 10.3 The budget setting process is informed by the assumptions and modelling undertaken in the HRA business plan, this takes into consideration key items of income and expenditure forecasted over 30 years.
- 10.4 The budget setting for capital major works on council dwellings are set as part of the overall HRA, this determines the level of revenue contributions required to fund capital expenditure.
- 10.5 In setting the 2018/19 budget it was estimated that the HRA would need to find savings of £3.6m between 2017/18 to 2019/20. £1.3m of this saving is profiled to be achieved in 2019/20 through the full impact of the transformation programme which is currently being implemented in this financial year.
- 10.6 The Government's social housing green paper published in August 2018, shows ministers have scrapped plans to force local councils to sell off their highest value social homes and give the proceeds to the Treasury. This relieves savings pressures that would have been required within the HRA to fund levy payments.

## **11.0 Overall summary and conclusion**

- 11.1 Local government continues to face an extremely challenging financial outlook following a prolonged period of austerity as well as disproportionate growth in demand for services. There is a growing level of uncertainty as the cliff edge of 2020 approaches – marking the end of the current Spending Review period and start of the new 75% business rates retention scheme.
- 11.2 The government plans to implement all three reform strands – Fair Funding, a redesigned business rates retention system at 75% and reset of the business rates baseline – by April 2020. This will require a significant volume of technical developments, formal consultation and detailed modelling. Each of the reforms could individually have a potentially significant financial implication for local authorities which could include:
- An increase or decrease in the size of baseline need set for an authority;
  - A change in the current percentage share of local business rates income after 2020/21 compared to the current structure;
  - A change in the levels of financial reward or loss arising from shares of business rates; and

- An increase or decrease in the size of the business rates baseline which would affect the levels of gain or loss at 75%.
- 11.3 What transitional arrangements are put in place and whether these arrangements relate to just one or more of the reforms will also have a significant financial impact for an authority and the size of any cliff edge that may arise. It is anticipated that MHCLG will formally consult on the proposals, although the timing for such formal consultation is unclear at this stage.
- 11.4 At the national level the debate over Brexit is likely to dominate political proceedings. Whilst there is much speculation about what sort of deal might be negotiated and what its national and local consequences might be the reality is that it is too soon to be able to make any sort of reliable estimate of the consequences for local government. What is reasonably certain is that the Brexit negotiations will take up a significant proportion of government resources, such that other legislative programmes may be subject to delay or other lack of certainty. This is perhaps particularly likely to be true of local government related legislation which is rarely a high political priority. For now, it is too early to predict how the government will respond on these issues and on the wider issue of austerity more generally.
- 11.5 Since 2010 the council has delivered against a series of challenging financial targets (£164 million of savings delivered since 2010 or around £18m per annum), through a combination of effective financial management, cost control and more innovative approaches to investment and demand management.
- 11.6 Officers' expectation is that savings of £40m will be needed over the lifetime of this Administration. The profile of these is broadly balanced, and so officers' advice is that the Administration should seek to agree savings of at least £20m in order to be able to agree a balanced budget for at least the next two years. However, it is important to note that, on the current funding estimates, significant further savings will need to be agreed at the Council meeting of February 2021. As a result the current working assumptions is that anything not agreed in this budget round may need to be considered again at the point in time, and further options identified.

## **12.0 Financial Implications**

- 12.1 The financial implications are set out throughout the report. As the budget proposals are for consultation at this stage, not agreement, there are no direct costs associated with agreeing the recommendations, other than for consultation, the costs of which are built into existing budgets.

## **13.0 Legal Implications**

- 13.1 A local authority must budget so as to give a reasonable degree of certainty as to the maintenance of its services. In particular, local authorities are required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to calculate as part of their overall budget what amounts are appropriate for contingencies and reserves. The Council must ensure sufficient flexibility to avoid going into deficit at any point

during the financial year. The Chief Financial Officer is required to report on the robustness of the proposed financial reserves.

- 13.2 Standing Order 24 sets out the process that applies within the council for developing budget and capital proposals for 2019/20. There is a duty to consult representatives of non-domestic ratepayers on the Council's expenditure plans before each annual budget under Section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The council also has a general duty to consult representatives of council tax payers, service users and others under Section 3 (2) Local Government Act 1999.

The council is also required to comply with other statutory and common law consultation obligations relevant to particular options being considered and with the Public Sector Equality Duty. The council must consult at a formative stage in the decision making process and adequate time must be given for public consideration and response. The consultation information must be accurate, fair and balanced, give sufficient reasons for proposals to permit of intelligent consideration and response and the information produced by the consultation must conscientiously be taken into account in finalising the proposals.

#### **14.0 Equality Implications**

- 14.1 Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in the Equality Act 2010, Brent Council is required to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different those who have a protected characteristic and those who don't when making decisions. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation and gender reassignment. Although socio-economic status (people on low income, young and adult carers, people living in deprived areas, groups suffering multiple disadvantage, etc.) is not a characteristic protected by the Equality Act 2010, Brent Council is committed to considering the impact on socio-economic groups.
- 14.2 The PSED does not prevent decision makers from making difficult decisions in the context of the requirement to achieve a significant level of savings across all operations. It supports the Council to make robust decisions in a fair, transparent and accountable way that considers the diverse needs of all our local communities and workforce. Consideration of the duty should precede and inform decision making. It is important that decision makers have regard to the statutory grounds in the light of all available material, including relevant equality analyses and consultation findings. If there are significant negative equality impacts arising from a specific proposal, then decision makers may decide to amend, defer for further consideration or reject a proposal after balancing all of the information available to them. This may mean making up the shortfall from additional reductions elsewhere.

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

15.1 Section eight of this report provides more details of the statutory and the non-statutory consultation process with regards to the proposed budget setting process.

## **16.0 Human Resources**

16.1 Where options included in the appendices require changes or reductions in staffing, the council's Managing Change policy will apply.

**Report sign off:**

**CONRAD HALL**  
Chief Finance Officer

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	<p align="center"><b>Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee</b> 15 January 2018</p>
	<p align="center"><b>Report from the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment</b></p>
<p align="center"><b>Consultation on the Draft Brent Local Plan</b></p>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All, except area that falls within the boundary of the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation.
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b> (only applicable for Cabinet, Cabinet Sub Committee and officer decisions)	N/A
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	None
<b>Background documents:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Brent Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation Statement November 2018</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Brent Local Plan Consultation Summary February 2018</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Brent Local Plan Issues and Options February 18</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Brent Local Plan Preferred Options November 18</a></li> </ul>
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Paul Lewin, Team Leader Planning Policy <a href="mailto:paul.lewin@brent.gov.uk">paul.lewin@brent.gov.uk</a>

## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. The report details progress with the development of the council's new Local Plan and provides access to the results of initial public consultations. It sets out the plans for further consultation.

## 2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee consider the contents of the report.

## 3.0 Detail

### Brent Local Plan Review

- 3.1 Brent's Development Plan sets out the planning policies against which planning applications are determined. It comprises four documents: Brent Core Strategy 2010, Brent Site Specific Allocations 2011, Wembley Area Action Plan 2015 and Brent Development Management Policies 2016. To reflect changes to national policy, the London Plan and Brent's latest aspirations, Brent's Local Plan needs to be updated. This process commenced in summer 2017.

### Stages of Engagement to Date

- 3.2 Best practice in relation to local plan consultation is focussed on 'front-loading' the process. This is to tease out the issues and the potential options to address them through appropriate policy. This is with a view to reducing the potential for objection, or the need to radically revisit issues at the latter stages of adoption. To date there have been three separate phases of consultation:
- a) pre-issue of Brent Local Plan Issues and Options during 2017;
  - b) Brent Local Plan Issues and Options Feb 2018; and
  - c) Brent Local Plan Preferred Options Nov 2018.
- 3.3 For stage a) there was an informal emphasis. 9 workshops, 2 developer forums and 5 drop-in sessions were held across the borough in a range of venues to target different audiences. These were mostly held on evenings or weekends to allow maximum participation. These were advertised through direct mailing of interested parties, the Council's website and social media. Fuller details can be found on pages 8-9 of [Brent Local Plan Consultation Summary February 2018](#). In addition, targeted workshops and drop in sessions were held with groups that are sometimes underrepresented in consultation events. These included Brent Youth Parliament, Brent Multi-faith Forum, Disability Rights and Politics (DRAP) Brent and parents with young children via Barnardo's children's centres. This engagement occurred from early September until Early December 2017. In total 246 people attended a community workshop and approximately 230 commented at drop in sessions.
- 3.4 Stage b) was associated with a more formal issuing of a consultation Brent Local Plan Issues and Options document for comment from 8<sup>th</sup> February until 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2018. Awareness raising of the consultation was similar to that for Stage a). 8 drop-in sessions were undertaken. More detail can be found on page 5 of [Brent Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation Statement November 2018](#). Responses were collected principally via two mechanisms. One was through responses to particular questions raised in the Issues and Options document which could be responded to via the internet on a questionnaire, or via e-mail/ mail. In addition an interactive web map allowed people to identify areas and make comments. The comments can be viewed at <https://brent.commonplace.is/comments>
- 3.5 Stage c) the [Brent Local Plan Preferred Options November 18](#) document was issued for consultation between 8<sup>th</sup> November 2018 and 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2019. Publicity for the consultation was similar to that for stages a) and b). There

have been 4 workshops, 1 developer forum and 4 drop in sessions. In addition every property in the borough was sent a flyer advertising the consultation and there were advertisements in JC Decaux roadside sites as well as a video through social media.

### **Response Received**

- 3.6 There has been a good response to the consultations in terms of number and quality. The plan's content is extensive and as such the responses diverse. [Brent Local Plan Consultation Summary February 2018](#) and [Brent Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation Statement November 2018](#) both contain Executive Summaries which set out the main issues. A verbal update will be provided at the meeting on the Preferred Options responses as the consultation runs until 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2019. It is anticipated that the level of responses received will be significant and as such this update will only be high level as full analysis will not have been able to happen.

### **Future Consultation**

- 3.7 The next stages of consultation associated with the Local Plan are likely to be:
- a) Publication Stage Summer 2019
  - b) Examination Autumn 2019 Proposed Modifications
- 3.8 The publication stage is a statutory stage which has to be for a minimum of 6 weeks. At this stage consultation focusses on receiving representations related to the tests of 'soundness'. These relate to the policies in the Plan being: positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.
- 3.9 When the document has been submitted for examination it is likely that the Council will seek to make modifications. These will relate to representations made at the publication stage and the Inspector's feedback through the matters raised and hearings sessions.
- 3.10 The publicity for the publication stage is likely to be consistent with previous stages. An exception however is likely to be in relation to a flyer being sent to every property in the borough.

## **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The consultation undertaken in association with the Local Plan is proportionate to the funds that are available within budget set aside for the project.

## **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 There are statutory requirements set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 related to the consultation, examination and adoption of Local Plans.

## **6.0 Equality Implications**

- 6.1 The Council has sought to engage as widely as possible taking account of the diversity of Brent's population and those with protected characteristics.

Monitoring has been undertaken on the characteristics of respondents/ attendees at events and measures taken to address perceived lack of responses/ engagement with some groups.

- 6.2 The Local Plan policies themselves have been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) which includes an assessment of equalities impacts, as well as for sustainability and health.

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

- 7.1 All Ward Members have been made aware of the various stages of consultation and the ability to contribute. This has been through the members' bulletin, numerous invites/ reminders from the Lead Member Regeneration, Highways & Planning and special member learning briefings and opportunities to attend workshops.

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

- 8.1 The Council's property teams have been engaged with the Local Plan process throughout.

**Report sign off:**

**Amar Dave**

Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

	<p align="center"><b>Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee</b> 15 January 2019</p>
	<p align="center"><b>Report from the Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships</b></p>
<p><b>Affordable Housing Task Group</b></p>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Non-key
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b>	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	None
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Pascoe Sawyers, Head of Strategy and Partnerships, <a href="mailto:pascoe.sawyers@brent.gov.uk">pascoe.sawyers@brent.gov.uk</a> 020 8937 1045

## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report set out the findings and recommendations of the Affordable Housing Task Group.

## 2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee review and agree the recommendations in the Affordable Housing Task Group report.

## 3.0 Detail

3.1 The task group held a series of evidence-gathering sessions with internal and external partners and experts.

3.2 In its work the task group sought to gain an understanding of the barriers and solutions to affordable housing delivery during an acute housing crisis, and following decades of declining delivery of genuinely affordable housing in the borough, across London and nationwide.

3.3 The group have reached wide-ranging conclusions about approaches the council should take and we have grouped our key findings under seven themes, as follows:

- Affordable housing targets and viability
- Corporate approach to affordable housing delivery
- Estate regeneration
- Land owned by public authorities
- Industrial/employment sites
- Small sites
- Community led housing

3.5 After meetings and discussions the task group has made a number of recommendations. These are set out in the report.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

4. There are no financial implications arising from this report

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report

#### **6.0 Equality Implications**

6.1 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

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

7.1 Ward members who are members of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee will be involved in scrutinising this report at committee.

#### ***REPORT SIGN-OFF***

***Peter Gadsdon***

Director Performance, Policy and Partnerships



**SCRUTINY**

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING  
IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS  
TASK GROUP**

**NOVEMBER 2018**

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## 1. THE CHAIR'S FOREWORD



In the foreword to the June 2017 IPPR report, [what more can be done to build the homes we need?](#), Sir Michael Lyons said: “We would stress that it is not just the number built but also the balance of tenures and affordability which need to be thought through for an effective housing strategy.”

Locally, it has long been known that access to decent affordable housing is the number one issue for many Brent residents.



Whilst there are high expectations about how Brent Council can rise to a challenge, the impact of national and regional policy concerning housing finance and the planning framework is not always appreciated.

We are pleased that both Cabinet and Scrutiny have prioritised the need for a task group to examine the forces impacting on the delivery of affordable housing in new developments in the borough and to consider the best options for consolidating and where possible, improving upon delivery in the future.

It is intended that the 18 recommendations and detailed background analysis will provide Brent Council and partner organisations with clear direction as to how to maximise opportunities for new affordable housing.

We would like thank the many organisations and individuals who have provided evidence, and Patrick Doherty Senior Policy and Scrutiny Officer who has supported this task group.

**Cllr Neil Nerva - Chair**

**Cllr Robert Johnson – Vice Chair**

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The task group held a series of evidence gathering sessions with internal and external partners and experts.

This included a series of meetings with senior officers from Brent Planning and Housing departments; a major local Housing Association (HA); experts from a leading affordable housing consultancy; specialist officers from The Greater London Authority (GLA); a GLA Assembly Member; the Independent Chair of Brent’s housing company “Invest4Brent” (I4B); an expert in the disposal of public land; and representatives from a Community Land Trust in Tower Hamlets. The evidence gathering was combined with extensive research.

A full list of participants in the task group’s evidence gathering can be found in appendix two of this report.

## 3. INTRODUCTION

The Borough of Brent was created in 1965 through the merger of the Wembley and Willesden District Councils. The Council’s name derives from the river Brent that flows through the borough. At the time of its merger the Council had roughly 15,000 units of housing stock. At its peak, Brent housing stock numbered approximately 23,000 units.

The Housing Act 1980 had a real impact on the borough, bringing into being the “Right-to-Buy” regulations. Brent Council housing stock has since diminished to below 10,000 units, principally due to Right-to-Buy sales and stock transfers. The major housing regeneration schemes of Stonebridge, Church End, Chalkhill, South Kilburn (on-going) and Barham Park have seen the loss of over 9,000 council units through stock transfer to HAs and over 2500 homes have been lost through Right-to-Buy.

Since the 1980s the split of rental accommodation in the borough has shifted considerably, with a growth in HA units followed by a resurgence in private renting, with a gradually larger proportion of properties in the private rental sector over time.

An added complication is that prior to the Localism Act in 2011, 50 per cent of Right-to-Buy receipts was held centrally by Government and could not be used to replace the units lost through the sales process. The Localism Act now allows greater freedom to use sales receipts for replacing lost units, however the sale of the unit does not automatically produce a new social housing unit. It requires at least two sales just to replace one unit sold through right to buy.

The financing of Housing Associations as partly public sector organisations was through social housing grants which enabled significant private borrowing. The peak of grants available during the last Labour Government – where there was a pot of £8.1bn to be spent on creating 180,000 new homes per year. This was equivalent to an average of £150,000 grant for a typical 3 bedroom home. By the time that the new coalition Government came in during 2010, this was cut to a total of £6.5bn through the 2011-15 programme and further reduced to £3.3bn through the 2015-18 programme.

In 2018 the lack of truly affordable housing being built is a national problem, but has a greater impact in urban areas such as London.

## 4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In its work the Task Group sought to gain an understanding of the barriers and solutions to affordable housing delivery, during an acute housing crisis and following decades of declining delivery of genuinely affordable housing in the borough, across London and nationwide.

It is abundantly clear that there are no easy solutions. Government subsidies for genuinely affordable housing remain at historically low levels and local government borrowing to build homes has been tightly restricted, while at the same time land values and demand for housing are at record highs.

We continue to operate as a public body in an extremely challenging financial landscape, but we must respond to that challenge and to the demands of national and regional policy, pursuing every opportunity available to deliver genuinely affordable housing for our residents.

Our investigations did reveal that there is some cause for optimism, as potential for innovative approaches, partnerships and improved funding and borrowing opportunities arise. Ultimately, the main thrust of this report is that Brent council must make the most of every one of these new, if limited, opportunities.

We have reached wide-ranging conclusions about approaches the council should take and we have grouped our key findings under seven themes, as follows:

- Affordable housing targets and viability
- Corporate approach to affordable housing delivery
- Estate regeneration

- Land owned by public authorities
- Industrial/employment sites
- Small sites
- Community led housing

In total we have made eighteen key recommendations, but our findings in fact highlight a broader range of approaches the council should consider.

The council must ask itself what success would look like in 5 years. If development sites with capacity for above 10 units achieved 35 per cent affordable housing with a 70 per cent (Social/London Affordable Rent) to 30 per cent (intermediate product) tenure split; sites with capacity for below 10 units produced commuted sums to fund development elsewhere in the borough; publicly owned sites produced 50 per cent affordable housing, as in the South Kilburn estate regeneration; enough subsidy/free land was available to enable the council (or a council-owned company) to produce its share of new homes at social rent/London Affordable Rents; and an expansion of Invest4Brent or New Wave Housing continued to bring Temporary Accommodation numbers and costs down, this would constitute significant success and improvement.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Affordable housing targets and viability**

1. In the new Local Plan for Brent the strategic target of 50 per cent for affordable housing in new developments should be retained, with an expected tenure split of 70 per cent social rent / London Affordable Rent to 30 per cent intermediate affordable housing.
2. Brent Council should adopt the Mayor of London's 35 per cent "fast-track" threshold approach to viability (with 50 per cent on publicly owned land and for industrial sites). Through this the council would forego the requirement for a financial viability assessment and/or a late stage viability review in the event that a developer guarantees delivery of the requisite percentage of affordable housing across the entire development (with the 70 per cent social rent / London Affordable Rent to 30 per cent intermediate tenure split applicable). The policy should be subject to review.
3. To help meet the need for larger affordable homes in the borough, Brent should continue to require a minimum of 25 per cent of new affordable rented homes to be three bedrooms or larger, accommodating at least a household of six (2 people per bedroom). However, this approach must be combined with a clear and effective under-occupation strategy, enabling and incentivising down-sizing in order to release more existing larger homes for re-let.
4. The council should continue to use the "Existing Use Value Plus" (EUV+) method for determining benchmark land values. Any other uplift in value should be captured for the public.

### **Corporate approach to affordable housing delivery**

5. Future council policy with regard to the setting of rents for affordable housing should continue to be based on the traditional social rented model (like the mayor's London Affordable Rent model) and should not be linked to volatile and irrational market rents rather than incomes.
6. Brent Council should create a cross-departmental Board of officers, reporting directly into the Corporate Management Team (CMT), to ensure a 'one council', joined-up,

sustainable approach to the delivery of Affordable Housing. The board should have high level responsibility for programme management and monitoring of an Affordable Housing Action Plan and associated suite of Key Performance Indicators. The Board should include senior officers from Brent's Planning, Housing, Regeneration, Property, Finance and Legal teams.

7. Brent should consider adopting a land assembly, master planner approach, working with key partners and designating Land Assembly Zones in its Local Plan. Where attempts to encourage and incentivise voluntary land assembly do not succeed, Brent should commit to extend its use of compulsory purchase powers in these zones, where the law allows.
8. Brent Council should maximise resources available through the mayor's fund, RTB receipts and borrowing to support direct delivery within its own capital development programme with a primary focus on rented homes at social rent levels and on larger homes (3 bedrooms or larger).
9. Brent must adopt a clear policy on access to shared ownership in the borough, making the product accessible to people on incomes that are as low as possible and ensuring the policy is designed to enable keyworkers to take advantage of it.
10. All new homes in Brent should be marketed locally first, as per the Mayor of London's planned "first dibs" policy. Brent should investigate how such a requirement could be implemented.
11. Brent Council should explore all the options highlighted in this report for innovative partnering arrangements and delivery models with Registered Providers.

### **Estate regeneration**

12. Future estate regeneration projects in Brent should use the South Kilburn Regeneration Programme as a model of good practice and make a clear commitment to ensuring there is no loss (in quantum terms) of social rented affordable housing and to resident ballots.

### **Land owned by public authorities**

13. Brent should actively promote partnership working on publicly owned land with other public bodies, as promoted by the Naylor Review (One Public Estate), e.g. Network Rail/TfL sites such as potential over station and over rail land developments, as part of the Local Plan.

### **Industrial/employment sites**

14. Brent must adopt a proactive approach to identifying opportunities where surplus commercial space, underused retail sites and car parks may have significant potential for housing development, both strategic industrial land sites and smaller commercial land sites, and in particular where sites have potential for mixed-use developments.

### **Small sites**

15. The council and its agents should proactively explore partnerships with developers and RPs on small sites to maximise the amount of affordable housing across the borough. Brent should identify potential opportunities and funding mechanisms for increasing

development of small sites, including any further opportunities for infill development. It should be prepared to invest the necessary resources.

16. Developers of small sites with capacity for 10 or fewer units should be expected to pay a commuted sum, wherever possible, based on a consistent tariff, to Brent as a contribution to the fund for affordable housing to be built elsewhere in the borough. All affordable housing in small developments should be included in Brent's periodic performance stats.

### Community led housing

17. Brent should investigate and promote opportunities for community led housing projects, such as "Community Land Trusts" and "Self-Build" projects, which will protect homes and assets at affordable levels in line with local incomes for future generations.
18. Brent should explore setting up of a CLT model on publically owned land and encourage developers to do the same.

## 6. POLICY CONTEXT

### 6.1 Definitions of "affordable" housing

The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) introduced changes to the definition of housing affordability, as well as a range of "intermediate" housing products. The NPPF stipulated that "affordable housing" proposals must fit within three types and are to be provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. These three types are:

- Social rent
- Affordable rent
- Intermediate housing

The introduction of the new "affordable rent" type was both controversial and confusing, with "affordability" now being defined by Government as up to 80 per cent of local market rent with no link to local incomes. To maintain the number of so-called affordable homes being produced, the government replaced grant with much higher rents. The inevitable long term increase in the cost of housing benefit was not part of the calculation.

**Social rented** accommodation is what was commonly understood historically to be affordable housing. The amount of social rent a person pays is set according to a longstanding national formula based on the location and size of the property and average earnings in the area. This formula determines '**target rents**' to which rents will move over time on an agreed national basis (usually annual inflation + rent increases). Although sometimes measured in comparison with market rents, the calculation system is not linked to local market rents. The vast majority of existing council and housing associations properties have their rents assessed in this way and are often referred to as 'traditional social rent'.

The **affordable rent** introduced by the coalition government in 2012 is directly linked to market rents in an area. It can be up to 80 per cent of local market rents, but in practice is sometimes set lower. Although normally used for new properties, many existing social rented homes (nearly all housing association homes) have been 'converted' to affordable rent when they become vacant. This has been encouraged by government because it generates additional income to support the development programme, but it is expensive for the tenant and the long-term cost of housing benefit.

**Intermediate products** are sub-market housing for both sale and rent, traditionally targeted at working households on moderate incomes and especially 'key workers', including "low cost" home ownership products such as "Shared Ownership".

The NPPF was revised in 2018 and now provides the following overarching definition for **Affordable Housing** as: "*housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:*

*a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).*

*b) Starter homes: is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.*

*c) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.*

*d) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement."*

There are further affordable housing products that have recently been made available in London, funded by the Mayor of London, including "**London Affordable Rent**" (**LAR**), which is set significantly lower than national affordable rent. Unlike the national scheme, LAR is not related to market rents but is linked to target rent levels towards which social rents are gradually being raised. This makes it higher than average social rents in the capital. For 2017/18 the benchmark London Affordable Rent for a two bedroom property was £152.73, whilst a three bedroom property had a £161.22 benchmark.

The intermediate product "**London Living Rent**", is set at 67 per cent market rent, with an assumption that the home will be sold as shared ownership after 10 years.

Anyone familiar with rent levels in Brent and London will question the degree to which 80 per cent of market rent can be termed "affordable" in any reasonable sense, but regardless of whether rents defined as "affordable" constitute genuinely affordable rents, in terms of

planning policy, and the previous mayor's capital grant funding, "affordable housing" has been defined as "up to 80 percent of market rent" since 2012.

In practice, for new development secured under the planning system by s106 agreement, "Affordable Rented" housing also standardly requires disposal to a Registered Provider, rents be capped at LHA rates and a nomination agreement be entered into between the Registered Provider and the council, giving the council rights to nominate people on the housing waiting list to "affordable" rented housing. Together these additional requirements provide some check on rents being charged at the full 80 per cent of market rent.

Tables 1 & 2 below provide a comparison of social rent cap levels in Brent with "Affordable Rent", based on median average market rents as of June 2017.

**Table 1 – Brent Social Rent Cap levels**

<b>Weekly Rents</b>	<b>Social rent cap</b>	<b>+£20pw s/c*</b>	<b>% of Market</b>	<b>Brent Market Rent (median average)</b>
1 bed	£144.26	£164.26	57%	£289
2 bed	£152.73	£172.73	49%	£350
3 bed	£161.22	£181.22	43%	£426
4 bed	£169.70	£189.70	37%	£506

\*s/c = service charge

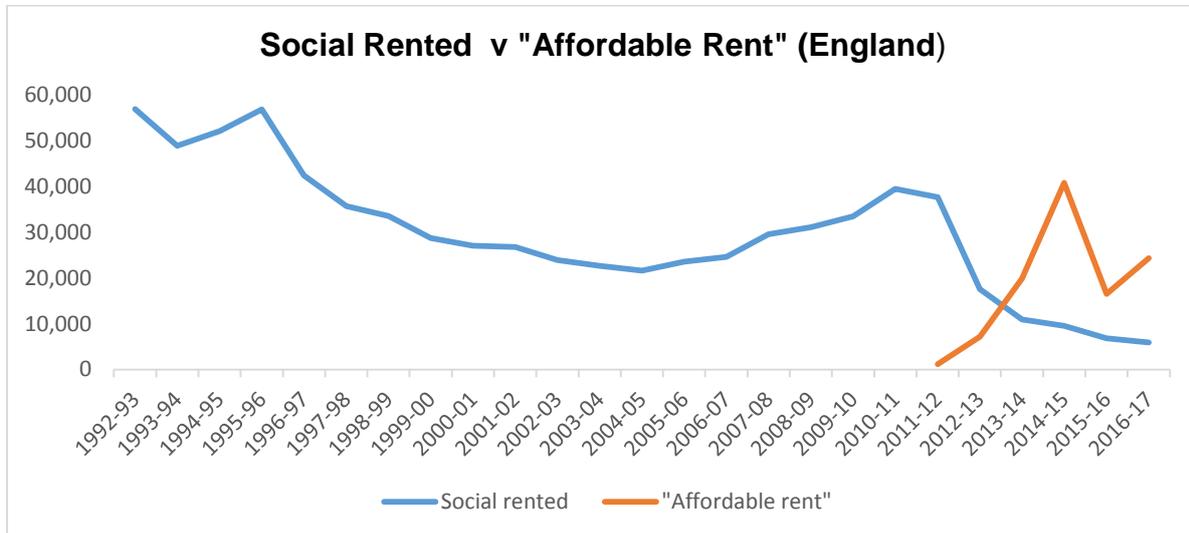
**Table 2 – Brent "Affordable" Rent (80 per cent of market rent)**

<b>Weekly Rents</b>	<b>80 per cent Affordable rent (inclusive s/c*)</b>	<b>% of Market</b>	<b>Brent Market Rent (median average)</b>
1 bed	£231.20	80%	£289
2 bed	£280.00	80%	£350
3 bed	£340.80	80%	£426
4 bed	£404.80	80%	£506

\*s/c = service charge

## 6.2 Historical delivery of affordable housing

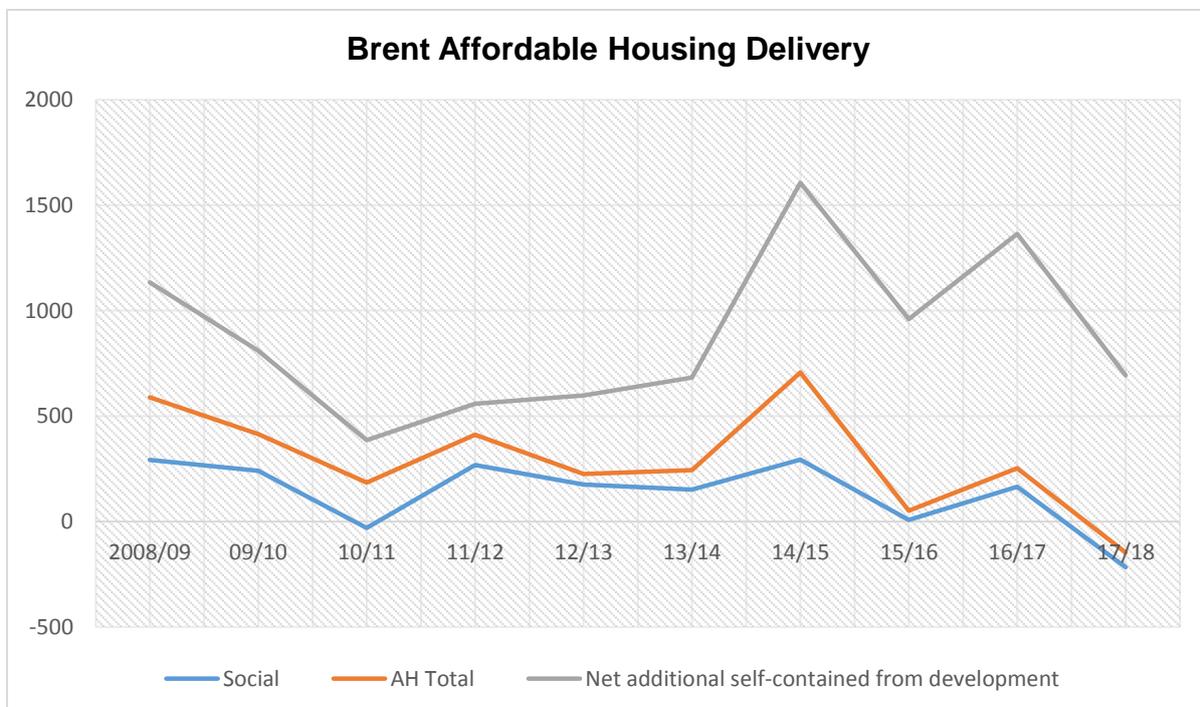
The graph below shows the downward trajectory for the amount of new social rented accommodation built across England since the early 1990s. "Affordable rent" units (as defined under the NPPF (2012)) are shown from its introduction in 2012.



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-affordable-housing-supply>

The following graph shows social rented homes and "affordable" rented housing (NPPF definition) as a proportion of new self-contained housing units delivered in Brent over the last ten years.



Source: GLA London Development Database

The spike in 2014-15 was due a large number of developments coming through at the end of the 2011-2015 funding cycle. The reduction in net social rent units shown in 2017/18 is due to

a demolition phase on the South Kilburn regeneration programme (it should be noted that all such units will ultimately be replaced like for like, so in the longer term this will not represent a loss in social housing units).

However, these caveats aside, the proportion of units of housing being delivered which are “affordable” and in particular for social rent, has continued to decline.

Causes for the decline in new genuinely affordable housing are complex and manifold. In the following sections of the report we will examine this decline in the context of national, regional and local policy.

Since the 1980s councils have been discouraged from involvement in housing supply, through both cuts in housing subsidies and caps on borrowing. Since 2010, central government grant funding has been switched from mainly social rent to mainly “affordable rent” and then to mainly low cost home ownership.

However, since 2016 some additional grant funding has been made available, a revised NPPF 2018, the policies of the new Mayor of London and the emerging new draft Local Plan have strengthened the planning framework, and the HRA borrowing cap is being lifted, so the ability of London councils and HAs to produce more ‘affordable’ homes has been improved.

### 6.3 Affordability and housing need

The GLA’s projections in their 2017 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) suggest that based on demographic changes and market trends, the net requirement for new homes in London between 2016 and 2041 will be around 65,900 homes a year. This equates to 2,915 new homes a year in Brent.

They project that 47 per cent of these would need to be ‘low cost rent’ (social rent and London Affordable Rent) and 18 per cent intermediate, e.g. shared ownership and London Living Rent and only 35 per cent at market rates.

Brent’s own current Local Plan “The Core Strategy” identified a need for at least 22,000 new homes overall in Brent between 2007 and 2026, and its SHMA 2016 identified a need for 47,510 new homes between 2011 and 2037, including 23,780 affordable homes. More recently in 2018, the West London SHMA identifies the Full Objectively Assessed Need for Housing in West London (Barnet, Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow) to be 322,000 new homes to 2041. This equates to 1,919 new homes a year in Brent.

#### ***Affordability in Brent***

Brent’s housing market, as with much of London, faces distinct pressures. There is high demand, a shortage of genuinely affordable housing, a diverse mix of households - including large numbers of multigenerational households, above average levels of overcrowding and many households living in temporary accommodation.

To begin to understand “affordability” of housing in Brent, it is necessary to understand the relationship between average income levels and the level of rents locally. To this end Brent Housing Department commissioned Cambridge University to carry out a study in 2017.

The report reached some shocking conclusions, most notably that social rents are already too high for a significant proportion of Brent social housing tenants.

The researchers found that over half of current working single people or couples allocated social housing in Brent were struggling to afford Brent rents for 1 bedroom flats, and that 90

per cent of families with 2 children couldn't afford the rent for a 3 bed property (affordability here being judged by the income that a household requires in order to be able to afford the rent without the need for support from Housing Benefit). With higher average rents the situation is even worse for tenants renting from Registered Providers.

The report concluded that the council faced a choice in the future between building a smaller number of social rented units (due to factors including the lack of subsidy available, restrictions on and cost of borrowing, and land values) or a larger number of units at "affordable rents" (in this case 65 per cent of market rent) where many more tenants would be reliant on housing benefit support to meet the rent.

We should be mindful here that the landscape has shifted since the 2017 report was commissioned, given the recently proposed lifting of the HRA borrowing cap.

### ***Private sector rents and income levels***

In Brent the acute pressures on housing are compounded by high private sector rents combined with relatively low income levels in much of the borough, when compared with London as a whole.

In September 2017 the average private rent in Brent was £1,557 per month, which represents a 15 per cent increase from five years earlier and a figure only 8 per cent lower than the average of £1,685 for London. Whereas full-time workers in Brent earned an average gross weekly pay of £576.20 in 2017, compared with the London average of £692.50, a difference of 20 per cent.

Brent private sector residents therefore face paying rents at a significantly higher proportion of their pay than the London average. Many people in work also need housing benefit to enable them to pay their rent.

It is worth noting that while private rented housing does not meet the definitions of affordable housing, many tenants that rent from a private landlord can only afford their housing costs because they receive housing benefit. Such households aren't counted in calculations of the "need" for affordable housing (as housing benefit enables most of them to afford their housing costs), but if housing benefit support was reduced or if there wasn't sufficient private rented housing available at a price they could afford, then this would inevitably and significantly increase the need for affordable housing.

This highlights the degree to which Government investment in housing has switched over time from capital expenditure on "bricks & mortar" to the housing benefit bill. More on this in the section on subsidy to follow.

### ***Out of work benefits and welfare reform***

Brent also has higher than average levels of residents in receipt of out of work benefits (10 per cent to London's 9.3 per cent in November 2016) and of those considered "economically inactive" at 23.8 per cent to the London average of 21.8 per cent (March 2018).

Welfare reforms have and continue to pose a considerable risk to households renting in Brent in both the private and social housing sectors. The combination of the freeze on many benefits, the benefits cap, the bedroom tax, changes in Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and, soon, the roll-out of Universal Credit, have put further pressure on low income renters and have impacted housing need in the borough, including through increases in PRS evictions.

### ***Brent housing register***

There are currently 3645 households in the priority Bands A to C on Brent's housing register, including homeless households. 19 per cent of these registered households are in bands A or B. This provides a clear indication of unmet housing need in the borough.

There are a further 17,190 households who are a low or no priority for housing who are in priority band D, making a total of 20,843 households registered in 2017/18. It should also be noted that an unknown number of households in need are not registered, either through a lack of awareness or the belief that social housing is no longer available.

The council's projection for lettings into social housing tenancies (council and Housing Association) in 2018/19 is 695, which will only meet around 18 per cent of the current total demand from housing register bands A to C.

The priority bands are defined as follows:

- Band A: Urgent need to move or releasing adapted or larger properties
- Band B: A need to move
- Band C: Need to move – Reasonable preference but with reduced priority

### ***Projected social housing lettings***

Many of the 695 lettings of social housing expected to be made during 2018/19 will become available through re-lets within existing social housing stock, including those arising from the transfer of existing tenants. The Council expects a total of 136 additional properties to be delivered through the new build programme, but a significant proportion of these will be 'affordable rent' not 'social rent'.

2017/18 lettings were comprised of 62 per cent homeless households, 16 per cent non-homeless families on the register and 22 per cent transfers.

### ***Brent allocations scheme and temporary accommodation***

The council's current allocations scheme was introduced in 2014 and aims to help those in the most housing need; giving priority to those with a long standing attachment to the borough and recognising the contribution of working households by awarding additional priority if at least one adult member of the household is employed (some conditions apply regarding the nature of the employment). The scheme is priority based and priority is awarded based on detailed criteria.

Registered households bid for homes that are advertised by Brent Council and Registered Provider partners, and applicants are placed in order of priority according to their band and waiting time. In most cases the highest ranking household will be offered the property.

Households are assessed for the number of bedrooms they need and the following income /asset thresholds apply:

<b>1 bed</b>	<b>2 bed</b>	<b>3 bed</b>	<b>4 bed+</b>
£35,000	£45,000	£55,000	£70,000

Applicants at or above the income thresholds for each bedroom category detailed above will not qualify to join the register as they are deemed to have sufficient financial resources to secure alternative housing.

In line with the powers granted to the council under the Localism Act 2011, the council can also discharge its duties to households accepted as homeless after 9th November 2012 through an offer of suitable private rented accommodation.

The table below shows the total number of homeless households in temporary accommodation (TA) since 2015. The numbers have reduced consistently over that time.

01/04/2015	01/04/2016	01/04/2017	01/04/2018	30/10/2018
3167	2933	2795	2478	2351

Brent accepts approximately 700 households annually as homeless and therefore has a duty to place them in TA. From the households in TA, Brent then places approximately 400-450 into social housing and 400 into the private rented sector (PRS) each year.

We can see from this that that there are more households being accepted as homeless each year, than there are units of available social housing coming on stream. The consistent reduction in the total number of households in TA since 2015 is therefore primarily explained by the decision taken by the council at that time to start using the powers granted under the Localism Act to discharge its homelessness duties through making offers of private sector accommodation to homeless families.

Such a policy is not without controversy and not all councils have adopted it. If a homeless household refuses an offer of accommodation in the private sector, the council has discharged its legal duty to house them and the household is then considered responsible for finding their own accommodation. Housing homeless households in the PRS also, once more, generally comes at a greater cost (to the state) in terms of housing benefit; a recurring theme in this report. High private rents also increase the risk of households facing a 'revolving door' of discharge into the private sector followed by a recurrence of homelessness, despite council support.

The PRS accommodation used by the council comes from a range of sources, including the council's own private housing company "Invest4Brent" (I4B) and a scheme through which landlords are offered incentives to rent to homeless households.

Roughly 650-700 new social housing units become available in Brent each year from all streams, including council and Housing Association new builds and re-lets. The 400-450 households going into social housing units annually from TA are the highest priority homeless households, generally those who have been in TA the longest. The rest go to high priority non-homeless households from the housing register, or are used for transfers.

In order to tackle rising numbers of households living in TA at the time, Brent's Cabinet took the decision in 2015/16 to amend Brent's allocations policy so that that 80 per cent of newly available social housing units should go to homeless households in TA.

From 2016/17 this became and remains an annual target of 70 per cent. Prior to these changes, approximately only 30 per cent of new social housing went to homeless households. This of course means that less available social housing goes to non-homeless households on the housing register.

### ***Large homes***

Due to the extent of overcrowding in Brent there is a recognised need for an increased number of larger affordable homes to be built, but this need is unlikely to be met by the market.

The current shortfall in such properties is compounded by the fact that developers and landlords currently lack the financial incentives to build them, as the difference in build cost between small and large properties (in terms of the number of bedrooms) is significantly greater than the difference in the level of rent that will be chargeable for them.

There is also a risk that this problem could be further compounded by the absence of a target for larger family homes in the Mayor of London's draft housing strategy.

## 6.4 Subsidy

The proportion of total development scheme costs met through Government grant funding has declined significantly since the 1990s. In the early 1990s, social housing grants provided for around 75 per cent of total cost of developing new affordable homes. By 2010, grants had fallen to 39 per cent of the overall cost of development. Under the Government's 2011-15 "affordable homes programme", it had reduced to only 14 per cent.

The coalition Government's 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review slashed council grants leading to further reductions in subsidy for building homes. Between 2009 and 2015 capital made available to councils and HAs for building homes fell from £11.4 billion in 2009 to £5.3 billion in 2015.

In 2010/11, just under 36,000 social rented homes were started, the next year work started on just over 3,000 and the downward trend continued in the early part of this decade.

There have also been significant changes to the funding regime for "affordable" housing. Government first ended funding for social rent and put the money into 'affordable rent', but it then reduced 'affordable rent' in favour of 'affordable home ownership' programmes such as "shared ownership".

Since the reductions in Government subsidy for social rented housing, most recent social rent has been provided either by section 106 agreements or by housing association self-financing through cross-subsidy from surpluses. Both are under severe pressure and producing very few new affordable homes.

Subsidy levels are still well short of historical levels, but some increased grant funding for affordable housing has recently become available from Government, with more capital grants available under the current Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan. Grants of up to £100k per unit are now available from the GLA for London councils to bid for.

It is worth restating here that the reduction in Government subsidy for the building of housing in no sense means that the Government isn't spending money on housing. The money is merely being spent a different way, as the Government is spending more than ever supporting people to live in rental properties through housing benefit and home ownership schemes like Help to Buy.

Between 1995/96 and 2015/16, annual spending on housing benefit increased by 51 per cent, from £16.6bn to £25.1bn, with the increase most pronounced in the private rented sector, which has seen an increase of 57 per cent in real terms over the past two decades. Housing someone in the private rented sector costs an average of £110 per week in housing benefit compared with £89 in social housing. And none of the money spent on private sector housing benefit increases the supply of new homes, whereas social landlords do of course reinvest.

## 6.5 The HRA borrowing cap

A primary means of funding local authority housebuilding programmes is borrowing on the Housing Revenue Account (HRAs), the income to which is ring-fenced so that it can only be spent on local affordable housing provision.

While councils can borrow money within their HRAs in order to build more homes, there has been an artificial cap on how much they are allowed to borrow, restricting their ability to invest in building new homes.

The picture does appear to be changing however, with the Prime Minister announcing at the Conservative Party conference in October that she plans to ditch the HRA borrowing cap. This followed the announcement in the wake of Grenfell by the Chancellor Phillip Hammond of an extra £1bn of borrowing capacity for council house building by 2021-22, including £500 million reserved for London boroughs, with councils told they'll be able to blend the money with grant or Right-to-Buy receipts.

## 6.6 The London Plan

The London Plan is the statutory Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London prepared by the Mayor of London. It sets ten-year targets for net housing completions for each borough and Brent must include these targets in our own Development Plan documents.

Borough targets in Sadiq Khan's draft London Plan were developed from the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) carried out in 2017 and a ten year target of 29,150 has been set for Brent.

This requirement for nearly 3000 net housing completions annually, represents a significant uplift on actual delivery in recent years for Brent. Furthermore, the plan requires that boroughs deliver around 1/3 of their overall target from small sites.

This small sites requirement is problematic, as a requirement for provision of affordable housing units cannot be stipulated in planning obligations for small sites providing 10 or fewer housing units.

## 6.7 Brent Local Plan

Local Plans set out a vision and framework for the future development of the area, addressing needs and opportunities, including in relation to housing, community facilities and infrastructure. The Local Plan guides decisions about individual development proposals.

Brent's current Local Plan "The Core Strategy" came into force in 2011 and contains a strategic target for affordable housing of 50 per cent of total units delivered with a ratio of 70:30 social/affordable rent to intermediate housing. There is a presumption that affordable housing should be delivered on site.

A new Local Plan for Brent is currently in development and has and will continue to be consulted upon extensively, with a final consultation planned for 2019, before submission to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. The Local Plan is ambitious for housing and affordable housing delivery and sets the local tenure and size mix for new homes in Brent.

Local Plans must clearly demonstrate evidence of housing need and include viability evidence for the borough, and they are required to accord with, and be justified against, regional and

national planning policy and guidance. This includes the London Plan, the NPPF and the “National Planning Practice Guidance” (PPG).

It should also be noted that Local Plans must, as a requirement of national policy, make provision for 10 per cent of new homes built to be of the affordable home ownership type, such as the shared ownership model.

## 6.8 Section 106 “planning obligations”

Due to decreasing levels of Government subsidy and the restrictions that councils have faced in the direct delivery of housing, an ever greater reliance has been placed on private developers to deliver affordable housing through Section 106 agreements, known as ‘planning obligations’.

Councils can require developers to build a proportion of affordable housing to meet the needs of households who will not be able to afford the new private housing, effectively diverting profit from private sales into subsidising new affordable homes.

Following the recovery after the economic downturn at the end of the last decade, land values and house prices have increased significantly, but this has not translated into increased numbers of affordable housing being delivered through section 106 agreements, at least in part due to the use and impact of “Financial Viability Assessments” (FVAs). It should be noted that other mechanisms for land value capture and developer contributions such as the Mayoral and Brent Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) have been introduced in this time which have secured contributions for the Elizabeth Line (Crossrail 1) and other local community benefits.

This has primarily been to the benefit of landowners through huge increases in profits, but to the detriment of councils and their local residents.

## 6.9 Viability

Many believe that FVAs have in recent years exerted a strong influence on the downward trend in affordable housing delivery across the country.

National, London and Local Plan policy all accept that new development schemes must be financially viable to be deliverable and in many cases it is not viable to deliver a large proportion of affordable housing without significant capital grant or public land. Planning applicants have been able to submit FVAs to make their case as to what would represent the “maximum reasonable amount” of affordable housing.

Developers bid against each other for land and take into consideration the anticipated sale value of the properties and deduct from this anticipated costs, including build costs, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and the cost of affordable housing provision. This leaves the ‘residual value’ of the land.

The levels of affordable housing provision have been subject to negotiation on the basis of ‘viability’ in recent years, but the Mayor of London’s recent Supplementary Planning Guidance 2016 announced a new viability threshold whereby a streamlined planning process applies if developers can commit to providing 35 per cent affordable housing on site. This aims to make developers take this fixed proportion of affordable housing into account when bidding for sites, and to reduce land speculation.

Critics of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 pointed out that it effectively encouraged developers to overpay for land in the knowledge that they could drive down the

amount of affordable housing to be delivered through planning requirements. This was in part due to a clause in the 2012 framework protecting their right to make “competitive returns” (commonly understood to be 20 per cent), ultimately at the expense of affordable homes.

This clause has since been removed from the revised NPPF 2018 along with further changes made with a view to reducing the influence of viability assessments, but it is of course too soon to know what impact the changes will have on land prices and/or delivery of affordable housing.

### ***Parkhurst Road Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and London Borough of Islington***

In 2018 a landmark test case went to the High Court on the issue of viability, central to which was the approach to valuation evidence for the purposes of FVAs.

The key issue was whether the developer’s offer of 10 per cent affordable housing was the “maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing” in the context of Islington’s overall affordable housing target of 50 per cent. The council and developer disagreed regarding the Benchmark Land Value (BLV) for the site based on which the developer had argued that any more than a 10 per cent affordable housing requirement was not viable. Islington claimed that 10 per cent failed to take into account their expectations for affordable housing in their Local Plan.

The developer’s approach to calculating the BLV was based on the market alone, the “market value” (MV), whereas the council adopted an approach which took account of the “existing use value” (‘EUV’) of the site (in this case of a former Territorial Army site negligible). Islington’s view was ultimately that unadjusted market data would not reflect policy compliant assumptions on affordable housing provision.

The developer had appealed against Islington’s decision, but the Planning Inspector had dismissed their appeal and accepted Islington’s assessment of the BLV.

The case then went to the High Court where the judge held that the Inspector had validly rejected the evidence of the developer because that evidence had failed to include any adjustment of market evidence to ensure it was policy compliant.

### ***Transparency***

Brent now has a requirement that it will publish viability assessments to ensure they are publicly available and open to scrutiny. The exception is where a developer can reasonably prove that there is commercially confidential information included which, in a tender situation, may negatively impact on the proposals.

## **7. KEY FINDINGS**

### **7.1 Affordable housing targets and viability**

The task group firstly recommends that Brent retains the 50 per cent target on the development programme as a whole for the provision of affordable housing (70 per cent of which should be social rented / London Affordable Rent housing and 30 per cent intermediate products). Secondly, a fast-track threshold approach to viability should be introduced.

Where developers choose not to go down the fast-track route, the higher target would apply pending submission and evaluation of an FVA, which by default would now be publishable.

### ***Viability threshold***

The mayor's Supplementary Planning Guidance 2016 recommends a fast-track threshold of 35 per cent "affordable housing", with a tenure split of one third social rent, one third intermediate and one third to be determined by the borough.

The London Plan also provides extremely challenging housing targets for Brent over the coming decade at 3000 units per annum. The proportion of one third of the total target that are expected to come from small sites is also problematic and could have implications for the council's ability to meet the targets and for its expectations in respect of affordable housing delivery.

Unlike with larger sites, councils can't require through section 106 planning obligations that a proportion of the units developed onsite in small sites under 10 units are "affordable". And while the GLA actually defines small sites as those producing under 25 units, if one third of the units produced in the borough over the next ten years are to be from such sites, there are implications for the borough's ability to achieve their targets. This means that on 40 per cent of "small sites" there will be no onsite affordable housing provision.

In the light of this the task group considered whether a threshold of above 35 per cent may in fact be justifiable.

Setting a higher threshold would certainly not be without risks and we cannot ignore how it may influence the thinking of developers. For instance, it could encourage them to go to other boroughs; could lead more of them to go for the full viability process; or lead more of them to challenge successfully the 70 per cent tenure split for social rent which we propose.

For the threshold approach to be influential it needs to be set at a level where it is an attractive option for developers, because where they don't accept it the longer viability process would still apply.

Setting the threshold at 35 per cent will also enable Brent to work under the mayor's policy umbrella. We do, however, propose that Brent should stretch the mayor's SPG approach by requiring a tenure split of 70:30 social rent/LAR to "intermediate", with social rent obviously being more expensive in a viability assessment. Given that current Brent performance is in the region of 20% affordable housing annually, getting to 35% would be a major achievement because the financial and policy context is still not entirely encouraging.

The policy could then be subject to review at a later date, as the mayor proposes, and setting it higher will be possible if in practice the policy bears down on land costs and on excessive developer profit. Construction costs are likely to rise above inflation in the coming years and any switch to off-site manufacture will be slow.

### ***Large homes, overcrowding and under-occupation***

As highlighted earlier in this report there is a shortage of larger homes in the borough and high levels of overcrowding.

To help tackle this Brent should maintain the requirement in the Local Plan for a minimum of 25 per cent of new affordable rented homes to be at least three bedrooms, but it should also blend this with an alternative approach. Notwithstanding the London Plan policy that there should be a mix of sizes in new developments, the council must also have a clear strategy for tackling under-occupation. If some new build properties could be targeted specifically at enabling downsizing by an existing 'bedroom taxed' council tenant, subsequently releasing a larger home for re-let, the same objective is ultimately achieved. This approach may make it easier to achieve viable new build and a higher share of social rent.

The London Plan measures affordable proportions by habitable rooms, not units. So, in a development it might, for example, be possible to achieve 2 x 1 bedrooms instead of 1 x 3 bedrooms, providing homes for 2 “downsizers” *and* releasing 2 additional larger properties, both (perhaps) 3 beds.

The additional homes to let (the crucial point in tackling need) then become 2 x 3 bedrooms, plus 2 x 1 bedrooms, rather than 1 x 3 bedrooms. This is a more complex operation, but ultimately provides a major improvement in housing outcomes.

### ***Land costs and developer profits***

Brent must ultimately seek to take an approach that can influence land costs and developer’s profit because the third factor in cost – the build itself – is likely to inflate in the coming few years due to Brexit.

The borough must also be willing to take a strong stance in negotiation and take test cases to the courts where necessary.

The Islington High Court judgement should strengthen the hand of councils in negotiations over viability and developers should no longer be able to claim that they cannot meet planning policy requirements because of the price that they have paid for the land.

There are signs that Government policy on land (after the Letwin review) might also change to challenge excessive profits for landowners, taking the view that a much greater share of the value uplift caused by planning permission should revert to the public.

Brent should also seek to set an acceptable level for developer profit within the borough, which could be geared to the degree of risk involved.

### ***Letwin review***

The Letwin review examined build-out rates on large sites (defined as over 1500 units) and the issue of land banking. While the review found “*no evidence that speculative land banking is part of the business model for major house builders*” it has made a number of recommendations that may ultimately impact on developer profits.

These include that large sites should be required to provide “a diversity of offerings” that should ultimately mean less emphasis on sales and tenures with the largest margins, and consequently lead to faster build-out rates. Importantly, it is recommended that that this should be facilitated through new planning rules for large sites in areas of high housing demand.

It is proposed that councils would be given the power to designate land for ‘large site’ development only and have the power to use Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) to obtain the land at a price that takes into account the diversity of tenures required. The council should take full advantage of any such changes should they become active government policy.

### **Key recommendations:**

1. In the new Local Plan for Brent the strategic target of 50 per cent for affordable housing in new developments should be retained, with an expected tenure split of 70 per cent social rent / London Affordable Rent to 30 per cent intermediate affordable housing.
2. Brent Council should adopt the Mayor of London’s 35 per cent “fast-track” threshold approach to viability (with 50 per cent on publicly owned land and for industrial sites). Through this the council would forego the requirement for a financial viability assessment and/or a late stage viability review in the event that a developer guarantees delivery of the requisite percentage of affordable housing across the entire

development (with the 70 per cent social rent / London Affordable Rent to 30 per cent intermediate tenure split applicable). The policy should be subject to review.

3. To help meet the need for larger affordable homes in the borough, Brent should continue to require a minimum of 25 per cent of new affordable rented homes to be three bedrooms or larger, accommodating at least a household of six (2 people per bedroom). However, this approach must be combined with a clear and effective under-occupation strategy, enabling and incentivising down-sizing in order to release more existing larger homes for re-let.
4. The council should continue to use the “Existing Use Value Plus” (EUV+) method for determining benchmark land values. Any other uplift in value should be captured for the public.

## 7.2 Corporate approach to affordable housing delivery

As the external environment changes (new London Plan, new funding regime, tougher decisions by the mayor, reduction in influence of viability in the new NPPF) Brent must be geared up to make the most of the opportunities and to consolidate recent moves to take a stronger approach.

Maximising delivery of genuinely affordable housing that meets the particular needs of Brent residents must be a corporate priority. Officers working to this end must feel confident that they have the full backing from the most senior levels of the organisation.

There is no silver bullet; the approach requires continuous improvement across all sectors and functions to get better outcomes: a “one council” approach. All relevant council departments must work closely together and display the collective courage required to make important and at times perhaps even unpopular decisions.

There is evidence of a wide range of housing need, affecting people on middle as well as low incomes, however, the overwhelming housing priority, in terms of meeting the needs of our residents, is for homes at social rents (or the Mayor of London new ‘London Affordable Rent’ which is based on, but not as low as social rents).

Council-generated resources for housing (HRA headroom, RTB receipts, high value sales, General Fund resources, mayor’s funding) must be maximised and directed towards the supply of genuinely affordable homes, including the £65 million GLA grant funding recently confirmed. And the council should make a clear assessment of the share of London-wide resources coming to Brent via the mayor’s programmes, which are determined by provider and not by borough.

Brent must review its housing strategy and consider the implications for future delivery of affordable housing in the light of the removal of the borrowing cap. The lifting of the cap is welcome but will not automatically lead to more council homes at traditional council rents. Either cheap land or subsidy is needed to do that. But how will this affect Brent’s strategy for new council homes? This must be considered through an urgent review of the proposed new housing strategy.

We must continue to develop a successful I4B programme and utilise and examine the possibility of other council-owned company programmes, considering and developing alternative ‘invest to save’ models – any option that can help reduce the need for temporary accommodation benefits council finances greatly.

Due to the very ambitious overall housing targets the council faces, i.e. 3000 homes per year over the next ten years, there will undoubtedly be pressure to deliver any type of home to meet the targets, and developers will be aware of this. Developers naturally prefer to deliver 'affordable' housing at the higher end of the range (e.g. shared ownership and market based rents), as they are generally more profitable. The council's clear policy should be the reverse, given the evidence of acute need for genuinely affordable rented housing.

The apparent cost of having higher 'affordability' requirements in private developments is accepted by many to lead to reductions in land values as developers will be more reluctant to overpay for land. This is of course an imperfect mechanism for achieving this, but it is a very good policy objective and should be central to Brent's approach. A consistent approach to affordability requirements across London will be important in controlling land costs and making housing more affordable in the long term.

The absolute benefits of successful development to the council should mean a flexible approach to the recruitment of staff (also including I4B and FW) and if necessary a flexible payment structure. However, partnering with or commissioning a Registered Provider is probably the most practical option for future council developments.

Brent should ensure it sets a clear vision for and maximises the potential for its wholly-owned housing companies "Invest4Brent" (I4B) and "First Wave Housing" to help reduce the cost of Temporary Accommodation, and it must consider the potential for I4B to extend its business model from purchasing to developing. However, careful consideration should be given to whether this is the best model. It might be best for I4B to focus on expanding its specialist provision of alternatives to TA (a clear council-wide priority) whilst using First Wave Housing as a developer (FW is a registered provider) or even setting up a new company. Each organisation should have a clear and dedicated focus, but all should adopt the I4B working method of keeping close to the council.

With regard to the Community Infrastructure Levy, it is reasonable to expect that most CIL funds will be used to unblock future housing development, through infrastructure spending.

There should also be a clear policy on the use of overage arrangements on council disposals and s106 agreement planning viability reviews – i.e. where the council receives a share of future profits if a development outperforms over time, or deferred commuted sums should a development viably support such when delivered post planning determination.

Whilst the Local Plan is developed, initiatives such as a corporate land assembly approach (Corporate Master Planning) should be encouraged so that the authority is in the driving seat in future planning of all available sites in the Borough. This will enable the Council to set realistic plans over a 5 to 10 year period. It will also enable the Council to challenge both the mayor and the Government on what is a realistic target in terms of delivery of new units in the borough.

### ***Approach to setting of affordable rents***

Brent should not adopt an approach to "affordable rent" in their future housing strategy whereby a large proportion of rents are set as a percentage of market rents rather than an approach based predominantly on social rents, and providers building in Brent should not be encouraged to either. Such an approach should definitely not replace the council's commitment to 'social rent'.

Rents set at, for instance, 65 per cent of market rent, would be higher than the mayor's 'London Affordable Rent (LAR) (which is the closest current option to social rent). The mayor's proposal has already been criticised for being higher than social rent and will be likely to diverge more

from social rent over time, but has been accepted as being the best that can be achieved with this government in charge of funding (we must remind ourselves again that the landscape here could change given the proposed lifting of the HRA borrowing cap).

Brent should not go even higher than LAR, the logic of doing so would be questionable in the light of what we know about need and affordability in the borough, and the council should not risk being in a contradictory position of arguing a clear case for social rents, yet adopting a higher rent policy.

In the absence of clear evidence the task group remains unconvinced that a market rent based approach would actually lead to additional delivery and feels that acceptable levels of “affordable rent” probably cannot be justified in Brent in large numbers if set that way. Moreover, as the argument is one of affordability, affordable rents must be set in relation to incomes in the borough and the cost of provision, not by a dysfunctional and volatile market.

Brent’s future housing strategy should be explicit about the need for social rent. It is not acceptable for the viability process to lead to a lack of social rented accommodation, but significant proportions of “affordable rent” and intermediate products such as shared ownership, when we know these simply are not genuinely affordable options for residents of the borough in housing need.

The Cambridge University Study concluded that a significant proportion of Brent residents already struggled to afford social rents. While this presents clear difficulties it also demonstrates beyond any doubt that rent setting based on market prices simply cannot be the answer to meeting the true need in the borough.

### ***Sale of council homes***

If the council is to consider sales of high value council homes as part of an asset management strategy it needs to be extremely careful about how any such approach is to be adopted.

Clear and strict rules must be in place about how many homes are sold and on what terms. Brent should also be seeking to monitor and influence what housing associations in the borough do in this regard, and how they use the proceeds from such sales.

The task group is not in principle opposed to ‘asset management’ strategy sales, but this is where HAs started, with modest plans to sell very high value and hard to let property, only to gradually become so development-driven that large numbers of social rent homes ended up in auction (including many in Brent) to fund development, which then did not in turn produce social rent homes to replace those that were sold and might not even have been in the borough.

Any such policy must be very carefully monitored and any ‘asset management’ sales should meet a clear test of benefit and the money should be used for replacement social rented homes not for higher rent or intermediate products.

### ***Shared ownership***

There is of course a good case for ‘intermediate’ schemes which help people on better incomes, as housing built should be for all and not only those with the most critical needs. A diverse range of housing products are therefore required in the borough. However, intermediate products must not be the council’s headline policy nor the main programme as clearly they do not meet the most acute housing need in the borough.

The council must carefully consider who shared ownership and ‘intermediate rent’ products are actually for in Brent and what more can be done to make these a realistic option for Brent residents. Policy on this must clearly define priority beneficial groups, in particular key workers.

To access shared ownership in London, annual household income must generally be less than £90,000 and they must be able to easily access at least £4,000 to cover the costs of buying a home. In most cases savings or access to a minimum 5-10 per cent of the equity share being bought, as a deposit.

50 per cent of “affordable” housing delivered in Brent in 16/17 was shared ownership. But household income of approximately £60k per annum is generally required to access it here and there is clearly a shortage of households in the borough for whom it is attainable.

The task group heard anecdotally of a development in Wembley, where even after the income threshold had been reduced considerably to £45k, there was still a lack of Brent residents able to take up the offer.

The task group therefore finds that Brent must adopt a clear policy on access to shared ownership in the borough. The aim should be to make the product accessible to people on incomes that are as low as possible and policy must be designed to enable keyworkers to take advantage of it, bearing in mind that it needs to be sustainable for the household. HAs may have waiting lists, but the borough should ensure access policies are fair and reasonable and should set other eligibility criteria if it wishes. It is also important to make sure that there is an effective second hand market in the borough.

### ***Build To Rent (BTR)***

There is growing interest in “Build to Rent” schemes as major investors move into London. The Task Group would like to see a similar approach to achieving affordable homes applied to these as to any other schemes, where the council should be looking for 35% affordable and full access to nominations, even if the developer intends to manage the homes itself. Market rent homes within the scheme should be offered on longer tenancies with high quality management guaranteed.

The Task Group acknowledge that under current National and London planning policy, the economic assessment of BTR schemes for planning is different than developer led ones. The NPPF 2018 says BTR should provide ‘Affordable Private Rent’; The London Plan calls this ‘Discount Market Rent’ (of which 30% should be London Living Rent, with 70% at intermediate, as opposed to a standard disposal to an RP).

However, we stress that the council must give serious consideration to whether BTR schemes will provide any genuinely affordable housing, or just some at London Living Rent, and whether it may generally be better, in terms of meeting local housing need, to wait for an ordinary mixed development to be viable for a particular site.

With this in mind the council should consider whether it may need to go beyond London Plan requirements by requiring some social rent in BTR schemes.

### ***Partnerships***

Better joint working with housing associations is critical. A major new programme of council house building for social rent would undoubtedly be a good thing if financially viable. However, the important thing is not to engage in an ideological debate, but to focus on obtaining the right housing outcomes.

If working with housing associations produces more homes for social rent than the council going it alone, we should welcome it. The model of council land, plus council HRA funds, plus grant through Register Providers may be the most effective means of delivery. However, if such partnerships only, or predominately produced more shared ownership or higher rent

products the task group would be opposed to it. Commuted sums from other schemes should also help these developments.

Brent must also seek to gain more influence over Housing Associations (HAs). There is a need for more comprehensive info about what they're doing, especially on sales, 'conversions' to affordable rent, and the tenure and rents of new developments. We need to know their investment levels in Brent or whether they are spending their money elsewhere.

It is worth remembering that housing associations generate considerable 'internal' resources by making surpluses on all their activities, which are then available for reinvestment. Surpluses amount to hundreds of millions of pounds in London and may be derived from previous schemes within Brent or from the management of homes in Brent.

The council needs to be aware of the position with local HAs and discuss with them how they intend to apply their surpluses. They may, for example, be able to choose between subsidising new-build schemes elsewhere or investing within Brent to keep rents down to social rent levels. It is reasonable for the council to seek to influence these investment decisions to assist Brent to the greatest extent possible.

The task group also heard during its investigations that HAs sometimes compete with each other in land purchase, which inevitably tends to up the price. This produces an unacceptable outcome and the council may feel it can do more to influence the process through better dialogue with local housing associations.

There are several potential models for Brent working with HAs. Land could be sold to them for them to build out in line with our strategy. There could be partnerships where the council and HA share a development. The council might contribute funds (CIL for supporting infrastructure and other funds) to enable a HA scheme to proceed. Or there could just be a commissioning arrangement where the council employs a HA on contract to do all the necessary work (design and construction) on a council development which is then managed by the council.

Any and all of these options should be considered appropriate in different circumstances – with what produces the most social rented and other genuinely affordable housing being the guiding principle.

#### **Key recommendations:**

5. Future council policy with regard to the setting of rents for affordable housing should continue to be based on the traditional social rented model (like the mayor's London Affordable Rent model) and should not be linked to volatile and irrational market rents rather than incomes.
6. Brent Council should create a cross-departmental Board of officers, reporting directly into the Corporate Management Team (CMT), to ensure a 'one council', joined-up, sustainable approach to the delivery of Affordable Housing. The board should have high level responsibility for programme management and monitoring of an Affordable Housing Action Plan and associated suite of Key Performance Indicators. The Board should include senior officers from Brent's Planning, Housing, Regeneration, Property, Finance and Legal teams.
7. Brent should consider adopting a land assembly, master planner approach, working with key partners and designating Land Assembly Zones in its Local Plan. Where attempts to encourage and incentivise voluntary land assembly do not succeed, Brent should commit to extend its use of compulsory purchase powers in these zones, where the law allows.

8. Brent Council should maximise resources available through the mayor's fund, RTB receipts and borrowing to support direct delivery within its own capital development programme with a primary focus on rented homes at social rent levels and on larger homes (3 bedrooms or larger).
9. Brent must adopt a clear policy on access to shared ownership in the borough, making the product accessible to people on incomes that are as low as possible and ensuring the policy is designed to enable keyworkers to take advantage of it.
10. All new homes in Brent should be marketed locally first, as per the Mayor of London's planned "first dibs" policy. Brent should investigate how such a requirement could be implemented.
11. Brent Council should explore all the options highlighted in this report for innovative partnering arrangements and delivery models with Registered Providers.

### 7.3 Estate regeneration

It must be recognised that there is a shortage of land available in Brent, greatly restricting opportunities for redevelopment. We therefore cannot fail to maximise outputs from opportunities where precious land is available and has potential for development, including those that arise through in-fill and intensification on our estates.

There has been a change in mind-set, away from the stock transfers of past regeneration schemes, and this direction of travel should be maintained and the good work done thus far consolidated.

Estate Regeneration is, of course, not solely about increasing the number of affordable housing units, but about creating balanced and sustainable communities. However, council estates in Brent arguably already are mixed communities, so this alone is not a justification for building private homes.

The requirement for private homes is a) to help meet the London plan targets set for Brent and, most importantly, b) increasing density to get extra value - to help pay for refurbishment of and supply of more council and lower rent homes in the area. Schemes should be kept flexible so that the tenure split can be improved if additional funding (e.g. from the mayor) becomes available.

The Task Group is therefore not opposed in principle to private sales during redevelopment of estates. Just as there is a desire for private development to provide affordable housing, we recognise that council developments may need to do private sales in order to generate revenues to recycle into further genuinely affordable housing and estate improvements.

The Task Group is aware that estate regeneration schemes prior to Barham Park sometimes led to the loss of social rented homes, even if there was an increase in total homes. This damages the council's ability to meet need in the long term.

All proposals for estate regeneration should therefore include a forecast, taking into account the likely programme of decanting and demolition, and of the likely impact of the scheme on the forward lettings plan.

The mayor is now requiring no loss of social rent overall in funded schemes plus tenant ballots. This policy change is supported by Brent and will be implemented in the St Raphael's Estate Regeneration.

It is paramount that the South Kilburn approach to regeneration and intensification is considered a model of best practice and used elsewhere in the borough wherever feasible.

**Key recommendation:**

12. Future estate regeneration projects in Brent should use the South Kilburn Regeneration Programme as a model of good practice and make a clear commitment to ensuring there is no loss (in quantum terms) of social rented affordable housing and to resident ballots.

## 7.4 Land owned by public authorities

Brent must adopt a strong corporate approach to the identification of other land within its boundaries which could be brought forward for housing development. This could include the purchase of land to create developable sites, by agreement or by using its compulsory purchase powers.

The council also needs to improve the output of affordable homes on public land, getting more from land owned by other public agencies (NHS, TFL, Network Rail, Metropolitan Police, The Fire Service, Crown Estate etc.) but also by improving the supply of sites in council ownership – which will produce the highest proportion of affordable homes.

We consider that the Council should take the lead in any complex partnership arrangement to maximise the delivery of housing units in the borough. The model suggested by the Naylor review (One Public Estate) is worth developing across the borough – in particular working with TFL and Network Rail.

We do recognise the tension between maximising affordable housing and public agencies maximising income from sale. However, there is a need to maximise the benefit to the whole public sector and not just a single agency. A high degree of affordable/social rent housing must be achieved on public sector sites to enable the council to deliver its overall policy.

**Key recommendation:**

13. Brent should actively promote partnership working on publicly owned land with other public bodies, as promoted by the Naylor Review (One Public Estate), e.g. Network Rail/TfL sites such as potential over station and over rail land developments, as part of the Local Plan.

## 7.5 Industrial/employment sites

Much of the future housing supply in London will come from existing ‘brownfield’ sites in zones 3 and beyond. Even in places where mixed-use projects are happening there is often a lack of diversity of suitable and flexible workspace, but if carefully designed and with suitable access, a wide range of activities can take place in similar spaces.

It is an extremely important task for the council to ensure that as demand for retail and commercial space continues to change, we adopt a proactive approach to identifying opportunities where surplus commercial space, under-used retail sites and car parks may provide potential for housing development, with a focus on mixed use development.

Whatever the ownership, identifying and uncovering potential sites and bringing them to development should be a clear aim of the council.

As part of the revision of the Local Plan, there is the opportunity to identify relevant strategic industrial land sites and smaller commercial land sites which can be developed or used for mixed use - so that we can develop a coherent strategy over the lifetime of the next Local Plan and beyond.

Brent's planning framework must incentivise the delivery of innovative, mixed-use, productive employment and residential schemes.

**Key recommendation:**

14. Brent must adopt a proactive approach to identifying opportunities where surplus commercial space, underused retail sites and car parks may have significant potential for housing development, both strategic industrial land sites and smaller commercial land sites, and in particular where sites have potential for mixed-use developments.

## 7.6 Small sites

The new London Plan places great emphasis on the need for increased delivery of homes from small sites, around one third of the total target for new homes from boroughs is to come from such sites. As identified earlier, this has implications for the delivery of affordable housing. We must also give careful consideration to how best to ensure that small sites do make some contribution to increasing the supply of affordable housing.

Brent must ensure that there is a requirement in the development of small sites (defined in the London Plan as less than 25 units) over the 10 units threshold that they should meet fully the council's requirements for affordable housing through a section 106 agreement to provide affordable housing onsite.

Small sites under 10 units should also be expected to make a financial contribution via an offsite tariff; a contribution to the council's affordable housing fund to assist with the provision of affordable housing elsewhere. The Council should consider charging a commuted sum based on a consistent formula for such sites. A clear policy on this will ensure consistency.

The council must also consider whether to provide the flexibility for payments to be collected prior to the occupation of development, rather than prior to commencement of development as recommended in the London Plan.

**Key recommendations:**

15. The council and its agents should proactively explore partnerships with developers and RPs on small sites to maximise the amount of affordable housing across the borough. Brent should identify potential opportunities and funding mechanisms for increasing development of small sites, including any further opportunities for infill development. It should be prepared to invest the necessary resources.
16. Developers of small sites with capacity for 10 or fewer units should be expected to pay a commuted sum, wherever possible, based on a consistent tariff, to Brent as a contribution to the fund for affordable housing to be built elsewhere in the borough. All affordable housing in small developments should be included in Brent's periodic performance stats.

## 7.7 Community led housing

The Council is pushing for more genuinely affordable housing that will meet the needs of its local people. There are also various alternative models available, which are not actively promoted in the borough.

The GLA have taken on board both the self-build and Community Land Trusts models, which meet the criteria of affordable housing and they have allocated some funding towards them. The model has the backing of communities across London as it promotes a lifetime affordable product.

A community land trust (CLT) is a non-profit corporation that develops and stewards affordable housing, community gardens, civic buildings, commercial spaces and other community assets on behalf of a community. “CLTs” balance the needs of individuals to access land and maintain security of tenure with a community’s need to maintain affordability, economic diversity and local access to essential services. A number of other London councils have an interest in developing the CLT model with the National Community Land Trust. <http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/>

There are now over 225 CLTs in England and Wales, half of which formed in the last two years. CLTs have developed 700 homes and will have developed a further 3000 new affordable homes by 2020.

However, with the right funding and support, that could be tripled. It is recommended that Brent Council explores setting up of a CLT model on its own land and also encourages developers to do the same, to provide another avenue for truly affordable housing provision in the borough.

### **Key recommendations:**

17. Brent should investigate and promote opportunities for community led housing projects, such as “Community Land Trusts” and “Self-Build” projects, which will protect homes and assets at affordable levels in line with local incomes for future generations.
18. Brent should explore setting up of a CLT model on publically owned land and encourage developers to do the same.

## APPENDIX 1 - TASK GROUP MEMBERSHIP

<b>Chair</b>	Councillor Neil Nerva
<b>Vice-Chair</b>	Councillor Robert Johnson
<b>Members</b>	Councillor Janice Long Councillor Orleen Hylton Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson
<b>Brent Resident</b>	Mr Steve Hilditch – Brent resident and affordable housing expert

The Senior Policy and Scrutiny Officer who supported the work of the task group was Patrick Doherty.

## APPENDIX 2 – PARTICIPANTS

The views expressed in this report are those of the task group. However, during their investigations the group met with or consulted all of the following and the task group is extremely grateful to all the participants for their valuable input, insight and challenge.

<b>Brent Council</b>	Councillor Eleanor Southwood, Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform  Councillor Shama Tatler, Lead Member for Regeneration, Highways and Planning  Brent Strategic Director of Regeneration & Environment  Brent Strategic Director of Community Wellbeing  Brent Director of Housing  Brent Head of Planning  Brent Spatial Planning Manager  Brent Head of Estates Regeneration  Brent Senior Regeneration Manager  Brent Head of Supply and Partnerships  Brent Planning Policy & Projects Manager
<b>GLA</b>	Tom Copley – GLA Assembly Member  John Wachter – Strategic Planning Manager – Viability, GLA

	Nick Taylor – Head of North West, London Housing and Land Directorate, GLA
<b>Invest4Brent (I4B)</b>	Martin Smith – Independent Chair
<b>Campbell Tickell</b>	Maggie Rafalowicz, Director Greg Campbell, Partner
<b>Network Housing</b>	Helen Evans – Chief Executive
<b>London Community Land Trust</b>	Calum Green and Lianna Etkind
<b>Future Care Capital</b>	Annemarie Naylor MBE - Director of Policy & Strategy

### **APPENDIX 3 - SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE TASK GROUP**

A Task Group was convened by Brent’s Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee towards the end of the last municipal year to examine Financial Viability Assessments (FVAs) and explore concerns regarding their impact on the delivery of affordable housing in the borough.

Progress of the committee was interrupted by purdah and the election cycle, but its initial work suggested that, firstly, the national and regional planning policy landscape was shifting, and secondly, it would be beneficial to investigate a wider range of issues impacting affordable housing delivery in the borough.

It was also considered that the Task Group was asking the wrong question, which should in fact have been how to get more affordable housing, rather than how/why FVAs were preventing it.

The Task Group was re-formed, with new membership, to continue the work with a broader remit.

This group’s primary objectives were to examine and understand the forces impacting on the delivery of affordable housing in new developments in the borough and to consider the best options for consolidating and where possible, improving upon delivery in future.

The group was to take evidence from relevant expert witnesses and consult key guidance, policies and strategies, producing a detailed report and a set of policy recommendations for cabinet, taking account of the national, regional and local context.

Our work has run concurrently with the development of Brent’s new Local Plan, so its recommendations are timely. The group’s full terms of reference can be found as appendix 6 to this report.

## APPENDIX 4 - TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. To understand the policy context of subsidising housing and the barriers and solutions to affordable housing delivery
2. Examine forthcoming changes to regional and national planning policy and guidance
3. Analyse the supply of affordable homes (numbers and percentage) from new developments in Brent over the past 10 years
4. Review best practice from other London boroughs
5. Understand the full range of “affordable” and “intermediate” housing
6. Learn from case studies in Brent where planning targets for affordable housing have been met
7. Examine how land owned by public authorities can contribute to targets for affordable housing
8. Understand if Brent is maximising the affordable housing contributions from developers and whether better use could be made of late stage reviews and Section 106 payments
9. Investigate alternative models for delivery of genuinely affordable homes, such as Community Land Trusts
10. Understand what the council believes is genuinely affordable for communities in Brent
11. Gather evidence to feed into and influence the development of the new Local Plan and Housing Strategy

## APPENDIX 5 – REFERENCES

The task group referred to a number of reports in the course of its work. Key documents included:

<b>Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government</b>	National Planning Policy Framework, 2012 & 2018
<b>GLA</b>	Draft New London Plan – August 2018  Affordable Housing And Viability Supplementary Planning Guidance – August 2017  Homes For Londoners Affordable Homes Programme 2016-21 Funding Guidance  Annual Planning Monitoring Reports
<b>Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research</b>	Affordable Housing Products In Brent and Their Affordability To Target Client Groups – December 2017

<b>Centre For London</b>	<p>(July 2018) <i>Borough Builders: Delivering More Housing Across London</i></p> <p>(2017) <i>Strength In Numbers – Funding and Building More Affordable Housing in London</i></p>
<b>Capital Economics</b>	<p>(2016) <i>SHOUT - Building New Social Rent Homes</i></p> <p>(April 2014) <i>Increasing Investment In Affordable Housing</i></p>
<b>House of Commons Library</b>	(2016) <i>Affordable Housing In London</i>
<b>Inside Housing</b>	Multiple Articles
<b>Joseph Rowntree Foundation</b>	<p>(2013) <i>Changes To Affordable Housing In London And Implications For Delivery</i></p> <p>(2015) <i>Living Rents – A New Development Framework For Affordable Housing</i></p> <p>(July 2015) <i>Rethinking Planning Obligations - Balancing Housing Numbers And Affordability</i></p>
<b>Smith Institute</b>	(October 2017) <i>Delivering The Renaissance In Council-Built Homes: The Rise Of Local Housing Companies</i>
<b>Centre for Housing Policy</b>	(January 2015) <i>The Coalition’s Record On Housing: Policy, Spending And Outcomes 2010-2015</i>
<b>Local Housing Delivery Group</b>	(June 2012) <i>Viability Testing Local Plans</i>
<b>The Housing Finance Corporation</b>	(December 2016) <i>Investing In Affordable Housing - An Analysis Of The Affordable Housing Sector</i>
<b>Frontier Economics</b>	(September 2014) <i>Assessing The Social And Economic Impact Of Affordable Housing Investment</i>
<b>University of Reading</b>	(January 2017) <i>Viability And The Planning System: The Relationship Between Economic Viability Testing, Land Values And Affordable Housing In London</i>
<b>Shelter</b>	(2017) <i>Slipping Through The Loophole</i>

<b>Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA)</b>	(November 2017) <i>New Models, Partnerships And Innovations</i> (May 2018) <i>Delivering Affordable Homes In A Changing World</i>
<b>Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)</b>	(June 2017) <i>What more can be done to build the homes we need?</i>

## Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2018-19

Tuesday 3 July 2018

Agenda Rank	Item	Details	Cabinet Member/Member	Brent Council/Partner organisations
1.	Chair's report	Update from the Chair on the work of the committee.	Cllr Matt Kelcher, Chair Scrutiny Committee	
2.	Borough Plan	Pre-scrutiny of the in-development Borough Plan, which sets out how the council will deliver its policies and how the manifesto pledges of the administration will be achieved.	Cllr Muhammed Butt, Leader	Carolyn Downs, Chief Executive Peter Gadsdon, Director Performance, Policy and Partnerships Pascoe Sawyers, Head of Strategy & Partnerships
3.	Property and assets	The council's assets list to be presented in the context of an update report on the new assets strategy, including examination of how Brent can use its properties to generate workspace and office space for local SMEs.	Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader	Althea Loderick, Strategic Director Resources Oliver Judges, Interim Director of Property

4.	Scrutiny 2017/18 annual report	Committee to review and agree the 2017-18 annual report for publishing.	Cllr Matt Kelcher, Chair Scrutiny Committee	
5.	Affordable Housing Task Group, Terms of Reference	To discuss and agree revised terms of reference for the task group looking at ways of increasing affordable housing in new developments.	Cllr Neil Nerva, Task Group Chair	Amar Dave, Strategic Director Regeneration and Environment  Aktar Choudhury, Operational Director Regeneration  Alice Lester, Head of Planning, Transport and Licensing

## Wednesday 5 September 2018

Agenda	Item	Details	Cabinet Member/Member	Brent Council/Partner organisations
1.	Chair's report	Update from the Chair on the work of the committee.	Cllr Matt Kelcher, Chair Scrutiny Committee	
2.	Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee - work programme 2018/19	To review and agree the committee's work programme for 2018-19.	Cllr Matt Kelcher, Chair Scrutiny Committee	
3.	Digital Strategy update	A report updating on progress with implementation of the Digital Strategy, including channel shift. The committee will review progress and examine protections afforded to vulnerable residents.	Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader	Peter Gadsdon, Director Performance, Policy and Partnerships  Sadie East, Head of Transformation
4.	Resurfacing and repair contract	A report on the performance of Conway, including the terms of their contract and their performance. The committee will consider alternative options for carrying out affordable repairs.	Cllr Shama Tatler Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Highways & Planning	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment  Chris Whyte, Operational Director of Environment Services  Tony Kennedy, Head of Highways and Infrastructure

<p>5.</p>	<p>Review of new positions</p>	<p>A report on the roles of Town Centre Manager and Neighbourhood Manager. The committee will examine how these roles are performing, whether they been successful and what else they might be able to do.</p>	<p>Cllr Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Highways, Planning</p>	<p>Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment</p> <p>Aktar Choudhury, Operational Director Regeneration</p> <p>Matthew Dibben, Head of Employment, Skills &amp; Enterprise</p> <p>Chris Whyte, Operational Director of Environment Services</p> <p>Simon Finney, Head of Environmental Improvement</p>
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Tuesday 15 January 2019

Agenda	Item	Details	Cabinet Member/Member	Brent Council/Partner organisations
1.	Chair's report	Update from the Chair on the work of the committee.	Cllr Matt Kelcher, Chair Scrutiny Committee	
2.	Budget scrutiny report	Committee to scrutinise and agree the Scrutiny Budget report for 2019-20 and 2020-2021.	Cllr Muhammed Butt, Leader  Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader	Carolyn Downs, Chief Executive  Althea Loderick, Strategic Director of Resources  Conrad Hall, Chief Finance Officer
3.	Local Plan	Pre-scrutiny of the draft Local Plan in development for launch in 2020, and due for consultation during 2019.	Cllr Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Highways, Planning	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment  Aktar Choudhury, Operational Director Regeneration  Alice Lester, Head of Planning, Transport and Licensing
4.	Knife Crime Task Group scoping paper	Scoping document for Knife Crime Task Group to be approved by the committee.	Cllr Tom Miller, Cabinet Member for Community Safety  Cllr Sandra Kabir	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment  Chris Whyte, Operational Director of Environment Services  Karina Wane, Head of Community Protection

5.	Affordable Housing Task Group report	Report on the findings and recommendations from the scrutiny task group review of affordable housing delivery in new developments.	<p>Cllr Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Highways, Planning</p> <p>Cllr Eleanor Southwood Cabinet Member for Housing &amp; Welfare Reform,</p> <p>Cllr Neil Nerva, Task Group Chair</p>	<p>Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment</p> <p>Phil Porter, Strategic Director of Community Wellbeing</p> <p>Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director Housing</p> <p>Alice Lester, Head of Planning, Transport and Licensing</p>
6.	Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee – Revised work programme 2018/19	To review and agree the updated committee work programme for 2018-19.	Cllr Matt Kelcher, Chair Scrutiny Committee	

**Thursday 07 February**

<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Cabinet Member/Member</b>	<b>Brent Council/Partner organisations</b>
1.	Chair's report	Update from the Chair on the work of the committee.	Cllr Matt Kelcher, Chair Scrutiny Committee	
2.	Parking and electric car charging	A report on progress with council plans to create and enable more electric car charging points. The committee will also investigate how the parking regime can free up more space on roads by restricting vehicle lengths.	Cllr Krupa Sheth Cabinet Member for Environment  Cllr Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Highways, Planning	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment  Chris Whyte, Operational Director of Environment Services  Tony Kennedy, Head of Highways and Infrastructure  Rachel Best, Transportation Planning Manager  Gavin Moore, Head of Parking & Lighting
3.	Annual report on complaints	Committee to receive update on the council's 2017-18 complaints performance	Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader	Peter Gadsdon, Director Performance, Policy and Partnerships  Irene Bremang, Head of Performance & Improvement

4.	Food Banks Task Group Update	A report updating cabinet actions following the food bank task group recommendations	<p>Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader</p> <p>Cllr Roxane Mashari, Task Group Chair</p>	Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships
5.	Budget proposals	The committee is to consider and comment on the actual budget proposals and its comments are to be noted and submitted to Cabinet.	Cllr Matt Kelcher, Chair Scrutiny Committee	

**Monday 14 March 2019**

<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Cabinet Member/Member</b>	<b>Brent Council/Partner organisations</b>
1.	Chair's report	Update from the Chair on the work of the committee.	Cllr Matt Kelcher, Chair Scrutiny Committee	
2.	Contracts 2023	The committee will look at several key council contracts due to end in 2023 and examine the process for setting the terms of these contracts and the merits/obstacles to bringing the services back in-house.	Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader  Cllr Krupa Sheth Cabinet Member for Environment	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment  Chris Whyte, Operational Director of Environment Services
3.	Air quality pledges	A report updating on progress against air quality pledges made during the election. How can the council can deliver against these promises over the coming years?	Cllr Krupa Sheth Cabinet Member for Environment	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment  Chris Whyte, Operational Director of Environment Services  Karina Wane, Head of Community Protection

4.	Flats and recycling	A report on recycling levels in flats. The committee will examine barriers to recycling and consider how landlord licencing can help to boost rates.	Cllr Krupa Sheth Cabinet Member for Environment	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment  Chris Whyte, Operational Director of Environment Services
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**Monday 15 April 2019**

<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Cabinet Member/Member</b>	<b>Brent Council/External organisations</b>
1.	Chair's report	Update from the Chair on the work of the committee.	Cllr Matt Kelcher, Chair Scrutiny Committee	
2.	Knife Crime Task Group report	Report on findings and recommendations from the task group examination of knife crime in Brent.	Cllr Tom Miller, Cabinet Member for Community Safety	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment  Chris White, Operational Director of Environment Services  Karina Wane, Head of Community Protection
3.	Illegal rubbish dumping	A report on actions the Council can take to help combat the problem of illegal dumping of rubbish on non-council land. This is to include a review of options for mattress tagging in the private rented sector.	Cllr Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Environment	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment  Chris Whyte, Operational Director of Environment Services
4.	Annual Safer Brent Partnership Report 2018/19	Annual report of the Safer Brent Partnership and update on community safety.	Cllr Tom Miller, Cabinet Member for Community Safety	Carolyn Downs, Brent Chief Executive  Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment  Karina Wane, Head of Community Protection  Metropolitan Police

**Proposed for 2019/20:**

- Options for a new Council Tax Support scheme and potential impacts of Council Tax collection moving in-house